

SAFETY CULTURE

Techniques for Building Positive Organizational Change



A PUBLICATION OF MINNESOTA COUNTIES INTERGOVERNMENTAL TRUST

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INTRODUCTION



What Is Safety Culture and Why Is It Important?

Safety culture is not easy to define or measure. It is made up of both individual and group beliefs, attitudes, experiences and customs surrounding safety. A positive safety culture places a high level of importance on safety and is shared by a majority of the people within the workplace.

Safety culture can have a significant impact on an organization, either positive or negative, depending on the shared values, practices and attitudes about safety. The culture can influence productivity, morale, absenteeism, reputation and operational costs.

BENEFITS OF A POSITIVE SAFETY CULTURE

Every MCIT member entity should strive for a sustainable, positive safety culture. Putting initiatives in place to encourage every employee to become an engaged safety advocate can:

- Reduce injuries.
- Lower absenteeism and costs related to injuries.
- Increase productivity and morale.
- Help maintain a positive organizational reputation.

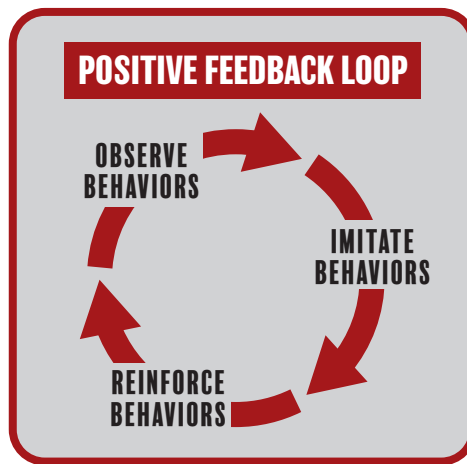
BUILDING A POSITIVE SAFETY CULTURE

Building a positive safety culture takes time. Focusing on creating an organizational commitment to safety, opening channels of communication and creating a solid base of safety literacy are steps to achieve that goal.

FEEDBACK LOOP OF SAFETY

Building an organization committed to safety must take into account that a culture operates on a feedback loop. A feedback loop is a process in which the end products of an action cause more of that action to occur. This amplifies the original action.

Positive safety cultures create a positive feedback loop in which individuals feel a connection to safety throughout the organization and act in a safe manner, making ongoing safety improvements.



Others see this behavior and are encouraged to imitate it. This perpetuates safe behaviors and a positive safety culture.

In a negative safety culture, individuals learn that safety may be spoken of highly, but the true value of safety falls below other workplace goals, such as productivity or cost savings. As employees learn how the work is actually performed, they change to the realities of the workplace.

Behaviors, therefore, often begin to mirror the environment and create and reinforce the problematic culture again.

To foster a positive safety culture, support at all levels of the organization is required. Leadership (board members, administrators, executive directors) needs to be active in addressing safety concerns, rather than giving lip service to slogans or mission statements, such as "safety first." Therefore, sincerity and encouragement of safety often begin at the top leadership levels and then extend downward.

SAFETY LITERACY

Safety literacy among all levels of employees is key to creating and maintaining a positive safety culture. To identify safe or unsafe working conditions and behaviors and to understand safety expectations, individuals require a basic understanding of safety and its rules. Remember the idea of what is safe can differ from person to person based on his or her perceptions and tolerance of risk.

Managers should clearly understand and articulate to employees safe work practices and safety rules. Supervisors need to explain these rules to staff during trainings or daily work interactions.

This ensures that everyone has the same definition of "safe" for the work area or task. Ongoing and regular reinforcement of safe working practices is crucial.

For further support, managers and interested employees should be consulted and empowered by top leadership to

contribute to safe work practices in their areas.

Staff should be encouraged to report safety hazards without fear of reprisal. Leadership should take those reports seriously and respond promptly to make safety improvements. This demonstrates that leadership is committed to providing a safe work environment.

USING THIS RESOURCE

This publication is broken into three concepts that contribute to a positive safety culture.

- 1. Foundational elements** are important to building a positive safety culture. The Chapter 1 assessment helps identify policies, procedures and measures already in place. Using this data, leadership can identify those areas that could use more attention. Chapter 2 focuses on creating an organizationwide, visible commitment to safety, opening lines of communication and bolstering safety programs. These foundational elements make it easier for other initiatives to find a solid footing upon which to build.
- 2. Pillars of safety** reflect the Minnesota AWAIR (an accident and injury reduction) program and provide ideas to help reduce injury, often with the collaboration of employees. Even if the foundational elements are not fully in place, the ideas and programs in these chapters can help to reduce incidents and injuries.
- 3. Safety culture tools** can be used by safety committee, those in charge of safety and managers to boost awareness, bolster commitment and encourage communication about safety.

Most chapters include a “Going Further” section, which provides ways to incorporate other topics from this publication to enhance the use of that chapter’s safety culture concept.

Member Improves Culture and Outcomes

For several years, Aitkin County Land Department (ACLD) employees experienced numerous injuries, many of them severe. The ACLD injuries eventually accounted for the majority of injuries throughout the county. As these injuries peaked during the busy summer season, management took action.

Department managers began safety meetings with field staff. These weekly trainings often involved a safety video and discussions about safety hazards or near misses experienced by the staff. Employees also used the meetings to plan for the coming weeks.

Measurable Results

Initially many questioned the usefulness of the program, but after a few weeks, employees began offering suggestions for changes. Some of these involved purchases of safer equipment, but more often the proposals were cost free, such as reorganization of the workshop, cleanup of clutter, assigning of task responsibility and staff organization.

Management took these concerns and suggestions; implemented several corrective actions; and empowered employees to help design policies and procedures, and propose better types of personal protective equipment.

In the first season of implementing these changes, ACLD employees had no serious injuries. Despite the busy season and concerns about these trainings affecting productivity, the initiative was followed and the work was completed in a timely manner. Furthermore, keeping all employees safe at work reduced overtime and need to find time and resources to train new employees.

Employees were also able to focus on their work responsibilities without having to worry about taking on additional duties of an injured co-worker.

Because of the success of this program, ACLD continued its safety efforts and had positive results in following years.

Focus on Safety Is Key

This example demonstrates how through managers’ initiative and sincere commitment, along with employees’ support, the culture of safety can be influenced by giving people an opportunity and venue to discuss safety and safety hazards. In many ways, the safety videos or topics were less important than the emphasis and focus on safety, and the opportunity and encouragement for employees to think about, report and offer potential solutions for workplace hazards.

Consequences of a Negative Safety Culture

In January 1986, over Cape Canaveral, Fla., the space shuttle Challenger lifted off. It carried seven crew members and, like other shuttle launches, was broadcast live throughout the United States. Having suffered numerous delays and setbacks in the launch, and receiving increased pressure from the government and the public, NASA authorized the launch.



An accident 73 seconds after space shuttle Challenger liftoff claimed both crew and vehicle. Photo credit: NASA

Seventy-three seconds after liftoff, the launch vehicle exploded, killing all seven crew members as millions of Americans watched.

It was later revealed that O-ring seals in joints of the solid rocket booster engines failed in the cold temperatures of the launch. Many engineers and others had alerted NASA administrators and the O-ring manufacturers of the hazard prior to the launch. In fact, the defect was known as early as 1977, nine years before the disaster. However, the launch was authorized despite this information.

In a separate tragedy on April 20, 2010, the Deepwater Horizon oil rig conducted drilling operations on the Macondo Prospect in the Gulf of Mexico. The operation was six weeks behind schedule and \$58 million over budget.

Then a blowout occurred and ignited, killing 11 crew members. The resulting disaster spilled approximately 5 million barrels of oil into the Gulf of Mexico, creating the largest ecological disaster in American history.

Because of the delays, cost overages and complacency, myriad factors emerged that led to the blowout and subsequent fire and oil spill. The predominant root cause was found to be poor management decision making and communication.

Management consistently chose riskier alternatives to standard industry practices. The alternatives saved time and money; however, management neglected to conduct risk assessments to evaluate if

those options were safe. The alternatives were not properly communicated to key oil rig personnel or contractors, resulting in untrained crews conducting dangerous work with unfamiliar equipment.

Culture Contribute to Tragedies

Today these tragedies are often used to describe the dangers of groupthink (putting the progress of the group

before individual concerns) and complacency, but they also illustrate the consequences of a negative safety culture.

As a member of the Challenger disaster investigation panel, renowned physicist Richard Feynman was outspoken of critical flaws in NASA's safety culture. This included the lack of effective communication between engineers and management, which led to the misrepresentation of the shuttle's dangers. Feynman successfully argued that NASA had to suspend operations and undergo a major overhaul to resolve its internal inconsistencies.

The Deepwater Horizon situation is also the result of a negative safety culture, where management chose cost and time saving alternatives over tried and true methods without assessing the potential risks associated with those alternatives.

This culture of putting public relations and/or profits ahead of safety, combined with ineffective leadership and complacency led to the deaths of both the Challenger and Deepwater Horizon crew members.

Although these are extreme examples of the negative consequences of a poor safety culture, they exemplify the importance of striving for a positive safety culture within an organization. A negative safety culture can limit employee input and disregard safety in favor of other goals. However, positive safety culture can help reduce injuries and costs, create a more positive work environment and improve employee morale and public perception.

