

A photograph of four men sitting at a long table on a stage during a panel discussion. They are engaged in conversation, with some looking towards each other. The background features a blue curtain and a screen displaying text. A podium on the right side of the stage has the conference logo. The foreground shows the backs of several audience members seated in rows.

EHS Today

Safety Leadership CONFERENCE

September 18-20, 2023

Orlando World Center Marriott | Orlando, FL

safetyleadershipconference.com

Beyond the Buzzword

What Being Proactive in Safety Really Means

Doug Pontsler

COVE, Chairman & Managing Director

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Doug Pontsler is dedicated to the application of visual literacy for industrial and service applications with an emphasis on safety.

Prior to his current role, Doug was the former vice president of operations sustainability and EHS for Owens Corning (retired). He joined Owens Corning in 2002 and held leadership positions including director of corporate services and vice president of global sourcing.

Doug served as a member of the National Safety Council (NSC) Board of Directors and as the Chairman of the Campbell Institute at the National Safety Council.

He is a recipient of NSC's 2019 Distinguished Service to Safety Award.





Image courtesy of the Toledo Museum of Art.



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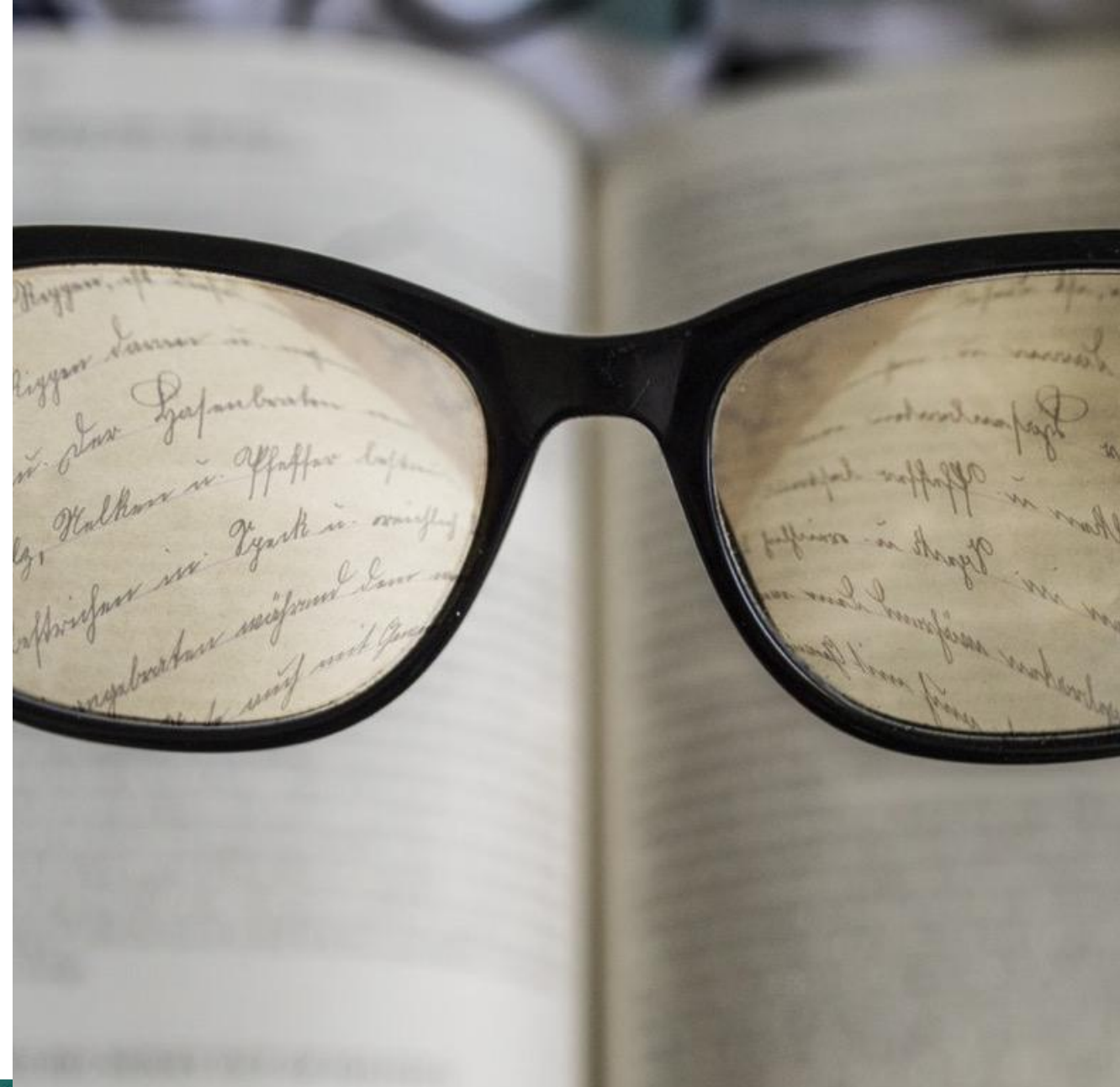


