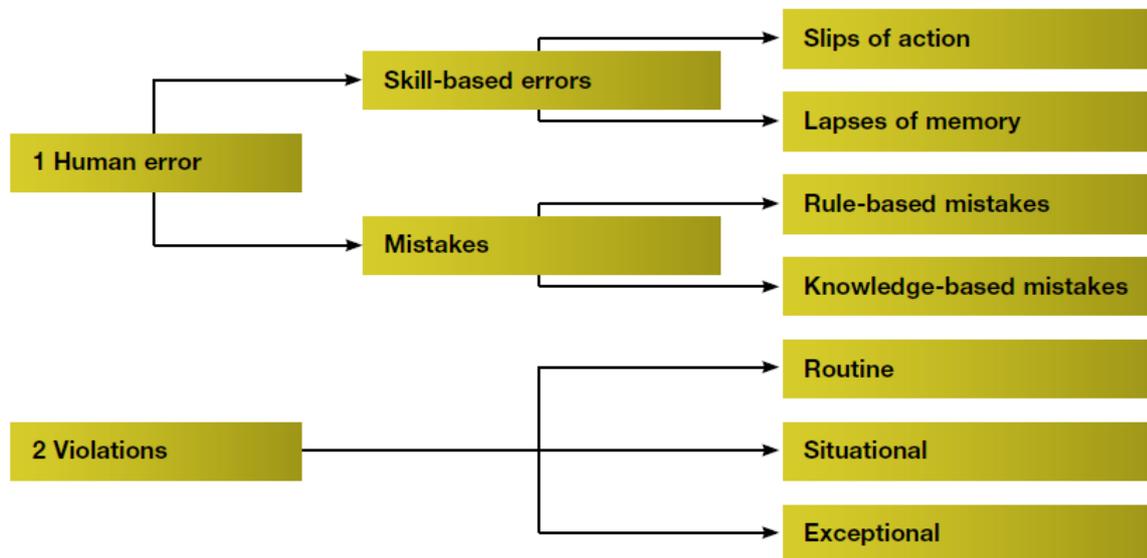


## October 2016 – don't forget to form good habits



Most of us will be familiar with the following description of human failure:

- **Human error** is an *unintentional* action or decision.
- **Violations** are *intentional* failures – *deliberately* doing the wrong thing.



Human error can occur when undertaking very familiar tasks which can be carried out without much conscious attention. These tasks are vulnerable to slips and lapses

Slips – not doing what we're meant to do

Lapses – forgetting to do something or losing your place midway through a task

Mistakes are decision-making failures and arise when we do the wrong thing, believing it to be right

Violations are intentional failures (deliberately doing the wrong thing). Rules are broken for many reasons but in summary:

"I felt I had no choice" – intentional due to the situation or rules

"I didn't care about the consequences" – intentional violations

What happens when an incident investigation is carried out? In addition to the identification of root due to system and management failings, how far does the investigation review human failings beyond a statement of "complacency"?

Root cause analysis is vital to understanding systemic and equipment failure to identify the lessons learned and to make appropriate recommendations. Humans are more complex and we need to identify whether better habits or a more complex solution is required.

Many incidents can be avoided through the implementation of simple precautions delivered by the development of good habits and positive supervision (thereby avoiding issues caused by slips or lapses). If the analogy of the seat belt is analysed; the habit of using a seat belt has been formed through a combination of raised awareness, the communication of the benefits of wearing them, enforcement for not wearing them and technology (warning devices when not used).

If we keep solutions simple they can have huge benefit – forming good habits does not incur huge expenditure!

Read more of my blogs [here](#).

*The content of this article is intended to provide a general guide to the subject matter. Specialist advice should be sought about your specific circumstances.*

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