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS



CHAPTER 1

Safety Culture Assessment

Safety culture has numerous components, many of which are subjective or vary from person to person, such as attitudes, leadership, experience, beliefs, accountability, etc. This makes it difficult to assess an organization's safety culture. However, tangible and measurable activities exist in every organization that can be used to evaluate its safety culture.

The following assessment assists in evaluating the strength of an organization’s safety culture and identifies areas that need improvement. The assessment should be conducted at the beginning of safety culture building efforts. Consider periodic reassessment to measure changes to the safety culture.

This assessment should be completed by the safety committee, safety professional and/or a person

charged with safety. Having more than one person complete the assessment may provide a more accurate reflection of the organization’s safety culture.

For each statement, give it a rank on a scale of 1 to 3 (rarely to usually). Statements that receive a low score indicate areas where the organization can focus efforts to improve and thereby build a more positive safety culture.

COMMITMENT TO SAFETY	Rarely/No 1	Sometimes 2	Usually/Yes 3
There is a written safety mission statement and/or vision statement.			
The safety mission and/or vision statement is communicated to and understood by employees.			
The governing board has passed a resolution or released a statement affirming its commitment to safety.			
Those with responsibility for safety have the authority and resources to accomplish their goals.			
Job descriptions include expectations for working safely.			
Safety expectations are included in new hire orientation.			
Safety is addressed in performance reviews.			
All employees are expected to participate in safety training.			
There is a commitment to safety at all levels of the organization.			

COMMUNICATION	Rarely/No 1	Sometimes 2	Usually/Yes 3
Employees discuss safety issues with supervisors.			
Employees discuss safety issues with other employees.			
Employee feedback is used in the creation of safety procedures, job hazard analyses, etc.			
The procedure for reporting safety hazards and concerns is simple.			
When an employee reports a hazard, there is timely follow through and feedback given to that employee.			
Supervisors and department heads set clear safety expectations, solicit feedback, actively listen to employee suggestions, give constructive feedback and refrain from blame when an incident occurs.			
Supervisors include safety topics in their group meetings with employees.			

SAFETY PROGRAMS	Rarely/No 1	Sometimes 2	Usually/Yes 3
All levels of the organization execute their roles and responsibilities in regard to safety.			
All required safety programs/policies are followed and compliant with state and federal standards.			
Enforcement of safety procedures is applied consistently according to the organization's policies.			
Processes and procedures are in place to recognize hazards on the job and quickly remedy those hazards and injuries.			

SAFETY PROGRAMS CONTINUED	Rarely/No 1	Sometimes 2	Usually/Yes 3
Supervisors are trained about accident investigation best practices.			
All injuries and near misses are formally reported and investigated to determine the true (root) causes, and remedies are implemented and reviewed.			
Safety committees meet at least quarterly, review incidents and safety concerns, and bring recommendations to authorized parties for action.			
Safety committee members are actively engaged and use their position to advocate for safety and serve as the safety liaison for their respective departments (serving as a communication conduit between departments and the committee).			
Safety programs are reviewed annually and revised if needed.			

FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS



CHAPTER 2

Foundations of a Safety Culture

It takes time, resources and dedication to establish a positive safety culture. The goal is to create a working environment where every employee believes safety is important in all aspects of their jobs, strive to work safely and look out for the safety of co-workers.

A solid foundation is required on which to be successful in implementing a positive safety culture.

A strong foundation for safety culture displays three characteristics:

1. Support and commitment from top decision makers within the organization.
2. Open lines of communication between employees and management.
3. Safety programs tailored to the organization.

SUPPORT AND COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

A solid foundation starts with a commitment to safety. It is important that all levels of the organization, including the board and administration, demonstrate this. Efforts to improve safety culture are most effective when top management supports and promotes safety initiatives.

The word “culture” implies a shared set of values, beliefs and goals. Sustainable change requires everyone’s support. Leadership, especially the board, sets the standard and expectation of behavior within an organization. When the board clearly shows that safety is a priority, employees are more willing to support it.

To demonstrate leadership’s commitment to safety, consider implementation of the following:

- **Include safety in an organizational mission statement and/or statement of vision.** If the organization has a mission statement or statement of vision, consider adding an item regarding the organization’s commitment to safety. The statement should clearly define the

expectations for everyone in the organization. Including safety in the mission and/or vision statement communicates to employees and the public the importance and value that the organization places on safety, and guides future safety policies and programs. Likewise, each safety committee should have a mission and/or vision statement supporting its goals and expectations.

- **Consider a board resolution.** A resolution made during a board meeting sends a strong, public message about the board’s commitment to protect the health and safety of employees, the organization’s property and those who use its facilities. A board resolution communicates to staff that safety is a priority for everyone in the organization. It also tells constituents that the organization is mindful of their tax dollars, which can enhance the entity’s reputation.

In the absence of a mission or vision statement, a board resolution signals the organization’s commitment to building a safety culture. The resolution should detail action items and describe the responsibilities of everyone in the organization to promote safety. A sample board resolution is provided in the Appendix.

- **Empower safety champions.** Ensure that those who are tasked with overseeing safety have the authority and resources to accomplish their goals. Safety committees should have clear understanding of the process to escalate recommendations to someone in authority who can address them and return a timely response. When practical and appropriate, consider recognizing individuals who stand out as champions for a safe work environment.

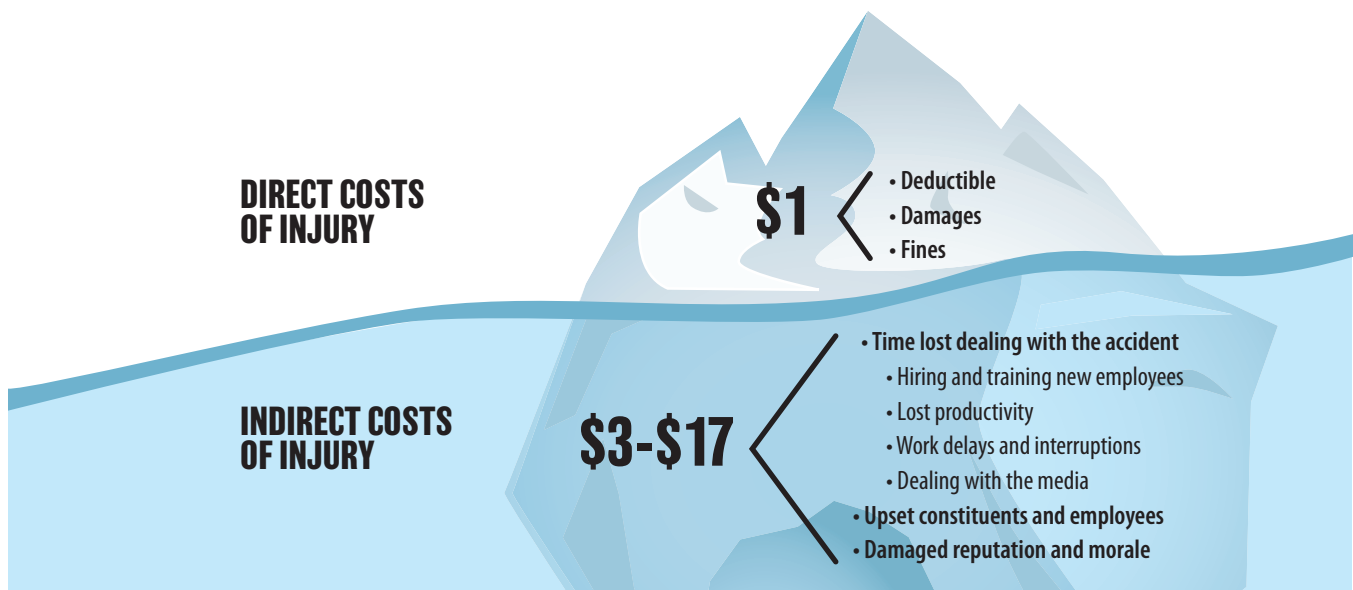
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Safety Metrics

Choosing the right metrics to evaluate employee safety is vital. These metrics should focus on activities leading to safety rather than accident rates or injuries. Any safety disciplinary actions should be included, but the majority of metrics should include items such as attendance at safety trainings, number of audits and corrective actions performed, prompt and detailed reporting of accidents or near misses, participa-

tion in investigations, observations of safe behavior or other similar items.

If the performance review focuses on negatives, such as injuries or days away from work, this could prevent employees from reporting injuries or make employees feel penalized for being injured. This focus on negatives can actually damage a safety culture.



- **Include safety as a requirement for hiring.**

Job descriptions should reference safety expectations. These expectations should be discussed during the job interview and again during employee onboarding. Setting clear expectations at the beginning of employment is a good method to establish culture, but these expectations must match the reality of work. (See Appendix for examples.)

- **Include safety as a part of performance reviews.**

This enforces expectations set forth in the hiring process and job duties. This can improve engagement and accountability to help reward those for safe behavior. When making safety part of a performance review, it is important to establish some types of safety metrics to evaluate the employee objectively. See “Safety Metrics” on page 10 for more information.

- **Set the expectation for employees to attend safety training and other safety activities.**

At a minimum, all employees should be required to attend Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) mandated trainings. Attendance at other training events, such as defensive driving, resiliency, etc., should be encouraged, as well as participation in audits, hazard reporting, incident investigations and other safety-related activities. Organizations with a positive safety culture encourage training and provide staff time and resources for it.