Screenshot



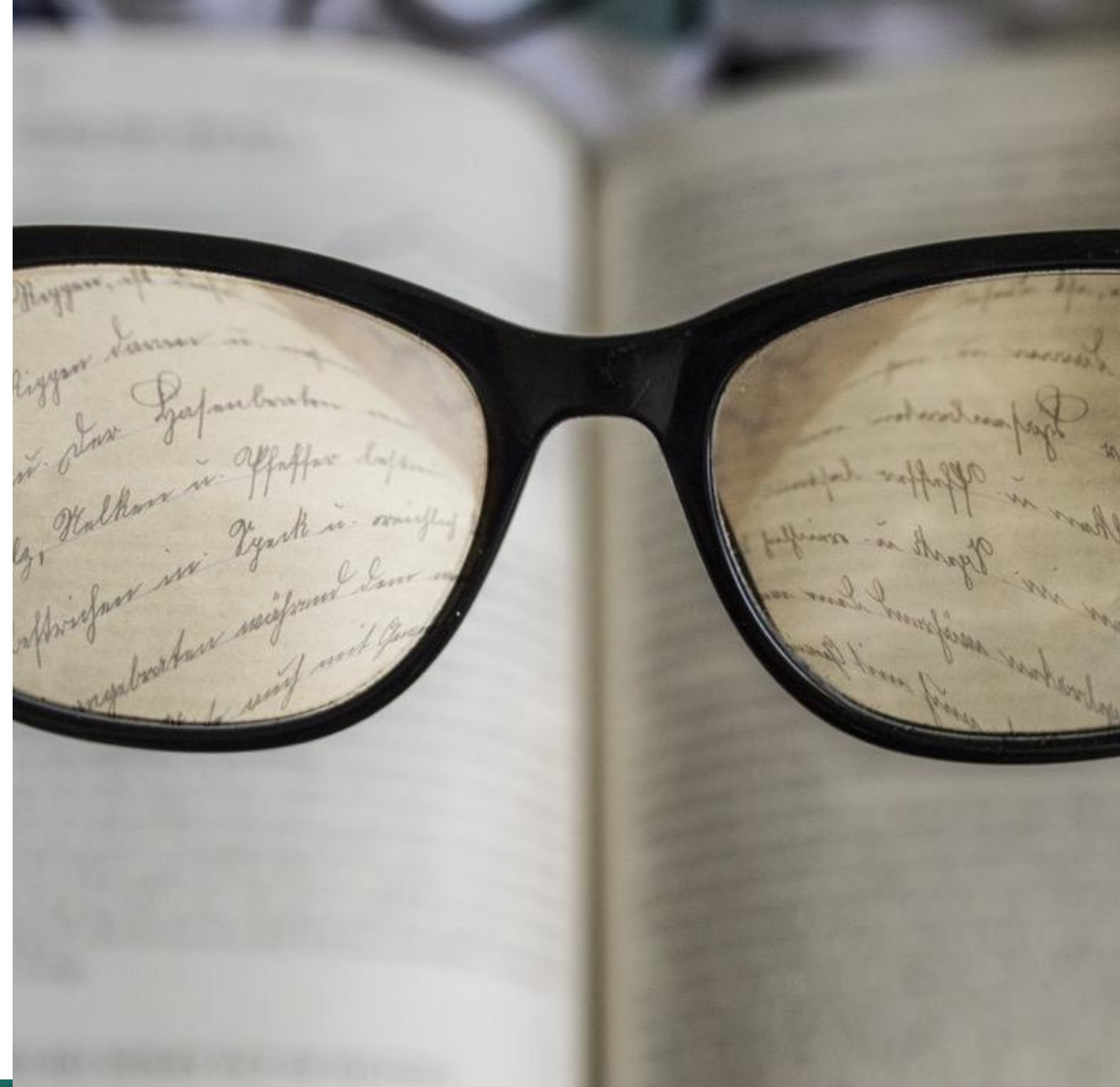
What are (some) of the buzzwords

- ❑ Safety is number one
- ❑ Zero harm
- ❑ World class
- ❑ Felt leadership
- ❑ Proactive Safety
- ❑ Psychological Safety

