

# Safety Alert



## Creating a Strong Safety Culture

A company's safety culture is a combination of the values, beliefs, perceptions, and behaviors shared by its personnel. Every company has a safety culture, whether it's intentional or not. In a strong safety culture, everyone feels responsible for safety and pursues it on a daily basis; employees go beyond the call of duty to identify unsafe conditions and behaviors. It's intentionally creating a continuous-improvement safety culture where co-workers look out for one another and point out unsafe behaviors to each other. As a result, a company with a strong safety culture typically experiences few at-risk behaviors, and consequently experiences lower accident rates, lower turn-over rates, lower absenteeism and higher productivity.



The culture that exists at your workplace didn't sprout overnight. It's a combination of myriad factors - from the attitudes of leadership to the style of local management - that have built up over the years.

If your safety culture is in need of attention, OSHA offers this checklist for creating a strong safety culture:

- Obtain top management "buy-in": Top leadership must be committed to this safety initiative.
- Continue building "buy-in": Accomplish this through buy in from management, employees and a union (if applicable).
- Build trust: This occurs as benefits from the initiative are achieved.
- Conduct self assessments/benchmarking: Compare your progress to other programs.
- Initial training: This can include safety and health training, as well as management, team building, hazard recognition or communication training.
- Establish a safety committee: This committee contains members of management, employees and the union (if applicable) with the common goal of improving workplace safety.
- Develop site safety vision: This includes policies, goals, measures, and strategic and operational plans.
- Align the organization: Establish a shared vision of safety and health goals and objectives vs. production.
- Define specific roles and responsibilities: Safety and health goals must be shared by everyone in the organization.
- Develop a system of accountability: Accountability becomes a duty, where everyone holds everyone accountable for safe practices.
- Develop measures: This includes an ongoing measurement and feedback system.
- Develop polices for recognition, rewards, incentives and ceremonies: Reward employees for their compliance and participation.
- Awareness training and kick-off: Share details of the incentive with the entire organization at a kick-off meeting.
- Implement process changes: This should include management, employees and a union (if applicable) using Total Quality Management (TQM).
- Continually measure performance, communicate results and celebrate successes: Share victories and maintain momentum. Keep everyone updated on progress.
- On-going support: Continue to build that momentum through reinforcement, feedback, reassessment, mid-course corrections and on-going training.

Contact us at 800-55-HELPS (800-554-3577) to learn more.