- **Inform administration and the board about safety culture.**

Gaining the support of top level decision makers is key to demonstrating that safety is a priority for the organization and for leadership. Emphasize that a positive safety culture can:

- ♦ **Improve overall morale and productivity:**

A positive safety culture requires communication and engagement throughout the organization. Showing employees that they are cared for and valued members of the team goes a long way toward improving morale. Positive morale contributes to reduced employee turnover and helps recruit quality candidates. Retaining engaged, skilled employees tends to help improve the level of services provided by the organization.

- ♦ **Provide tangible benefits with minimal investment of time and resources:**

Board members who personally participate in activities can contribute to a positive safety culture: attending safety committee meetings, recognizing safe employees and attending occasional safety-related events. Other activities include resources for safety initiatives and providing time for the safety committee and others to do their jobs. It is imperative that leadership support continued momentum for this effort.

- ♦ **Result in cost savings:**

Workplace injuries are costly (see graphic above). The direct costs of injuries are relatively easy to calculate and primarily include damages, deductibles and regulatory fines. Injuries also have indirect costs, such as increased stress; impact on morale; and time spent managing the claim, return to work efforts or training other employees. Indirect costs are just beneath the surface and harder to measure, but most estimates suggest that indirect costs greatly surpass direct costs by as much as three to 17 times.*



Introduction to Safety Culture Training Session

The Power Point training session "Building a Positive Safety Culture" is available to download at MCIT.org/work-wisely/ and is designed to be presented to board members, department heads and others. It explains the concept of a safety culture and its importance to an organization.

The training can be given by individuals within the organization or by an MCIT loss control consultant. Members are encouraged to contact their loss control consultant toll-free at 1.866.547.6516.

- ♦ **Reap great benefits from money, time and resources devoted to safety.** Often many of these initiatives can be implemented at little or no cost. Numerous studies have shown that safety investments can return anywhere from \$2 to \$4.41 in recognized savings per \$1 spent on safety.** Because safety culture is so inclusive of all safety matters within an organization, it is worth investing in a positive safety culture.

OPEN COMMUNICATION

A clearly defined commitment to safety is just part of the foundation from which to build a positive safety culture. Effective communication is another foundational element. Employees should be engaged and feel confident to discuss safety issues. Communication that is freely exchanged and is sincerely considered among all levels of staff and leadership is vital to developing, sustaining and improving a positive safety culture.

To create a foundation for improved communication, an employer should consider the following.

Develop an open and free line of communication between employees and management. This can be challenging to do; however, some tips to encourage this are:

- **Review or create reporting procedures for incidents, near misses and other hazards.** Whether recorded on paper or electronically, employees should be trained to use these reporting tools and not feel nervous when doing so. There should never be shame or blame when reporting an injury or hazard.
 - ♦ Reporting processes should be simple and varied. The easier it is to inform others about safety issues, the better. Paper forms are commonly used, but e-mail or even verbal reporting should also be encouraged. Consideration should be given to an anonymous method to report hazards.
- **Encourage employees to communicate** with supervisors, department heads, safety committee members, union representatives and each other. Having multiple people with whom to speak regarding safety hazards or concerns helps foster communication. Procedures should be in place to forward these concerns to the appropriate individual(s) for follow up.
- **Follow up on reports of hazards in a timely manner.** Advise the reporting employee of receipt of the report. Update the employee when the hazard has been acted upon and what was done. This feedback demonstrates that the process is working and worth the effort of the employee to report situations. If follow-up communication is sporadic or absent, employees can feel it is not worth the effort to report.
- **Be sincere.** If employers ask employees to come forward to mention safety hazards or offer tips to improve safe work hab-

its, managers should take their ideas seriously and make an honest effort to address the hazards or concerns. The goal is to empower each employee to become a safety advocate. If their concerns are taken lightly or are met with disapproval or disbelief, employees will think twice about coming forward in the future.

Improve leadership's communication. Supervisors and department heads contribute to the creation of good relationships. Some of the ways leaders can build and sustain good relationships with staff are:

- Setting clear expectations
- Providing feedback in a timely manner
- Acknowledging good work
- Actively listening
- Seeking to understand problems/issues rather than blaming
- Following through on commitments
- Removing road-blocks
- Asking for feedback

Focusing on providing training opportunities for developing these skills is vital to improving communication. MCIT members are encouraged to reach out to Sand Creek, the Employee Assistance Program administrator, for coaching suggestions (no fee) or organizational development or training (a fee may apply).



SAFETY PROGRAMS

Another key foundation upon which to build a positive safety culture is a strong safety program. The safety program encompasses the policies, procedures and practices for improving and maintaining a safe workplace. Employees should know their roles and responsibilities regarding safety. They should feel competent in performing their tasks and working within their equipment in a safe manner.

Safety programs should reflect the work actually being performed. They should adhere to safety standards (OSHA, American National Standards Institute (ANSI), etc.), as well as draw upon the unique work tasks of the affected employees.

To help tailor safety programs to the work being performed, employees and supervisors should be an essential part of the creation, review and updating of these programs. They best understand the work they do. Consulting with employees regarding the safety program also gives a sense of ownership in the process and increases safety engagement.

An organization's overall safety program is typically made up of individual policies and programs, such as employee right to know, blood borne pathogens, respirator use, etc.

These components should be reviewed

Compliance-focused Safety Programs

Many safety programs are mandated by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) or state regulations. As a result, safety programs are often created with the objective of simply complying with regulations and preventing fines. Although compliance is important, the primary intent of regulations is to keep employees safe.

Focusing on compliance may signal to employees that the organization is only concerned with preventing fines. This perception, regardless of its truth, often limits engagement and communication within the organization.

at least annually to ensure any changes in procedures or new hazards are addressed.

One component program, the AWAIR (a workplace accident and injury reduction) program, acts as the umbrella over all other components. It lays out how safety will be delivered within an organization and forms a framework for how all safety programs and policies work together to keep employees safe.

Emphasis should be placed on having an effective AWAIR program. Essential components of an AWAIR program (see below) should reflect organizational goals and procedures, and be routinely reviewed.

- 1. Roles and responsibilities for safety:** All levels of the organization from board members to employees have roles and responsibilities regarding safety. These should accurately spell out the expectations for board members, managers and employees.
- 2. Hazard identification:** The AWAIR program requires that there are processes in place to identify workplace hazards. Regular department self-audits, third-party inspections, creation of job hazard analyses should be detailed and followed.
- 3. Communication:** This section should outline expectations for safety training and other related communications. This could encompass OSHA-required trainings down to department training expectations, such as use of short safety talks often referred to as tool box talks. Injury and near miss reporting procedures should be included.
- 4. Incident investigation:** Every incident should be investigated to find their root causes and implement corrective actions to prevent future injury. The procedures and responsibilities for investigations should be outlined in this section of the safety program. Chapter 4 explains components of an effective incident investigation process.

5. Enforcement: This section should detail how the organization monitors and responds to unsafe behaviors and practices. These procedures should be evenly applied consistently within the organization.

6. Program review: Safety programs should be reviewed at least annually to capture changes in job tasks, procedures or exposures.

7. Safety committee: Every employer in Minnesota with 25 or more employees is required to create a joint management and labor safety committee that meets at least quarterly.** This section of the AWAIR program should detail the committee's structure, its responsibilities and procedures for recommendations and follow through. Chapter 3 details many practices for an effective safety committee.

SOLID FOUNDATION STRENGTHENS SAFETY CULTURE

With a solid foundation in place, other elements can better be implemented to strengthen the organization's safety culture. The following chapters describe pillars of culture that deserve attention based upon the components of the AWAIR program.

The remainder of the publication provides tools that can be used to encourage communication, engagement and a commitment to safety. These tools can contribute to making each employee a safety advocate, which can be helpful in further developing elements of a strong safety culture.

*Source: "Journey to Safety Excellence: The Business Case for Investment in Safety—A Guide for Executives," National Safety Council (NSC.org)

**There are exceptions to this model.

More About AWAIR

More information about AWAIR programs and policies are available at the Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry website: DLI.mn.gov.

SAFETY CULTURE PILLAR



CHAPTER 3

Safety Committees

Safety committees are made up of management and labor representatives from multiple departments within an organization to address issues related to safety. These committees are required by Minnesota statute for employers with 25 or more employees. Safety committees may review employee work-related injuries and near misses, safety hazards, incident investigations and safety programs. The committee may develop and follow through with corrective actions, promote safety training or carry out safety initiatives. Each member of the committee should act as a safety liaison within his or her own department.

SAFETY COMMITTEES SUPPORT SAFETY CULTURE

An active and effective safety committee can be a crucial leader in the development of a positive safety culture. It can open lines of safety communication within the organization and demonstrate a commitment to safety.

To help foster communication and employee engagement, a safety committee should consider adopting the following best practices:

- **Create a yearly calendar** with meeting dates and times. Scheduling meetings well in advance gives committee members notice and reduces the chance of absenteeism. The calendar can also highlight committee activities, such as safety initiatives, departmental safety audits, yearly self-assessments, newsletter topics and other key information.
- **Do not cancel meetings** unless an extreme circumstance arises. There should always be something to discuss at a safety committee meeting. Canceling meetings undermines the importance of the committee and can signal a wavering commitment to safety.