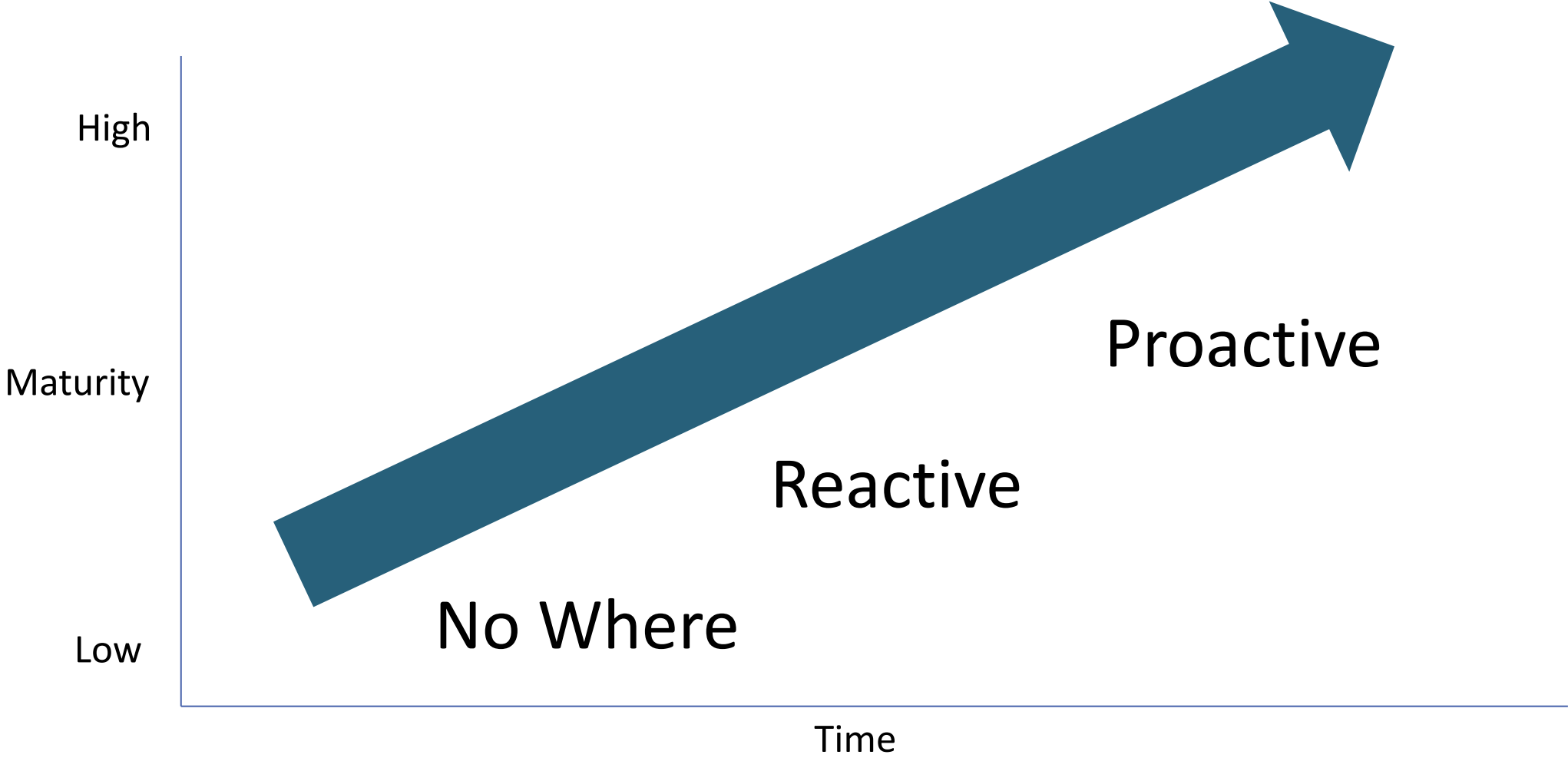


What are (some) of the buzzwords

- ❑ Safety is number one
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- ❑ Felt leadership
- ❑ **Proactive Safety**
- ❑ Psychological Safety



Aspiration Over Time



PROACTIVE

“Creating or controlling a situation by causing something to happen rather than responding to it after it has happened.”

