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inSIDER Report:

Safety Culture as a Driver of Compliance and Performance

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contents

SAFETY CULTURE 2018
Motivators, Messaging & Management
for World-Class Safety Performance

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Safety culture as a driver of compliance and performance

Dear Colleague,

The future of workplace safety is here. Today, employers must go beyond simply enforcing rules and procedures and help their workforce embrace safety as a priority in their day-to-day operations. Establishing a culture of safety is the most effective way to accomplish this—a process that includes motivating positive employee behavior, creating strong advocates for safety initiatives, and securing buy-in from superiors who must understand the financial implications of safety performance.

Independent research shows that improving safety culture decreases incidents in any process, thereby decreasing the risk of OSHA penalties, reducing injury rate, and saving your company money. There is a clear business case for building a strong safety culture, but it will take a careful strategy and deliberate execution to be truly effective.

It starts with you.

In this special report, we outline the best strategies for implementing and improving safety training, incentives and discipline, and safety leadership to improve safety culture. It will provide the baseline knowledge you need to limit your liability, comply with federal regulations, and drive safety success in your organization for your entire workforce.

Sincerely,

Amanda Czepiel, JD
Senior Managing Editor—EHS
BLR®—Business & Legal Resources
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Safety culture checklist: 6 keys to success

Many organizations want to improve their safety culture in order to reduce injury rates, save money, and increase productivity. But how does a company begin to foster a culture of safety? The following are a just few key areas that go a long way toward establishing a positive safety culture in an organization:

1 Management commitment. A safety culture must have the full commitment of company leadership. Executives and managers must lead by example by following safety policies themselves and must adopt safety as a core organizational value. Safety efforts must be viewed as complementary to productivity and profitability goals rather than in conflict with them.

2 Employee engagement. In an organization with a strong safety culture, employees are highly engaged with safety. They don't resent safety efforts, view safety rules as a nuisance that interferes with their work, or believe that safety is "someone else's job"; rather, they are fully committed to making their workplace as safe as possible. Engaged employees do not hesitate to speak up if they witness unsafe conditions or actions because they know that they can raise concerns without fear of retaliation.

3 Job hazard analysis and incident investigation. In order to protect employees from workplace hazards, you need to know what these hazards are. Job hazard analysis allows you to identify the hazards associated with the tasks your workers perform in order to identify appropriate protective measures. Similarly, following an incident, you need to be able to drill down to the root cause to determine what went wrong and how to prevent reoccurrences. An effective incident investigation program will allow you to do this.

4 Policies and procedures. Policies and procedures are the backbone that supports a safety culture. Safety-related policies—for example, regarding the use of PPE or prohibiting horseplay—should be clear, be in writing, and specify consequences for noncompliance. Procedures (such as those for lockout/tagout or emergency shutdown) should be written in easily understandable language that describes the subject in a step-by-step manner. Employees must be familiar with safety policies and procedures they are expected to follow and must be able to review them at any time.

5 Training. To have a strong safety culture, employees need to receive high-quality training on the company's safety policies and procedures, hazards they may be exposed to on the job, and safe work practices for protecting themselves against these hazards. Training must be in a language and vocabulary that workers can understand, and it must be provided to all workers, including temporary workers. Make sure to document training and keep track of when refresher training is necessary.

6 Measurable goals and accountability. Safety culture cannot take hold in an organization without clearly defined goals and reliable metrics for assessing success in achieving these goals. A combination of leading and lagging indicators provides the most complete picture of an organization's safety culture. Set challenging yet achievable safety goals and evaluate your progress toward those goals frequently, making adjustments as necessary. ◼

Tips and tactics for a stronger, more effective safety committee

Of course, you have a safety committee. But how effective is it? Does it satisfy a state requirement with minimal creativity or innovation? Is it your ticket to a discount on your workers' comp coverage? Or does it truly enhance your safety performance, giving employees at all levels an opportunity to lead and engage in the safety process?

What elements go into making a safety committee successful? This Compliance Report delivers reminders, tips, and best practices. Be sure to share the content with your committee and use it as a departure point for improvements at your site or company.

> " **A safety and health committee is an organizational structure where members represent a group, giving everyone a voice.**"

GIVING EVERYONE A VOICE

According to employment lawyer and safety professional Adele Abrams, a safety and health committee is "an organizational structure where members represent a group, giving everyone a voice." Committees aid and advise management and employees about safety and health pertaining to a plant or company operation.