Required Safety Committees

Safety committees are required for all public or private organizations with 25 or more employees under Minnesota Statutes, Section 182.676. A safety committee should meet at least quarterly, but given the safety exposures from their wide variety of operations, members should consider meeting every two months or even monthly.

Some MCIT members have created additional safety committees, each focused on a single department, such as highway or law enforcement, so discussions can address hazards specific to that area.

- **Create a mission statement and bylaws** that define the committee's purpose, composition, procedures and responsibilities. The committee should review the bylaws annually and amend as needed.
- **Train new safety committee members** about their responsibilities and expectations as part of membership on the committee. Training should be considered for topics such as hazard identification, incident investigation, and other health and safety-related information.
- **Members should be expected to act as safety liaisons** to their departments. Members should take ideas and concerns from their departments to the committee, as well as update the department on key topics discussed at the meeting.
- **Committee members should have alternates.** They can join a meeting if the assigned member cannot attend, ensuring better participation at each meeting. Alternates can play a role in committee continuity when members' terms end.
- **Review employee injuries, incident investigations, near misses and new hazards** that have happened since the last meeting. These should all be discussed to identify the true (root) cause(s) and recommend or take corrective actions to reduce the

chance of future injuries. Discussions must take into account the privacy of individuals and not identify employees involved in the incidents.

- **Conduct departmental safety audits.** Each member of the committee should walk through his or her department looking for potential safety exposures. This can be done individually or with a small team. The frequency of the audits should be determined by the committee but should be added to the calendar to encourage completion.

The findings from these audits should be addressed at the next safety committee meeting. Hazards not addressed should be added to a plan of action to determine how to remedy the hazard. Plans of action should be reviewed at each meeting until the hazard is mitigated. A checklist for typical office hazards can be found in “Discussion Items and Resources for Safety Committees” (at *MCIT.org*). This checklist can be tailored to individual departments.

- **Take a leadership role in the review of the organization’s safety programs.** At a minimum, the written AWAIR (a workplace accident and incident reduction) program should be reviewed annually to ensure that it accurately details how work is performed safely throughout the organization. Given that the safety committee is made up of representatives from several departments, it is the ideal group to review and update the responsibilities, procedures and details laid out in the organization’s safety programs/policies.
- **Encourage participation or representation from leadership.** Having a board member or administrator on the committee demonstrates the organization’s commitment to safety and can guide the committee’s discussions and courses of action from a budgetary or administrative point of view. (See page 18 for more about this.)
- **Publish committee minutes.** Each committee should designate a secretary or share the responsibility of taking minutes at each meeting. Minutes can be posted to break room bulletin boards, on the intranet or in the employee newsletter, for example, to detail discussions and actions of the committee that affect employee safety.

- **Create an expectation for committee members to promote safety initiatives and activities.** This could be as simple as hanging slip, trip and fall awareness posters in the committee member’s own department or changing themed table tents in the break room. Other activities or initiatives could include an audit of first-aid kits, monthly automated external defibrillator power reviews, checking emergency action readiness kits or creating an awareness display during National Fire Safety week.

GOING FURTHER WITH SAFETY COMMITTEES

Whenever possible, the organization’s leadership should promote the activities of the safety committee. Every employee should know who the committee members are and the committee’s actions. This opens lines of communication and demonstrates a visible commitment to safety on behalf of the organization. This can help recruit interested and engaged safety-minded employees for the committee in the future.

Safety committees have a number of tools to carry out safety initiatives. Regular (e.g., weekly, every other week, monthly) e-mails can be sent from the committee to all employees on a safety topic. Newsletters or the organization’s intranet could include a safety corner regularly updated with topical information. Posters, handouts, table tents, displays and surveys are some of the tools that can be used by committee members to further safety awareness.

“ Whenever possible, the organization’s leadership should promote the activities of the safety committee. ”

RESOURCES

- Minnesota Statutes, Section 182.676
- Minnesota Administrative Rules Chapter 5208 regarding accident and injury reduction program
- “Discussion Items and Resources for Safety Committees”: MCIT.org/safety-committees/

Officials Bring Value to Safety Committees

Some of the most effective safety committees include board members. Having elected officials on the committee reinforces the importance of the safety committee. It also demonstrates that top decision makers are committed to safety within the organization.

In addition to bringing an organizationwide perspective to the committee, a board member can observe and take part in the safety process.

Officials' Insights Boost Proposals' Chances of Success

Elected officials' knowledge of budget and entity procedures can be invaluable when formulating safety recommendations and proposals. The board member's input can give the safety committee's recommendation a greater chance of success.

An example of this occurred when a county safety audit revealed that an I.T. room was protected by a low hanging wet-pipe sprinkler system. The room contained all of the electronic equipment for dispatch and law enforcement communications. If a sprinkler head were to be bumped or damaged, it could release water and destroy the electronics, costing tens of thousands of dollars, as well as hindering vital services.

To replace the sprinkler system with an alternative was a large expense. With a commissioner on the safety committee, it was able to work through the reasoning and planning for this significant investment. Had the commissioner not been involved, the request for an expensive upgrade to the



fire sprinkler system may not have been approved.

Ask Officials to Participate

Although safety committees may think that elected officials have no interest in serving on the committee, they may be surprised.

Take for example, Cook County Commissioner Heidi Doo-Kirk. When she first was elected, she inquired how they could get healthier choices in the vending machines and was told to approach the safety committee, so she attended a meeting.

Doo-Kirk says, "I learned that [the safety committee does] so much more! I asked why they didn't have a commissioner on the committee and was told that they didn't think there was interest. I asked if I could join. The rest is history. I have been a member for six or seven years."

It would be great if elected officials came to the safety committee looking to learn how they can be involved with the organization's safety efforts.

To help further participation of elected officials, safety committees should take the initiative to invite them to join and explain how their involvement can improve the safety, operations and bottom line of the organization.

Commissioners Support Safety

County commissioners who participate in safety committees find their experience valuable for them and the organization as a whole. Here's what a few commissioners have to say about their safety committee participation.

"Having a safety committee isn't just good for the health and safety of employees, but helps with the bottom line by reducing cost. I support the Winona County Safety Committee as a county commissioner because it helps me understand how safety affects our budgets and ability to get things done."

—Chris Meyer, Winona County Commissioner

"With management being involved [in the safety committee], it helps to be able to bring the results back to the county board in the form of reporting how it is helping reduce workplace injuries and may even help with the number and cost of workers' compensation claims and premiums."

—Marc Prestby, Fillmore County Commissioner

"Being a part of the safety committee shows you care. My role as liaison between the board and committee has also helped move safety projects forward in a more efficient manner."

—Jeff Docken, Rice County Commissioner

SAFETY CULTURE PILLAR



CHAPTER 4

Safety Audits

Audits, or walkthroughs, refer to walking through a facility or department periodically and checking for safety hazards. These hazards can then be noted and corrected.

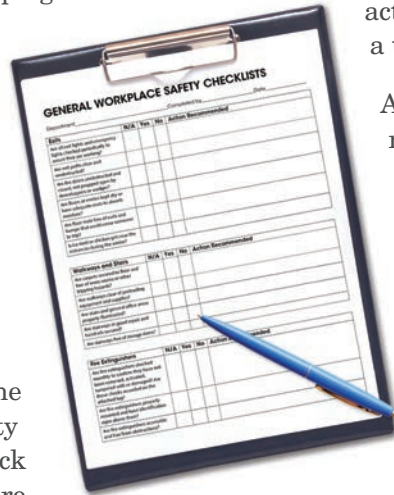
The audit process can be done individually or as a group, formally or informally. Informal audits can take place every day with a quick check for hazards, whereas formal audits tend to go deeper and may involve a small team.

Audits are typically conducted by supervisors, safety committee members, facility management staff, safety coordinators and/or a third party, such as an MCIT loss control consultant.

BENEFITS OF SAFETY AUDITS

Conducting periodic audits serves many functions:

- **Reduction of workplace hazards.** To be efficient, there must be procedures in place to remedy the hazards once found. Accountability and follow through are vital.
- **Increase visibility of the organization's commitment to safety.** Employees see the efforts of other staff members to create a safer workplace. It increases the presence of safety committee members or other safety-related staff. It can open up communication with staff who may have a specific safety concern.
- **Generate data to help evaluate the effectiveness of safety initiatives.** For example, a winter slip, trip and fall awareness campaign can be evaluated using injury or near miss data, but regular audits can also determine if proactive measures are being taken: rugs flattened, water at entries mopped up, walkways cleared, etc.
- **Help target future safety initiatives.** Analyzing the data from audits can often identify areas that could benefit from some form of targeted awareness: safety campaign, safety discussion (Quick Take on Safety or toolbox talk), procedural review, etc.



GOING FURTHER

Audits and walkthroughs are commonly aided with the use of checklists that can help focus attention on common hazards. However, checklists do not always identify all possible hazards. Customizing checklists or other hazard identification tools to include

RESOURCES

- General Workplace Safety Checklists available in the “Discussion Items and Resources for Safety Committees”: MCIT.org/safety-committees/
- Safety topic checklists available at the end of each chapter in the “Loss Prevention Best Practices Guides” for public works, solid waste management and facility management: MCIT.org/resource/

specifics for the location or tasks performed can help address this shortcoming.