Oxford Languages



Most **hazards** have existed for a long time, and we work around them.

Why Is Hazard ID So Challenging?

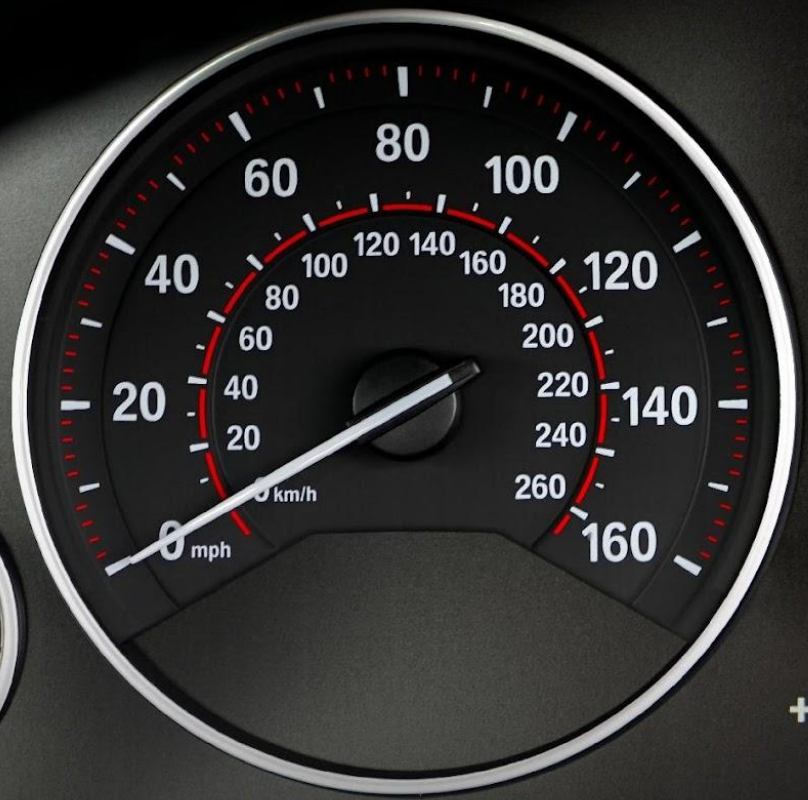
- ❑ Technical Knowledge
- ❑ Time
- ❑ Risk Tolerance
- ❑ No Process for Haz ID
- ❑ We Don't See the Hazards



Why Is Hazard ID So Challenging?

- ❑ Technical Knowledge
- ❑ Time
- ❑ Risk Tolerance
- ❑ No Process for Haz ID
- ❑ **We Don't See the Hazards**





+16.0 °C

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15:29

Draw Your Instrument Panel

How can our risk management processes be effective if we don't see the hazards....



“I’ve walked by that a thousand times....”



Why don't we see
the things that
can hurt us and
what we can do
about it





“It is not enough to know intellectually what a hazard is. We must be able to see it.”

Visual Literacy

is all about...



What we see



What it
means



What we do
about it

We don't see as well as we think we do!