An effective safety committee:

- Encourages safety awareness
- Has a large number of employees actively involved in the safety program
- Motivates employees to follow sound safety practices

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An effective employee safety structure provides a feedback mechanism to identify and correct new safety hazards at the earliest stage. Once the safety committee structure is in place and working well, it is a natural vehicle for employee involvement, preparation, and introduction of new safety efforts.

There are no federal requirements for safety committees in private sector workplaces. However, many states require them. In other states, employers may get a discount on their workers' compensation premiums if they have a safety committee in place.

Tasks can include:

- Monitoring
- Training
- Conducting investigations
- Developing innovative solutions to safety issues

Abrams emphasizes that a committee meeting is not a safety meeting where all employees or managers are present; rather, representatives are limited in number. At some sites, committee membership is strictly voluntary, while at other workplaces, management may recommend or volunteer employees for participation.

Committee membership and makeup vary greatly by size, structure, purpose, hazards, and the makeup of employees and managers. One study found that safety committees with a heavier concentration of hourly workers had lower injury and illness rates. Other research found that sites with a higher percentage of employees were found to have better rates.

DIVERSE BENEFITS

Safety committees can help achieve a variety of objectives, not all of which are directly related to worker protection. Among them:

- *Big picture.* Committees that represent all functions or departments allow the organization to take an overall look at safety requirements and foresee problems that might otherwise cause difficulties.

- *Sounding board.* The committee is a visible and approachable body for safety or health complaints, suggestions, etc.

- *Central coordination.* With management direction, much of the coordination of safety activities can be accomplished by the safety committee, which shares with management the responsibilities for implementing and monitoring the safety process.

WorkSafeMT, a nonprofit safety organization, describes a committee's purpose like this:

- To promote and maintain the interest of employees in health and safety issues

- To educate managers, supervisors, and employees through awareness and training activities for which they have primary responsibility

- To help make health and safety activities an integral part of the organization's operating procedures, cultures, and programs

- To provide an opportunity for the free discussion of health and safety problems and solutions

- To inform and educate employees and supervisors about health and safety issues, new standards, research, etc.

- To help reduce the risk of workplace injuries and illnesses

- To help ensure compliance with federal and state health and safety standards

Although there are many ways to measure the success of your committee (and your plan needs to spell these out), the following are basic levels of effectiveness:

- Meetings are consistently scheduled and held on a regular basis.

- Clear meeting agendas are created, published in advance, and followed.

- Minutes summarize the issues discussed, proposed action items, and the individuals responsible for follow-up on each item. Minutes are published and provided to each committee member and are made available to all employees.

- Members are required to attend all meetings, except in case of emergency. If a member cannot attend, an alternate is sent. Attendance is taken at each meeting and is recorded in the minutes. Some committees record and publish the names of members who did not attend, as well as those who did.

- The committee's accomplishments are publicized. Acknowledging success reinforces the effort of members and makes others want to be part of something positive.

- The efforts of individuals and groups throughout the organization that make significant contributions to the safety program are acknowledged.

DO THIS, NOT THAT

But in order to make a difference, a good safety committee has to go well beyond the basics. Like any effective organization, your safety committee needs a mission statement—a clear expression of management's goals and expectations for the group. A mission statement also provides the committee with guidelines that help it meet requirements. According to WorkSafeMT's *Best Practices for Workplace Safety Committees,* top leaders should attend safety committee meetings at least periodically, which demonstrates their interest in the safety program to both supervisors and employees. The committee should address legitimate safety issues only. Keep meetings from devolving into gripe sessions that accomplish nothing and lead to discord.

As for pitfalls, the workers' compensation carrier SFM points to 10 common safety committee mistakes.

- Roles are not clearly defined

- The committee is too big or too small

- New members are not adequately trained

- There is no formal meeting agenda

- Lack of follow-up on action items

- Inadequate communication

- Domination of the committee by management

- Lack of employee participation

- Inability to adapt to change

- Insufficient budget

CHECKING THE BOXES OR MOVING THE NEEDLE?

Minnesota OSHA has developed a self-evaluation checklist to identify areas of improvement for safety and health committees. We've provided an edited version of that document to help you assess your efforts.