Additional forms, such as action item follow-up forms, can be helpful for assigning corrective actions to appropriate individuals to assure a timely remedy to identified hazards.

Audits should be reviewed at safety committee meetings. The data generated from audits can be helpful in creating goals or safety campaigns. Safety committee members can also be assigned work areas to walk through and bring back findings to the committee. Safety committees, managers or other appropriate personnel may also need to be involved to ensure that follow-up activities are carried out in a timely manner.

As noted previously, the information gathered in these audits should be analyzed. Often, the audit will present an opportunity to utilize another safety culture tool detailed in this publication. Certain identified hazards may best be addressed by increasing employee awareness through use of a safety campaign, posters, e-mails, etc. Sometimes, a timely discussion by a supervisor (Quick Take on Safety or toolbox talk) or other training may be appropriate.

Quarterly Safety Audits May Be Required

Under A Workplace Accident Injury Reduction (AWAIR) Program Minnesota Administrative Rules 5208.0040, members are required to conduct quarterly safety audits if the workers' compensation experience modification factor is 1.4 or greater.

The experience modification factor, also known as a mod rate, takes into account past claim history and influences the contribution amount for workers' compensation coverage.

SAFETY CULTURE PILLAR



CHAPTER 5

Reporting and Investigating Incidents

When an employee is off work due to a work-related illness or injury, this loss often affects the entire team. Although the direct costs of an injury are typically easier to calculate, there are often many indirect costs that affect the organization as well. Co-workers must disrupt their own work duties to fill the absence. Managers' time is spent on incident paperwork, delays and the need to hire and train extra help. Property may be damaged and in need of replacement. In addition, the stress stemming from the incident can decrease employee morale and productivity. It is in everybody's best interest to work to eliminate employee injuries. Encouraging incident, hazard and near-miss reporting and having a strong incident investigation process is one way to do this.

INCIDENT INVESTIGATION

Incidents resulting in an injury are required to be investigated by Minnesota state statute in the a workplace accident and injury reduction (AWAIR) program. Beyond complying with the law, a well-coordinated and timely incident investigation process can reduce the negative consequences from a work injury and promote a more positive safety culture.

INVESTIGATION: MORE THAN A CLAIM REPORT

It is worth remembering that an investigation is more than reporting an injury or incident for workers' compensation. Investigations focus on preventing future incidents by addressing the hazards that caused the incident. Organizations that conduct thorough investigations and correct the underlying causes demonstrate care for the well-being of employees and a commitment to health and wellness. This commitment goes a long way toward boosting employee morale, advancing safety culture and improving the work atmosphere in general.

All incident investigations must examine the facts and not presume guilt or assign blame. Employees should feel

like they can participate in the process and not fear retaliation. If employees fear reprisal or believe the investigation is about assigning blame, it can negatively affect the safety culture of an organization by making employees distrust the process and limit future engagement (e.g., not reporting incidents, witnesses not cooperating in investigations).

To ensure that an organization has a strong incident investigation process, consideration should be given to implementing the following best practices.

PRIOR TO INJURIES

- Supervisors, human resources staff and safety coordinators should be trained on how to conduct incident investigations. This includes utilizing the proper forms and/or documentation, applying root cause analysis, and understanding the importance of focusing on facts rather than assigning blame and guilt (see “Incident Root Cause Analysis” on page 26).
- Create a written plan that supervisors (or those responsible for the investigations) can understand and follow.
- Train employees during orientation about expectations for their participation and responsibilities in regard to the investigation process.
- Prepare an investigation kit including some of the following:
 - ♦ Note paper or report template
 - ♦ Pens or pencils
 - ♦ High-visibility caution tape
 - ♦ Tape measure
 - ♦ Forms or checklists
 - ♦ Camera
 - ♦ Ruler for scale in photographs
 - ♦ Gloves or other personal protective equipment
 - ♦ Flashlight and spare batteries

AFTER THE INJURY

The immediate priority is to ensure that the injured employee receives needed care and the area is safe to begin an investigation. Investigations are typically led by the supervisor of the affected employee with others included as necessary, which



may include designated safety coordinators, risk managers and human resources staff.

Gather Information

- Identify and interview witnesses promptly. Memories fade over time.
- Security camera footage can be a good source of information. These recordings are often only saved for a limited period, so check for footage and save it early in the investigation process.

Analyze Information

- Identify direct, contributing and root causes of the incident.
 - ♦ Direct causes could be as simple as a fall, a burn or contact with a machine and are typically easy to identify.
 - ♦ Contributing causes could involve not wearing personal protective equipment, such as eye protection or gloves; rushing; fatigue; working without training; or not reporting unsafe conditions.
 - ♦ Root causes go a step further and attempt to identify reasons for the contributing causes. Root causes tend to focus on the organization rather than the individual. Some common examples are the lack of a hazard reporting process, poor fitting or inadequate personal protective equipment, poor training practices and lack of oversight.
- Examine past incidents to determine if similar events have occurred before and if previous corrective actions may have been ineffective or need revision.

Identify Corrective Actions

- Once the causes of an incident have been identified, corrective actions should be implemented to help prevent recurrence and address the root causes. Investigators should seek assistance from knowledgeable employees to develop solutions that work for everyone.
- Assign corrective actions to appropriate individuals to ensure that the items are completed. This may require multiple people depending on the identified causes.

Review, Follow Through, Report

- Have procedures in place to review corrective actions and revise if necessary.
- Create an incident investigation report. This should then be shared with the safety committee for additional feedback and potentially improved oversight of corrective actions.

INCIDENT REPORTING

Organizations should expect employees promptly to report injuries; however, the same is not always as clear for near misses. A

The 3 R's of Hazard Identification and Correction

Recognize, remedy and report are the three R's of hazard identification and correction.



1. Recognize: Identify hazards as they appear.



2. Remedy: Once identified, individuals can then remedy the hazard, as most are relatively minor. An example of a minor hazard could be a tool on the ground or cord in a walkway that could easily be put away.



3. Report: If a hazard does not have a simple remedy or if the employee is uncomfortable with addressing the hazard, the employee should report the hazard for corrective action. Minor corrective actions can also be reported to inform others of the issue and to make sure the hazard does not recur.

near miss refers to an incident without an injury. Often the difference between an incident resulting in injury or illness and a near miss is one of chance.

The underlying safety hazards that cause injuries also cause near misses. Employees should be encouraged to report workplace hazards and near misses without shame or fear of reprisal. A timely investigation should follow the report to eliminate those hazards and prevent future injury.

REPORTING VS. INVESTIGATING

Reporting and investigating are related but different. Reporting refers to alerting those within an organization to the near miss, hazard or incident. The report can then trigger an investigation. The investigation looks to find the underlying (or root) cause of the near miss, hazard or incident and then correct it to prevent an injury (or another injury) from occurring later.

By encouraging reporting and taking steps to investigate near misses and incidents, an organization helps prevent future injuries and can foster a positive safety culture. When employees are expected to report safety issues and the organization commits to addressing those hazards, employees understand that their observations and interven-

tion can have a positive effect in the workplace for themselves and others.

Reporting and investigating near misses and incidents demonstrate that an organization cares about safety and is willing to do something about it. The reporting and addressing of hazards also communicates to employees the willingness of an organization to go beyond compliance to address some of the underlying safety concerns.

To report and investigate hazards and near misses effectively, an organization should employ the following best practices:

- Create a procedure for employees to forward identified safety hazards and near misses to appropriate parties within the organization.
- Include multiple options for reporting. Verbally reporting hazards and near misses to supervisors or those nearby exposed to the hazard should be encouraged. Putting a link or page on the intranet or a form for people to complete is another option. Means to provide anonymous suggestions about workplace safety can also be beneficial, particularly if the safety hazard is the result of the actions or inactions of a co-worker. Whichever means are used, employees should be made aware of procedures for reporting hazards and near misses.

“ Incident investigations are an important component of every organization’s safety program. When done well, they can contribute to a more positive safety culture. ”

Accident Triangle

Reporting and addressing near misses can proactively reduce injuries within an organization. According to the accident triangle developed by researchers Herbert Heinrich and later updated and expanded by Frank Bird, many serious injuries are often preceded by numerous near misses or minor accidents.

Heinrich found that for every major injury, there were about 29 minor injuries and more than 300 near misses. Bird refined this later: for every one death, there are 10 serious injuries, 30 minor accidents and 600 near

misses. Although the ratios were developed in the 1930s by Heinrich and in the 1960s by Bird and may have changed, the underlying concept still applies. For every serious injury, there are often many warning signs that went unreported and/or uncorrected.

Addressing near misses and focusing at the bottom of the triangle rather than the top, can help correct hazards and prevent serious injuries from occurring. Therefore, reports and investigations should be made of near misses in addition to injuries and illnesses.



- Ensure forms or other reporting tools are easy to complete and find. If the process to submit a hazard or near miss is too difficult, it is less likely someone will take the time to do it.
- Make a good effort to be timely in responses. Unless the report is sent anonymously, a reply regarding the status of the hazard in question should be provided to the contributing employee as soon as practical. This reinforces the importance of the reporting process and encourages further communication. The employee may also have some suggestions for corrective actions. If the hazards are reported anonymously, consider announcing improvements to the group or make the effort to let people know that corrections have been implemented.
- Train employees about common safety hazards of their work area. Some hazards may not be obvious. If an employee is unable to identify a hazard, it will likely not be reported. Training should also include the expectations for reporting and how to do it. See “The 3 R’s of Hazard Identification and Correction” on page 23 for more information.