2 Types of Biases

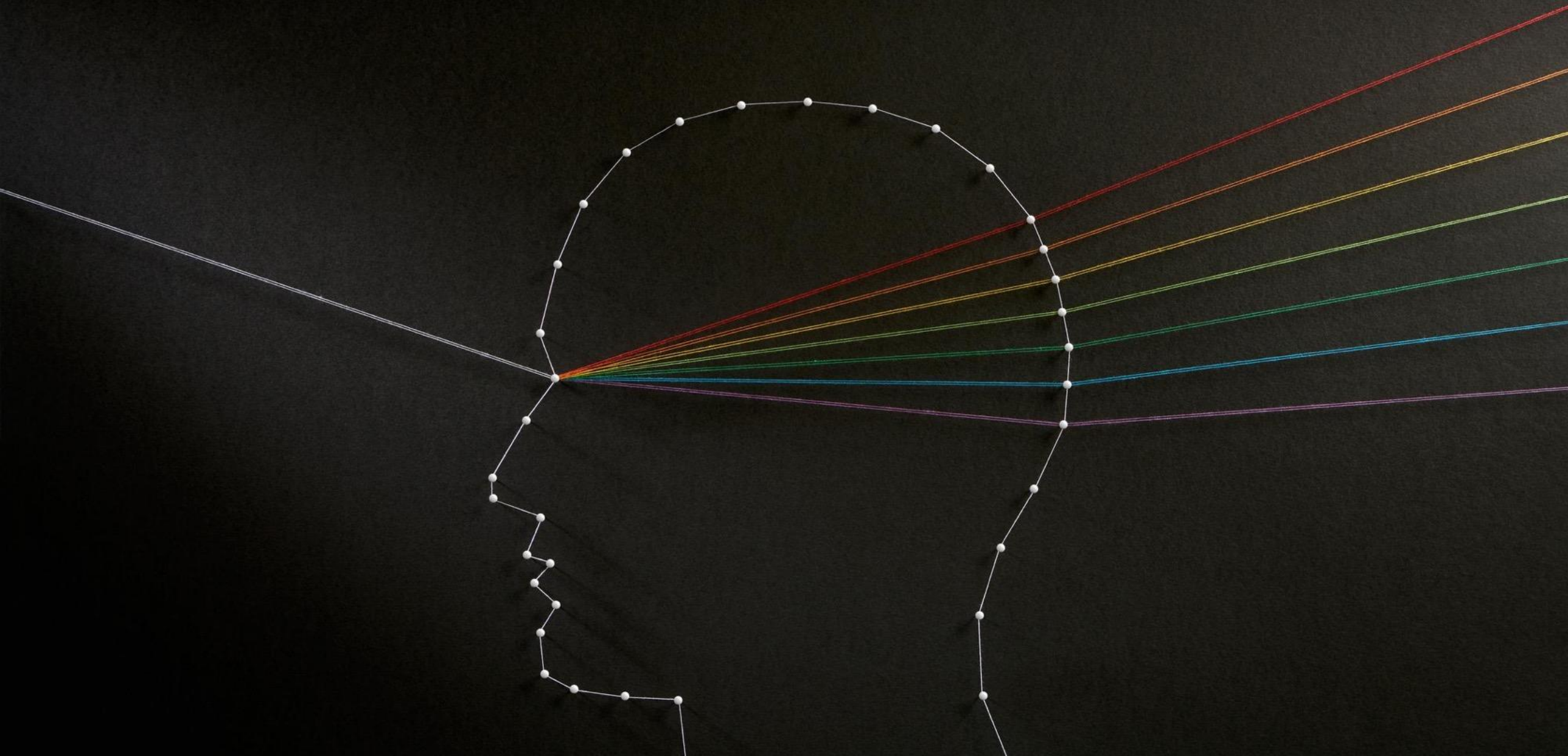
01

Visual
Biases

02

Inherent
Personal
Biases

We See With Our Brain



INTRODUCTION TO VISUAL LANGUAGE

Awareness of Visual Bias and Responding to It



- Once you see something, it is hard to remember what it was like not to see it
- Sometimes, you cannot see what is in front of you, even if you know it is there
- You are always filling in blanks based on what you expect to be there
- You are only **seeing as little as 10% of what you think you are seeing**