- Are safety committee leaders elected by the committee?

- Are terms of service staggered so that at least one experienced member from labor and management is serving on the committee?

- Are efforts made to ensure that committee members represent the major work activities/departments of the site?

- Does the committee schedule regular meetings?

- Does the committee work from a written (and distributed) agenda?

- Are minutes maintained and made available to all employees?

- Are all reports, evaluations, and recommendations made part of the minutes?

- Does the committee have a system for collecting safety-related suggestions, hazard reports, or other information from frontline workers?

- Does the committee help the employer evaluate the employer's accident and illness prevention program?

- Does the committee make written recommendations to improve safety and health?

- Are there established procedures that allow the safety committee inspection team to identify safety and health hazards?

- Does the committee recommend ways for the employer to eliminate or correct hazards and unsafe work practices?

- Does the inspection team include employer and employee representatives?

- Does the committee inspection team document in writing the location of hazards and identify them?

- Are inspections of satellite locations done by the safety committee inspection team or by an individual designated at the location?

- Are there procedures to review safety and health inspection reports made by the committee? Based on the results of the review, does the committee make recommendations for occupational safety and health (OSH) improvements?

- Has the committee established procedures for investigating injuries, illnesses, fatalities, and near misses?

- Have the committee's purpose, operation, and rules been discussed with all members?

- Have committee members received appropriate training tailored to the site's operations and processes for hazard identification and accident investigation?

- Does management respond in a timely manner to recommendations? Is there a time frame established for responding to safety committee suggestions? ◼

Improving safety leadership

Because health and safety tend to operate alongside the hierarchical management structure of an organization, safety professionals may not think of themselves as leaders. But that doesn't mean that safety professionals can't implement the same leadership practices that company managers use to increase their effectiveness in the workplace.

The concept of safety leadership is much more developed abroad in Europe and Australia than it is in the United States. Let's take a look at some information you can put to immediate use.

BE A LEADER

Fortunately for health and safety professionals who are not managers in a strict sense—that is, having direct authority over a group of people directly involved in production or services—management and leadership are not the same thing. What's the difference between a manager and a leader?

Essentially, according to the Leadership and Worker Engagement Forum of Great Britain's Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the difference is one of vision versus execution.

- *Leaders* are capable of creating a vision, communicating their vision to others, and encouraging others to commit to their vision. That commitment gives rise to motivation, innovation, and adaptation that can help bring the vision about.

- *Managers* have a much more pragmatic function. Managers are responsible for planning, scheduling, resource allocation, and progress evaluation.

> **Leaders are capable of creating a vision, communicating their vision to others, and encouraging others to commit to their vision."**

Although it's possible for one individual to do both jobs, it's important to understand the difference between the two.

THE EFFECT OF GOOD LEADERSHIP

Skillful health and safety leadership has multiple benefits for an organization. The measurable impact of good leadership on your organization includes:

• *Building workers' safety knowledge.* Before workers can know it, you have to know it. If you're not up on the latest developments in your field; if you can't make the case that safe workers are more productive workers; or if you don't know how to properly analyze the hazards of the job, how are you going to pass that information along to them?

• *Strengthening workers' motivation.* If you don't care, why would they? Let your passion for safety and health—specifically, for your workers' safety and health—be an example for your employees. One of the things a leader does well is motivate others.

• *Increasing compliance with safety rules.* Workers who know more, and who are more motivated, will be better about complying with safety rules—so when you've laid the leadership groundwork, it organically gives rise to the outcome you're looking for.

• *Encouraging proactive safety behaviors.* Have you had a tough time in the past getting workers involved in proactive efforts like safety committee participation? Strong leadership that enhances workers' knowledge and strengthens workers' motivation will have a positive effect on these efforts, as well. ■

5 common safety strategy problems

Safety Culture 2018 keynote Shawn Galloway offers five common problems organizations need to overcome to improve both their safety planning and execution.

1. **Mostly buzzwords.** In many companies, there are phrases like "zero injuries," "employee engagement," "world-class safety performance," and "top tier" that appear to be empty, without meaning, and without a clear plan or road map to get there.

2. **Having a programmatic approach.** Rather than thinking through needs, process, and measurement, many organizations jump right into solutions, programs, and training. This results in safety efforts often being awkward fits for both the company and other business activities.