GOING FURTHER

Incident investigations are an important component of every organization’s safety program. When done well, they can contribute to a more positive safety culture.

Minnesota statutes require that employers with 25 or more employees have a written AWAIR program in place. The incident investigation process should be spelled out in this document, as well as the responsibilities of employees, supervisors, the safety committee, etc. regarding the investigation. As

noted previously, members should involve the safety committee in the process.

Hazard, near miss and incident investigation reports generate data that can be used to spot trends and plan future safety initiatives or employee training discussions (Quick Takes on Safety or toolbox talks). Repeated similar incidents can signal the need for reviewing and updating corrective actions to ensure that they are effective at preventing injuries.

Forms or checklists are often used to gather information for the report and follow-up investigation. Additional forms or checklists may be used to track the status of corrective actions.

As is done in the case of injuries, near-miss investigations should be reviewed by the safety committee along with suggested action items. The safety committee can hold people accountable for completing the corrective actions, and the committee can help refine the reporting process to make it as easy and effective as possible.

RESOURCES

- Incident Investigation sample form available at [MCIT.org/reporting-mcit/](https://www.mcit.org/reporting-mcit/)
- “Accident and Near Miss Investigations” video tutorial available at [MCIT.org/tutorials/](https://www.mcit.org/tutorials/)
- “Reporting Employee Accidents and Near Misses” video tutorial: [MCIT.org/tutorials/](https://www.mcit.org/tutorials/)
- Training conducted by MCIT loss control consultants. Members should contact their consultant at 1.866.547.6516.

Incident Root Cause Analysis

Determining the root cause(s) of an incident takes more than just a cursory review of the situation. Often what is readily observed is the direct cause (e.g., a burn caused by hot tar) or the indirect or contributing cause(s) (e.g., not wearing proper gloves). However, there are typically underlying causes at play (e.g., gloves not available, gloves not comfortable, employee complacency because he or she had not been injured before when not wearing gloves).

Each of the underlying causes should be examined to determine if they are indeed a root cause or if something more systemic is the cause (e.g., lack of training, ignoring employees' misuse of personal protective equipment, employee is uncomfortable communicating problem about gloves).

Incidents are like a dandelion: If the root is not fully removed, it grows back. Likewise if an incident investigation does not dig deeply enough to find and remedy root causes, a similar incident may occur later.

Conducting a Root Cause Analysis

Members can employ a number of strategies to determine root causes of an incident. One of the simplest methods is called the five whys. Quite literally, investigators ask the question "Why did the incident happen?" Then ask "why" for the answer until "why" has been asked five times. Often, a glimpse of the root cause can be determined before getting to the fifth "why."

After the fifth "why," other questions can be asked to flesh out what can be done to remedy the situation.

Root Cause Flow Chart

Often an incident is more complex than what the five whys can fully discover, and the use of a flow chart may help to determine root cause(s). Each arrow in the flow chart is similar to asking the question "why?" However, this strategy has the opportunity to explore multiple root causes and how they interact.

Example Root Cause Flow Chart



SAFETY CULTURE PILLAR



CHAPTER 6

Training

Training staff about safety policies and practices is one of the most important ways to keep them safe at work. Training is required and necessary for employees to understand how to do their job safely.

Employees should receive safety training before they engage in hazardous work and training often continues throughout an orientation period. Although this training is vital, it should not end there. Training is an ongoing process as tasks or programs change and memories fade.

Creating and maintaining an active and effective safety training plan is a key component to reducing injuries. Refresher trainings, reminders or other professional development options help keep the messages fresh.

TRAINING BEST PRACTICES

Organizations should consider the following best practices for safety training:

- **Tailor training to the specific organization, tasks and equipment being used.** It can be tempting to conduct a training from a template or other ready-made source. These may be more expedient for the trainer, but they should be further refined to be relevant for the organization, tasks, equipment and intended audience. The more personal the training, the more likely that individuals retain the information. It also sends a message that training is being offered for the well-being of employees, rather than simply to satisfy regulatory requirements.
- **Encourage the audience to interact.** Try to avoid a lecture style delivery. A saying attributed to Benjamin Franklin goes, “Tell me and I’ll forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I’ll learn.” The more employees are involved with a training, the better the retention. Having people demonstrate skills where appropriate creates a deeper level of understanding than a lecture or training video ever could. Pausing for audience input and feedback also helps get employees engaged and can make the training more relevant and memorable.

Training Limitations

After a workplace injury, the investigation may reveal that training was lacking. However, not all injuries are caused by a lack of training. Frequently lack of training is cited when the true cause was complacency, skipping steps or conducting other unsafe behaviors for reasons other than lack of knowledge regarding safe work practices.

Training is not a panacea for preventing workplace injuries. It is a tool like any other. Organizations need to determine whether more training would truly solve the underlying issues that caused an incident.

- **Include discussion questions and solicit questions throughout the training.** Encouraging questions helps people think more critically. This is particularly helpful after training videos or other resources that are difficult to adapt to a specific organization. Offering an opportunity for questions is vital and should be a part of every training. Because online trainings generally do not offer the opportunity for real-time questions, consider having a trainer present or available to answer questions.



- **Keep the training focused and on point.** Long, dry trainings are less effective than those that are short and focused. Offering breaks or opportunities to rest between training sessions provides an opportunity for employees to process information before changing to other topics. A short break every hour is often more effective than a longer break every few hours.
- **Incorporate safety into meetings.** This can be done by discussing short, safety-related topics at meetings with employees. If safety is consistently included with training, group meetings and messages of the organization, it becomes embedded into the culture of the organization. It can also help improve employee engagement with safety and safety communication in general.

GOING FURTHER

Training is a key component for creating a safe workplace. Multiple formats and tools can improve employees' retention of training topics. A short training reminder presented through the use of a short safety discussion (a.k.a. toolbox talk or Quick Take on Safety) can help call attention to specific topics that may have been forgotten or increase awareness of hazards related to the work area or tasks at hand.

The use of posters, fliers, handouts and other awareness materials can also further reinforce the training message. This not only makes the training more effective, but also makes awareness materials more effective, as people see the materials and remember the training.

Conducting frequent trainings also gives an organization the opportunity to develop metrics to help evaluate if safety programs are working.

OSHA's Position on Training

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has several training requirements. Some safety trainings may have specific requirements, but the main requirements are:

- Training must be conducted at a level and in a language employees can understand.
- There must be an opportunity for employees to ask questions.
- Training must be documented and records retained, typically for three years, though some specific programs may require documentation be retained longer.
- Training must reflect the workplace tasks and equipment employees will encounter.

Skills assessments, such as tests, quizzes or demonstrations, are often encouraged to prove employees understand the material presented, but they are not appropriate for all safety trainings.

RESOURCES

MCIT provides short, topic-specific training scripts known as Quick Takes on Safety that can be used to supplement training: [MCIT.org/quick-takes-on-safety/](https://www.mcit.org/quick-takes-on-safety/).

Launch a Safety Culture Campaign with No Cost Materials from MCIT

Just like a campaign used to raise awareness about winter slip and fall hazards for example, an awareness campaign can be implemented to help improve the general safety mindset of employees, a.k.a. a safety culture campaign. MCIT has created materials for a Work Wisely campaign to help foster a positive safety culture. Materials are provided to members at no cost as part of membership.

Access Materials Online

All materials are available at MCIT.org/work-wisely/ or members can order printed copies by contacting MCIT at info@mcit.org. Members are encouraged to use the materials in creative ways to fit their particular situation and needs. Check out a preview of the campaign materials below. Remember to use one message at a time and swap the design every few weeks to months to keep it fresh.



DISPLAY MATERIALS

Wall posters, mini fliers and table tents are intended to be located throughout facilities and in high-visibility areas, such as break rooms, meeting rooms, entries/exits, hallways, etc. Mini fliers can be used in a number of ways: insert into payroll envelopes, post to intranet, hand out at team meetings, use in the employee newsletter.

VIDEO

Video is the fastest-growing format for employee communication. The Work Wisely video is a short and engaging way to connect with employees about being safety conscious at work. The video can be shared with employees easily: embed to the intranet and/or e-mail a link to staff.



QUICK TAKES ON SAFETY

Short training scripts give supervisors the opportunity to discuss the importance of safety in the workplace with their teams. Employee handouts and quizzes are also available to reinforce the concepts and expectations.



E-MAIL/LOCK SCREEN MESSAGES

Ready-to-send e-mails and lockscreen images are great ways for safety committees to spread positive safety culture messages to employees.



LABEL

Place the label in spots where the organization wants to remind employees quickly about keeping safety in mind. It can be added to ID badges, payroll envelopes, employee memos, policy and procedures, etc. A PDF that can be printed to a standard Avery label sheet and a single jpeg image that can be added to electronic communications are available.



SAFETY CULTURE TOOLS



CHAPTER 7

Safety Campaigns

A safety campaign is a focused effort targeting awareness of a specific hazard. A safety campaign can be based around an annual national awareness movement, such as Severe Weather Awareness Week in April or Fire Prevention Week in October. Other examples include distracted driving awareness; the MCIT Step Wisely slip, trip and fall prevention program; or the Training Safety Officer program, which is focused on reducing injuries from law enforcement training activities.



