

That Washington Post has a detailed [story](#) that details BP's culture of carelessness:

Taken together, these documents portray a company that systemically ignored its own safety policies across its North American operations — from Alaska to the Gulf of Mexico to California and Texas. Executives were not held accountable for the failures, and some were promoted despite them.

What's most disturbing in the story is BP's history of filing false reports and suppressing worker concerns about safety and adverse safety information.

It's worth pointing out that for once the lawyers were the good guys in the story. BP's Houston law firm, Vinson & Elkins, warned BP that warned that pipeline corrosion endangered operations" in Alaska:

[The V&E report] also offered a harsh assessment of BP's management of employee concerns. According to the report, workers accused the company of allowing "pencil whipping," or falsifying inspection data. The report quoted an employee who said employees felt forced to skip key diagnostics, including pressure testing, pipeline cleaning and corrosion checks.

The report said that Richard Woollam, the manager in charge of corrosion safety in Alaska at the time, had "an aggressive management style" and subverted inspectors' tendency to report problems. "Pressure on contractor management to hit performance metrics (e.g. fewer OSHA recordables) creates an environment where fear of retaliation and intimidation did occur," it said. Woollam was soon transferred.

Unfortunately, BP did not heed the report, resulting in a disastrous accident in Alaska two years later. The company has apparently made some efforts to clean up its act in the last few years, but obviously this was too little and too late.

UPDATE: A more detailed version of the WaPo story, appearing on [Propublica](#), has links to some of the key documents of internal BP investigations.