3. **Ignoring culture.** Efforts primarily focus on incident prevention without considering the gap between the desired and current culture. We know culture is why compliance and excellence efforts succeed or fail. Culture is the ultimate sustainability mechanism of a corporation.

4. **Focusing primarily on failing less.** Even if initiatives are well designed to achieve the desired improvement, they are not always carried out effectively and often lack process metrics to measure the effectiveness of the effort.

5. **Competing with the business strategy rather than ensuring fit and value-add.** Safety will never become a core value within a company culture until the safety strategy is aligned with and supports the business strategy rather than hindering or constricting it.

Find out how to overcome these shortfalls and fortify your safety culture at Safety Culture 2018, September 14–16 in Atlanta, GA. Visit SafetyCulture.BLR.com to learn more!

Conducting engaging and successful safety training

Employee training is both an essential feature of any workplace safety program and a constant challenge for safety professionals.

To find out more about effective safety training, BLR® talked with Jeffrey Dennis, a certified safety professional and president of Industrial Safety Solutions, Inc., a safety, environmental, and industrial hygiene consulting firm located in Birmingham, Alabama.

Technology has enhanced many aspects of safety training. Both external and in-house trainers use a variety of technologies with names like virtual education, Web-based training, and computer-based training. These platforms deliver training content by text, audio, streaming video, Internet, podcasts, and numerous other means.

But when it comes to live training, the sophistication of technology is not nearly as important as the trainer's ability to reach trainees on a personal level. A challenge for many safety professionals is that they become trainers by default without a fundamental understanding of how to teach and how adults learn. So even if the trainer is a certified safety professional, an industrial hygienist, or has other safety credentials, he or she may lack specific training know-how.

> **A challenge for many safety professionals is that they become trainers by default without a fundamental understanding of how to teach and how adults learn."**

PREPARATION IS KEY

"One of the major pitfalls people fall into is not placing enough emphasis on preparation," says Dennis. "Adult learners want to be able to immediately relate the subject you're talking about to their jobs and how it

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will help them. If you are unprepared, they will shut you out." It's not enough to know the content; unless you can present it effectively in a way that will appeal to different types of learners, the message won't come across, he adds. According to Dennis, preparation is a three-legged stool.

- **Leg 1: Identify Learning Objectives**
  These should be specific, measurable, and timely. Learning objectives give your audience a clear idea of what they're going to learn and how they will know they've learned it. Everything that follows (discussions, group exercises, activities, case studies, etc.) must directly support the learning objectives.

> **"Training is an investment. Every dollar you put into training is going to come back tenfold because employees know how to accomplish their tasks more safely and more efficiently."**

- **Leg 2: Solid Course Content**
  "This is very important with adult learners. If you lose your credibility with them or can't explain yourself, they're going to disengage." It's essential to have your facts straight, as everyone in the audience will likely have a phone in hand and can easily confirm facts via the Internet.

- **Leg 3: Logistics**
  Everything you learned in grade school about planning ahead still applies. Get to the training location before your students arrive and check that the room is set up correctly. Make sure your computer, projector, or other equipment is working, and have a solid Plan B in mind in case your electronics fail mid-session.

CONNECT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

Letting your personality shine through helps people engage with you and, as a result, engage with the content. Live training affords the opportunity to go off script by encouraging trainees to provide their own relevant stories, ideas, and viewpoints.

All this adds to the personal connection Dennis considers essential for training success.

- Mix things up. Take advantage of the fact that everyone's got a phone in his or her pocket and go to a relevant site or check out an app as part of the training.

- Don't lecture your trainees to death.

- Provide opportunities to apply the lessons, for example, by requiring breakout groups to come up with solutions to real safety problems in their industry.

- Develop a curriculum that reflects various learning styles, including visual, auditory, and tactile learning.

VALUE OF SAFETY TRAINING

"Training is an investment," says Dennis. "Every dollar you put into training is going to come back tenfold because employees know how to accomplish their tasks more safely and more efficiently."

Of course, beyond the obvious priority of keeping people from injury is the need for regulatory compliance. OSHA is increasingly interested in ensuring that employees have been effectively trained and that the training has been documented. Dennis advises, "OSHA wants to ask employees about training, and what they say better match what you've written and certified. If it doesn't, that's a big red flag." ■

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