Campaigns work by communicating and reinforcing safety goals and initiatives to employees. When the board, administration and management show their support of these campaigns, it further demonstrates the organization's commitment to safety.

Encouraging employees and safety committee members to come up with ideas to include in the campaign or to help promote it improves engagement within the organization.

Safety campaigns can be organized by anyone. A department head may create an awareness campaign around safe lifting practices before a move. A group of employees could sponsor a safety poster contest created by children to remind co-workers to work safely.

Safety campaigns are often driven by safety committees as part of their function. The committee should consider adding annual campaigns to its calendar to ensure sufficient time to prepare and organize the event.

GOING FURTHER

A successful safety campaign often uses a number of methods and products to convey the message. These could include safety e-mails, posters, table tents, mini fliers, a section of a newsletter, creation of a display case, specialized training programs, etc. The focus is to engage employees and find ways to get the awareness message out.

RESOURCES

- Work Wisely safety culture program: MCIT.org/work-wisely/
- Step Wisely slip, trip and fall prevention program: MCIT.org/step-wisely/
- Deer collision awareness: MCIT.org/deer-collision-prevention/
- Training Safety Officer program: MCIT.org/law-enforcement/
- Distracted driving awareness materials and tools: MinnesotaSafetyCouncil.org/traffic/distracteddriving/
- Minnesota Safety Council ([Minnesota SafetyCouncil.org](http://MinnesotaSafetyCouncil.org)) and National Safety Council (NSC.org) provide a number of materials on their websites for a variety of workplace safety topics

Sample Fire Prevention Week Safety Campaign

The following is a sample safety campaign that a safety committee could run during National Fire Prevention Week.

- The committee starts a poster contest the week before: Encourage employees' children to create a fire safety awareness poster that then the committee hangs at the beginning of the campaign week.
- Each day of the week, the safety committee sends out a different safety e-mail cut and pasted from the National Safety Council site.
- A display case is decorated on Monday by the human resource staff with a message about creating a fire escape plan.
- I.T. puts a lock screen message on employee computers with a different message each day.
- The fire department is asked to provide fire extinguisher training on Wednesday.
- A fire drill is held on Thursday.
- The winner of the poster contest is announced on Friday and given a certificate by the board of commissioners.

SAFETY CULTURE TOOLS



CHAPTER 8

Safety Recognition and Awards

Recognizing safe work practices can improve employee engagement while encouraging others to be more mindful of safety. Depending on the process used to select those for safety recognition, it can also have the added benefit of evaluating workplace behaviors or safety engagement.

Safety recognition can range from providing awards or benefits to something as simple as a kind word from supervisors or upper management.

It also communicates to an organization's employees that the organization values safety. Safety recognition provides a critical component of feedback in a positive feedback loop.

Tracking the number of employees or departments recognized for safety is one way to measure the interest and commitment toward building a positive safety culture within an organization.

RECOGNITION CRITERIA

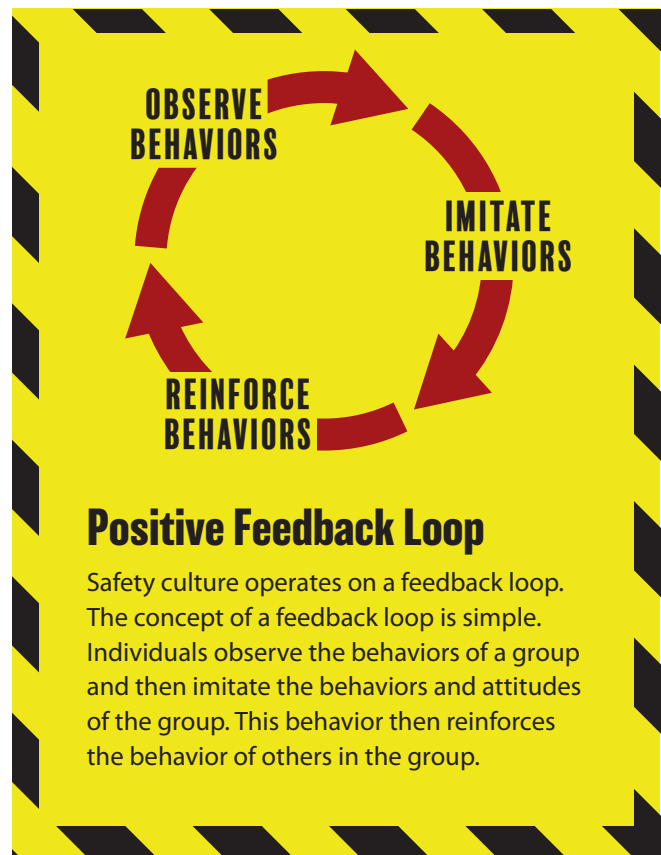
It is important when creating a formal safety recognition program to define the criteria and the steps taken to recognize employees. To be successful, this information must be well-communicated to employees.

These formal recognition programs can be designed for one department or involve all employees within the organization. Winner(s) can be selected by supervisors, safety committees or peers.

Keep in mind that it may take some time to foster participation or to find an award that engages employees. The recognition program and awards must be meaningful to employees to be successful.

Recognition Program Example

Fillmore County has run a successful safety recognition program for more than 10 years. Its safety committee sends information to employees asking for nominations of an employee demonstrating an act of safety or who exemplifies safety and to provide a short description of the reason for the nomination.



The safety committee votes on a recipient of the honor. During the next board meeting, the recognized employee is honored by the board with a custom jacket and certificate.

BE AWARE OF UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES

Depending on the criteria used, safety recognition could have unintended consequences. It might be tempting to base awards on the frequency and cost of injuries. However, this type of approach can chill



Choose Compliant Awards

As public entities, there are inherent limitations on the selection of awards. Employee recognition programs should be developed consistent with state law and the public purpose doctrine. The Office of the State Auditor has a statement of position addressing employee recognition programs and events on its website (Auditor.state.mn.us/).

reporting of incidents and near misses as employees or supervisors attempt to reduce the number of reported injuries. Remember that when incidents go unreported, their causes remain and more incidents are probable.

A similar strategy of offering awards for days without injuries can also be problematic (for example, after 30 days injury-free, a department receives an award). This can limit reporting because of the desire to try to keep the numbers low.

GOING FURTHER

Like many other elements for promoting a positive safety culture, safety recognition can be combined with other tools in this publication. Recognizing departments, individuals or teams for contributions to safety campaigns, completed corrective actions, hazard identification or incident reporting can help improve all of those other tools and contribute to

their success.

A safety committee can be the primary driver of safety recognition programs. The committee can devise a plan for the recognition process, solicit employee feedback and make the final selection(s).

Organizations should consider announcing the recipient(s) of the safety recognition award. Including the winner(s) in the organization's newsletter, on the intranet or via a widespread e-mail, bolsters the program and demonstrates the organization's overall commitment to safety.

RESOURCES

- Occupational Safety and Health Administration Incentive Programs: [OSHA.gov](https://www.osha.gov)



Safety Recognition: Sample Certificate

Below is an example of a safety recognition certificate that members can reproduce and modify to meet an organization's specific safety recognition program. A fillable PDF can also be downloaded from MCIT.org/work-wisely/.

Various parties within an organization, such as managers, the safety committee and leadership (i.e., administration and/or the elected board), can use the certificate to recognize employees for their positive contributions to workplace safety.



SAFETY CULTURE TOOLS



CHAPTER 9

Safety E-mails

Because e-mail is nearly instantaneous and can be used to send text, images and hyperlinks, it is a powerful tool for distributing safety information and reminders. Anyone in an organization can send safety awareness messages, but they are often sent by safety committee members, department heads, supervisors or safety coordinators.



BENEFITS OF SAFETY E-MAILS

E-mails also have the benefit of reaching a large or targeted audience, depending on the scope and audience of the safety message. Relaying these messages increases awareness of specific safety issues and demonstrates an organization's commitment to safety.

Including a signature line with the names of the safety committee members or other designee reminds employees about the role the committee plays regarding safety within the organization.

USE E-MAIL EFFECTIVELY

Despite its benefits, e-mail can be ineffective if messages are sent too often. People can delete them without reading, send e-mails to junk or spam folders or ignore messages because they have become a nuisance rather than a welcome message.

Sending safety messages in moderation either on a regular schedule or to alert employees of important time-sensitive safety information (e.g., when icy conditions develop outside) are often the best uses of safety e-mails.

Organizations should periodically reassess the impact of safety e-mails and respond accordingly.

GOING FURTHER

E-mail is a tool that can be used to bolster other tools. Safety campaign posters, slogans, goals, updates or notifications can be sent in e-mails that let people know of coming safety events or trainings. E-mails can also be used to distribute electronic versions of handouts or as a means to gather information in the forms of surveys, games or contests, or to receive results of audits or follow-up.

It is a tool that can be used for a variety of safety activities. Members are encouraged to be creative while acknowledging that moderation is key.

RESOURCES

MCIT offers ready-to-send jpeg images with safety messages that can be downloaded and pasted into the body of an e-mail. There are a number of topics in the safety e-mail library. These images are available at MCIT.org/safety-committees/safety-emails. Instructions on how to use and send these messages is included in Appendix E.

