

# MEDICALADVISORS, INC

## TECHNICAL NETWORK CONSULTING SERVICE®

### HUMAN FACTOR CONSULTANTS

Use Of Human Factor Consultants  
*Human Factors Expert from Texas*

The Human Factors profession, also referred to as Human Factors Engineering or Ergonomics, had its beginning in World War II when Human Factors was applied to the design and re-design of airplane cockpits since many pilots had to be trained in a short period of time. Since then a body of scientific knowledge, regarding the human being's interface with products, equipment and the environment, has continued to grow. The Definition of Human Factors, therefore, is the application of scientific knowledge, regarding the human being's capabilities and limitations, to the design of products and equipment so they can be utilized efficiently, effective and safely. In other words, the Human Factors professional makes sure a person can use a product or equipment easily and safely.

Human Factors can also be considered as a multi-disciplinary field since it is a combination of Engineering, Psychology and Safety. When I have been retained as a Human Factors expert by plaintiff or defense counsel, one of the very first steps I utilize is to examine all points of interface between the person injured or killed and what that person was utilizing in either an industrial or consumer setting. I have been retained on cases related to many industrial products, that have been involved in injuries and death, such as stamping/forging machines, conveyors, fork lifts, front-end loaders, toxic chemicals, cranes and backhoes. I have also been retained on cases relative to many consumer products, that have involved injuries and deaths, such as automobiles, trucks, aerosol cans, blenders, ovens, ranges, table saws, barbecue grills and exercise equipment.

Other cases have also involved slip and falls, stairway falls, railroad crossing accidents, medical products, children's products, farm implements and tractors, failure to warn, maritime accidents, swimming pool drownings, vending machine tip-overs, electrocutions, safety considerations, adequacy of instructions, fires and aircraft accidents.

I have found when retained for the plaintiff, that there are critical Human Factors issues that can be in one or more of the following areas. There can be design features that can be conducive to

human error. There could be a warning or warnings and/or instructions that are not adequate when Human Factors criteria is not utilized in the design of the warnings and instructions. The employer may not have provided adequate training and/or training materials.

When retained by the defense, I have found critical Human Factors issues as well. Even when the training and training materials were adequate, the employee did not follow what he was trained to do including the proper and safe operational procedures. There may have been an adequate warning on the consumer product or industrial machine that the person did not read or the person did read but did not heed. I have found in general that in many defense as well as plaintiff cases one of my areas of concentration, in my Human Factors analysis, is the actual behavior of the person injured or killed.

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