VISUAL LITERACY: FILLING IN INFORMATION

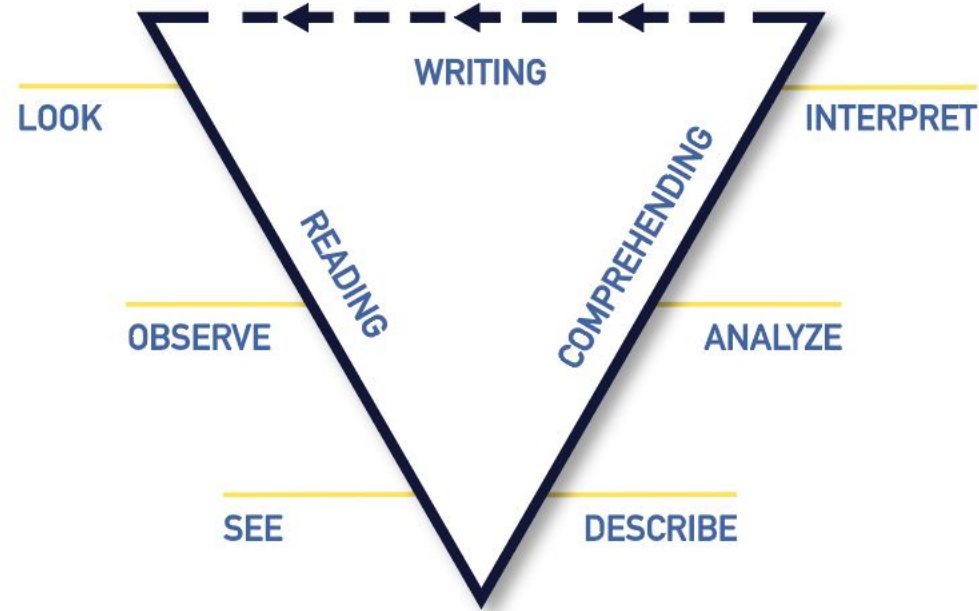
Can you read this?

