DE-RISKATHON

ACRISURE®

SESSION SUMMARY – OCTOBER 28, 2026

# *Making Safety Happen*

PRESENTED BY




**Brian Fielkow**
EVP, Risk Resources
Acrisure



**Mason Mimnaugh**
Moderator
Acrisure


WATCH THE SESSION REPLAY

## SESSION AT A GLANCE

Drawing on 16 years leading Jetco Delivery and his work with Acrisure clients, Brian Fielkow shared what some of the safest operators do differently — and why the same habits drive profitability and operational performance. Safety won't bubble up on its own: it starts with leaders, depends on an engaged front line, and grows stronger every time an organization learns from what goes wrong.

## WHAT THE SAFEST COMPANIES DO DIFFERENTLY

**Think differently**
Safety is a non-negotiable core value, not a priority

**Lead from the top**
Safety starts with the board and C-suite — it won't bubble up on its own

**Engage employees**
The front line owns safety and does the right thing when no one's looking

**Respect process**
Simple, understandable processes people actually follow

**Lean in**
Learn from every incident to build a stronger, smarter organization

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

1. **Safety is a value, not a priority.** Priorities shift when a customer calls. A non-negotiable core value doesn't compete with production pressure.
2. **Compliance is the floor.** Regulations set the bare minimum. A driver can be fully compliant with hours-of-service rules and still be too fatigued to drive safely.
3. **The real cost is far bigger than your loss runs.** Costs you absorb — legal fees, hiring and training replacements, damage to your reputation, and management time spent reacting — can far exceed what your loss runs show.
4. **Behavior follows the environment leaders create.** Employees adjust to what you reward and tolerate — and to what they hear. "Hurry up, we're late" can sound like "take a shortcut."
5. **Treat incidents by their potential, not their outcome.** Before the January 2025 Potomac midair collision, the same conditions had occurred more than 80 times since 2011. The only difference was that a crash hadn't occurred.

## BUILD PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

- **Employees should be able to call a timeout** without fear of retribution — and get thanked for it
- **Asking questions is a strength.** No one starts safety-sensitive work until they understand it
- **Reporting hazards and near misses** is expected, not just requested
- **Communicate to be heard,** and ask employees to repeat back what they heard
- **Practice just culture:** coach honest mistakes, and reserve consequences for reckless or deliberate behavior

## ENGAGE THE FRONT LINE

- **Bring in your frontline leaders.** They can be among your most effective allies in creating safe outcomes
- **Make onboarding human.** Get to know new hires as people first, and send a welcome letter home that shares your safety expectations
- **Involve families** — they help make sure people come to work rested and focused
- **Use peer mentors.** One stevedoring company's "gold letter group" became a confidential safe harbor for reporting
- **Hold one joint safety and operations meeting.** Safety isn't a department

## FIND YOUR ENGAGEMENT GAPS

**ASK 1**
Rank sales, production, safety, and customer satisfaction by importance to you.

**ASK 2**
Now rank them by importance to your manager.

**ASK 3**
Do safety and productivity conflict with one another?

**ASK 4**
If you were the CEO, what's the one thing you'd change about our safety culture?

**The lesson:** compare answers across the front line, managers, and executives. If employees rank safety first but think their manager doesn't, that's the gap to close — not a sign something's broken, but a place to start.

## MAKE PROCESS WORK

- ☐ Write processes at the reading level of the people who use them
- ☐ Let your workforce help write them, so they own them
- ☐ Give new hires a one-page set of safety expectations on day one
- ☐ Turn clunky manuals into checklists
- ☐ Define life-critical rules, like lockout/tagout or fall protection, that rise above the rest
- ☐ Track leading indicators: process audits, training completion, listening sessions, and technology adoption

## LOOK FOR THE HIDDEN RISKS

Look past individual error — a company can cause an incident as easily as an individual. These hidden risks are often at the root:

- **Rushing new hires** into work before they're ready
- **Shortcuts and workarounds** that undermine process
- **Complacency** when results look good
- **A disconnect** between leaders and the front line
- **Metrics** that aren't tied to safe outcomes
- **Processes** that aren't audited in the field
- **Undue production pressure**
- **Deferred maintenance**

> *"The law tells you what you can do. Safety tells you what you should do."*
>
> — BRIAN FIELKOW

*Request a free copy of Making Safety Happen*

Brian's new book includes the complete safety culture gap survey. Email your mailing address to request a copy. Your information will be used only to fulfill this request. Offer expires January 31, 2027.

REQUEST THE BOOK

RiskResources@acrisure.com

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** This summary reflects the speaker's remarks at DE-RISKATHON 2026 and is provided for general informational purposes only. The presenters are employees of Acrisure, LLC or one of its affiliates (collectively, "Acrisure"). The information discussed during the session and in this summary does not constitute legal, HR, employment, or other professional advice and is not a substitute for advice from a qualified professional on any particular issue or subject matter. You should consult an appropriate professional regarding your specific circumstances, including before purchasing any insurance product or service. This information should not be relied upon for the prevention or mitigation of risks, as a full and complete explanation of coverage under any insurance policy, or as a full and complete explanation of the terms and conditions of any services offered. The opinions expressed by the presenters are their own and do not necessarily reflect the positions of Acrisure. While this information has been compiled from sources reasonably believed to be reliable, Acrisure makes no warranty, guarantee, or representation, either express or implied, as to its accuracy, completeness, correctness, or sufficiency, disclaims liability to the maximum extent permitted by law, and undertakes no obligation to update this summary. Workers' compensation rules, forms, and experience rating vary by state. Acrisure provides risk management consulting and access to insurance solutions; it does not provide legal advice or issue insurance policies. Products and services described herein may not be available in all jurisdictions, and eligibility for insurance is subject to the determination of underwriting qualifications and acceptance by the issuing insurance company. © 2026 Acrisure, LLC. All Rights Reserved.