**We can
improve
our ability
to see!**



The Art of Seeing Art™

We teach the ability to read, comprehend, and write visual language



READING

visual language is about the *process* of seeing

COMPREHENDING

visual language is about the *interpretation* of seeing

WRITING

visual language is about the *action you take* in response to what you have seen

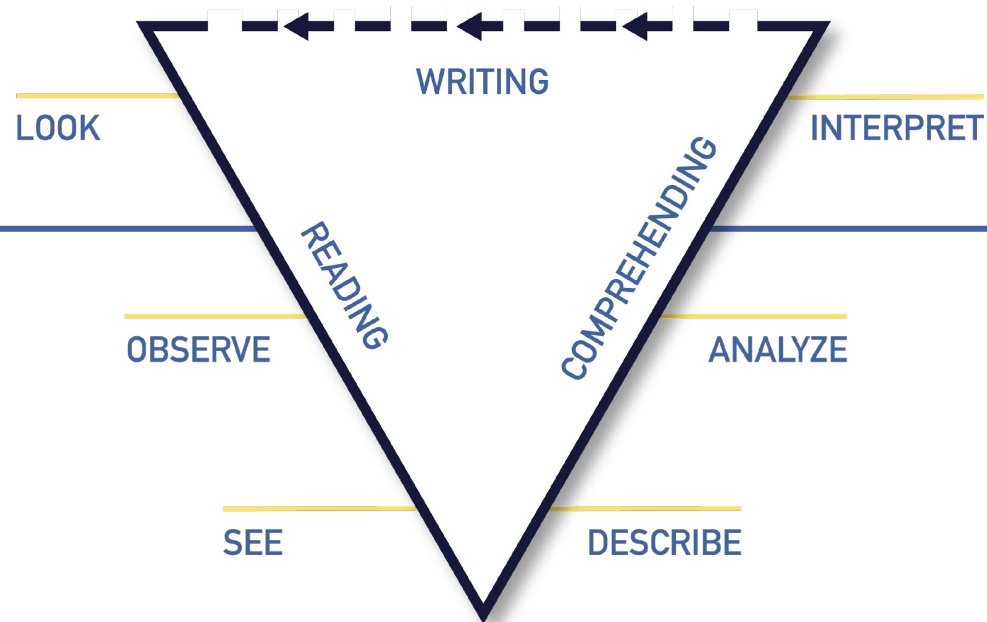
VISUAL LITERACY

the ability to read, comprehend, and write visual language



System 1
Fast Brain

System 2 Slow
Brain



The Art of Seeing Art™

READING

visual language is about
the process
of seeing

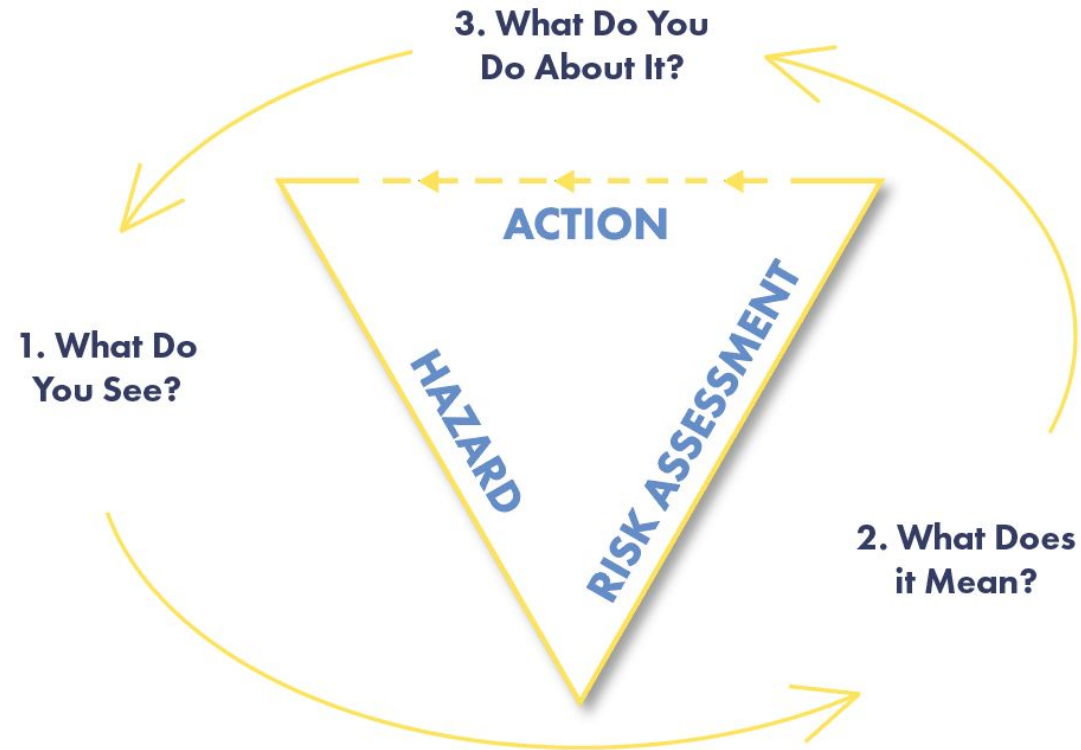
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visual language is about
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VISUAL LITERACY APPLIED TO SAFETY



Derived from the Art of Seeing Art TM

HAZARD

visual language is about the process of seeing

RISK ASSESSMENT

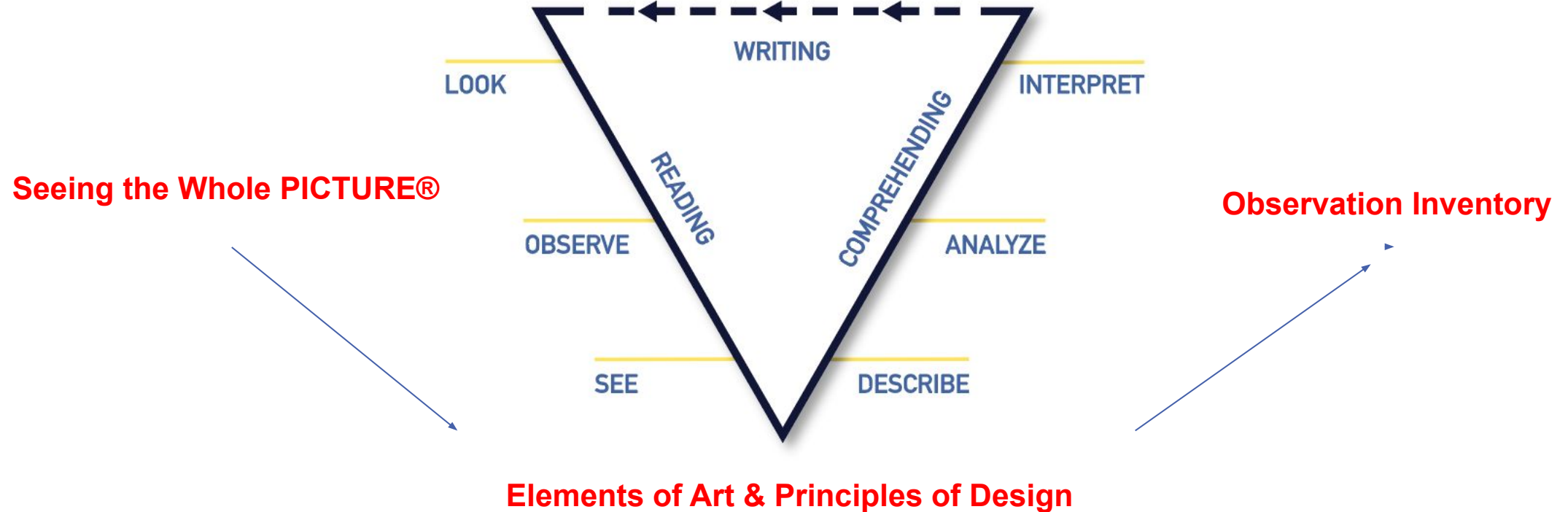
visual language is about the interpretation of seeing

ACTION

visual language is about the action you take in response to what you have seen

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Seeing the Whole PICTURE™

We all see things differently. This approach helps us look at and communicate about our environment in a more uniformed way.

P



Perimeter to Interior

Looking from the perimeter to interior will train you to see the entire scene instead of zeroing in on what your eye would normally be drawn to

C



Contrast

Looking for contrasts could reveal potential hazards that you may not have seen previously

TU



Turn it Upside Down

Change your perspective of how you look at your working environment. Try looking from different directions or heights

R



Repeat

Repeat this process to see if you can identify anything you may have missed the first time

E



Explain

Describe what you see using objective language. This ensures personal biases aren't interjected and inaccurate assumptions are avoided

Adapting the Elements of Art

Line

Shape

Color

Texture

Space





Center of Visual Expertise

The Elements of Art

Line

Shape

Color

Texture

Space



The Elements of Art

Line

Shape

Color

Texture

Space





Center of Visual Expertise

The Elements of Art

Line

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Screenshot

Leveraging Visual Literacy in Hazard Identification



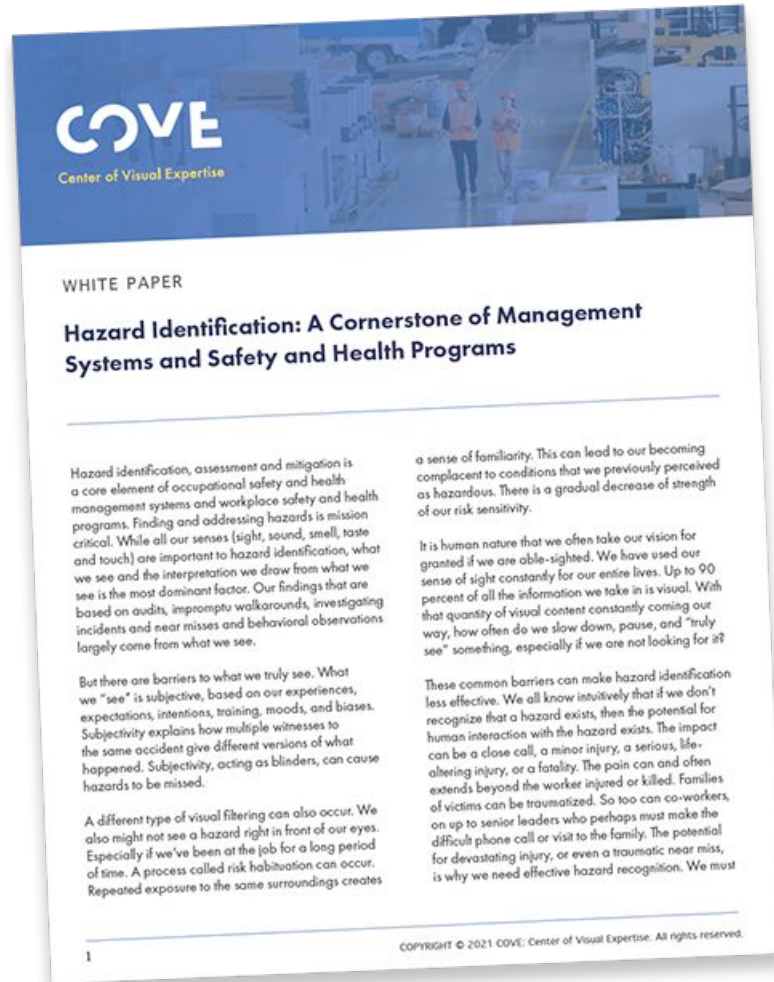
Leveraging Visual Literacy in Hazard Identification





**SLOW
DOWN**

Scan QR Code to Download the White Paper



Hazard Identification: A Cornerstone Of Management Systems And Safety And Health Programs



Remember... We can't fix what we don't see!



Photo by Elena Taranenko on Unsplash



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