SAFETY CULTURE TOOLS



CHAPTER 10

Toolbox Talks: Short Safety Discussions

Toolbox talks refer to short safety discussions or reminders, typically led by supervisors during informal or formal meetings. The term “toolbox talk” originates from supervisors on a construction site gathering employees around toolboxes at the beginning of a shift to discuss the common hazards of the day’s activities and how to work safely. Toolbox talks have now spread far beyond the construction site to a wide variety of occupations and topics, and go by different names, for example Quick Takes on Safety.

Taking typically five to 10 minutes, these discussions help bring safety to the forefront of employees' minds during the day.

These short training sessions could discuss fatigue with plow operators before a major snow storm,

power cord management with a group of social services employees or housekeeping reminders for the sheriff's office.

Regularly conducting these short training sessions demonstrates a commitment to safety on the part of the supervisor and other leaders. The sessions work well when employees have an opportunity to ask questions and time is provided for discussions after instruction.

During the discussion, employees can raise safety concerns and solutions, and suggest future topics that employees feel are relevant. As employees participate in discussions, some may even volunteer to lead future sessions. Although often given by supervisors, other employees can lead the discussion, which reinforces the concept that safety is everyone's responsibility.

Organizations should encourage every department to incorporate a short safety talk at every employee meeting. They can be implemented and delivered quickly.

GOING FURTHER

Toolbox talks work well with other safety culture tools. For example:

- Showing a safety video for a short training discussion can generate a good discussion.
- Conducting a safety audit or walk-through of a particular piece of machinery after conducting a short training session about the equip-



Toolbox Talks vs. Other Training

Toolbox talks (Quick Takes on Safety or other short training sessions) should not be used to replace introductory or refresher training designed to cover materials more in depth, introduce new procedures or skills and incorporate more detailed checks for understanding. Toolbox talks are best used to supplement initial and refresher training.





Short Training Session Topics

Quick training session topics can be scheduled based upon recent injuries or near misses or in preparation for specific tasks of the day. The more relevant the topic is to the work being done, the more engaging it will be.

Topics should not be repeated too frequently, unless there is a definite need. Repeating the same message too often can lead to employee inattention.

ment can also help individuals put their knowledge to immediate practical use.

- Providing handouts or fliers that review the topic after the meeting gives staff something tangible to keep that can then be referenced in the future.

RESOURCES

Short training sessions are relatively easy to create for individuals knowledgeable on a subject matter. Supervisors and employees should be encouraged to create their own.

- **Quick Takes on Safety and Employee Handouts:** MCIT's ready-to-use short training sessions called Quick Takes on Safety cover a variety of safety topics applicable to member operations. Each Quick Take is available as a PDF or Word document. They are designed to be customized to fit the circumstances of a particular location or work team. Members can download Quick Takes and corresponding employee handouts at MCIT.org/quick-takes-on-safety/.
- **Loss prevention best practices guides** for parks and recreation, public works, solid waste management, facility management and agricultural societies feature chapters with bullet lists that can easily be used to train others on a variety of topics related to specific operations. Find the guides in the MCIT Resource Library at MCIT.org/resource/.
- **Third-party toolbox talks** are readily available from various sources. When selecting a toolbox talk, supervisors should be sure to read it thoroughly before presenting it to employees. This way, members can ensure that recommendations, policies or procedures referenced in the script are compatible with those of the organization.

Toolbox talks can support other aspects of safety culture in many ways. Organizations should be creative but consistent with these discussions.

Give a Better Toolbox Talk

A number of short safety discussions, such as MCIT's Quick Takes on Safety, are readily available and designed for immediate use. A successful toolbox talk takes more than reading from the script. Consider the following tips to make a short training session effective for the targeted audience.



Take Time to Prepare

REVIEW SCRIPT

Read through the script prior to presenting the training. Although many scripts offer great information, they may not reflect the needs of a specific group or workplace. Ensure that the advice fits with the policies and procedures of the organization.

DOCUMENT ATTENDANCE

Have a quick sign-in sheet to help track who was trained about a particular topic. This can be useful for generating data and benchmarks to help critique the effectiveness of a safety program. It can also help when planning additional trainings or when a training may need to be repeated.

REVISIT PAST TALKS

Refer to notes from any past toolbox talks on the topic or similar ones and be sure to incorporate any potential improvements into the current training.

ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES

Consider other activities that may help reinforce the point of the training. Having a time after the training for discussion or a short check of a piece of equipment or process addressed can make the training more tangible and give some hands-on opportunity to test employees' knowledge.



Engage Employees While Presenting

MAKE EYE CONTACT

Be sure to look up at the audience as much as possible. Eye contact can help convey the message of the script and allow the presenter to gauge the audience.

EMPLOYEE PARTICIPATION

Have employees participate by asking them questions or having them give a demonstration. Greater participation and involvement helps make the training more engaging. It also allows for assessing participant understanding of the material.

ENCOURAGE ENGAGEMENT

Encourage questions and discussions from employees. This can be done throughout or near the end of the presentation. Hearing from participants can help the trainer understand employee concerns, as well as any areas that may need to be improved in the future.



Evaluate Session to Improve Future Training

EMPLOYEE COMPREHENSION

After the discussion, consider asking questions to evaluate if employees understand the material. These questions should cover the most important points of the training and can be used by the instructor to gauge if the material was understood. Ideally, the presenter should be asking questions throughout the presentation as well.

PRESENTER REVIEW

After a short training session, take a moment to record what went well and what may need to be improved. These can then be used to make the training better in the future.

SAFETY CULTURE TOOLS



CHAPTER 11

Videos

Video is a common format available for safety trainings or other safety reminders. Employers can find videos on nearly any safety topic from a variety of sources. MCIT members have access to videos through the MCIT video library and the Minnesota Safety Council (a membership with the Safety Council is provided to all MCIT members as part of membership).

Videos provide some advantages:

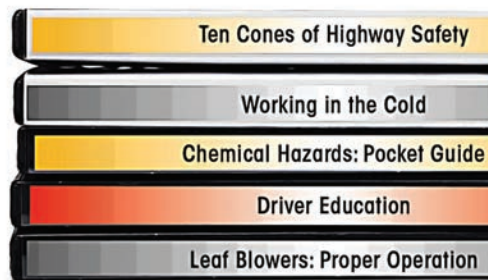
- An opportunity for viewers to see examples or hear testimonials and perspectives from other people
- Individuals can view on their own schedules
- Important safety messages are communicated to employees

Videos have potential drawbacks, however, depending on how they are used:

- If the video is watched individually, there is no interactivity. Individuals have no opportunity to ask questions, get clarification or check for understanding.
- It is difficult to share stories or talk about hazards regarding the topic with a larger group unless the video is watched together.
- Videos are relatively generic by necessity and are not easy to customize to fit a particular location or task.

GOING FURTHER

As a result of these strengths and weaknesses, staff will benefit from including other activities with viewing a video. Watching videos in a group setting allows the audience to have discussions regarding safety and the topics of the video: Employees



OSHA Stance on Video Training

The Occupational Safety and Health administration (OSHA) requires that training offer opportunities for learners to ask questions and that training is tailored to the organization and equipment being used. Training videos are a welcome addition to training, but the use of videos by themselves would not be sufficient to meet the intent of OSHA's training requirements. They are difficult to tailor to the workplace and often do not provide the opportunity for questions.

can ask clarifying questions, and trainers can offer details about how the information could apply to the organization's specific facility, equipment, policies, etc.

Combining handouts, posters, fliers, short training discussions (Quick Takes on Safety, toolbox talks) or other sessions to supplement the video can improve employees' understanding of hazards and safety solutions.

Some videos are designed more as public service announcements to remind people about hazardous situations or safety behaviors. These can vary in tone from serious to silly but are ideally short and designed to focus on a specific safety lesson. This type of video can be used to reinforce past trainings, safety campaigns or other safety initiatives.

RESOURCES

Safety training videos are plentiful. Some of the main places to access videos are:

- **MCIT video library (MCIT.org/video-library):** Members can borrow up to three DVDs for three weeks at a time.

- **MCIT tutorials (MCIT.org/tutorials):** Members can stream short video tutorials on subjects related to safety and coverage.
- **MCIT short animated videos (MCIT.org/step-wisely):** MCIT offers short animated

videos about slips, trips and falls; deer-vehicle collisions; and safety culture.

- **Minnesota Safety Council safety video service (MinnesotaSafetyCouncil.org):** From its library, members can borrow or stream videos on a variety of topics.

SAFETY CULTURE TOOLS



CHAPTER 12

Posters and Table Tents

Posters and table tents can be used to raise awareness or communicate important information about safety concerns. Topics range from general messages, such as “Wash your hands before returning to work,” to detailed directions, such as the steps for washing hands for optimal hygiene. The flexibility of messaging and their ease of use adds to the popularity of posters and table tents.

Table tents convey similar messages to posters but can be placed in areas where wall posters may not be feasible, such as waiting rooms, service desks, break rooms, meeting rooms or individual workstations. As people tend to gather in the areas where table tents are used, the messages can be longer or more detailed than posters.

Posters and table tents can be placed by anyone and can cover any topic. They provide reminders to employees or the public about specific safety concerns, hazards or directions.

Also, both posters and table tents further communicate the importance of safety at a specific location. Even when waiting to be served, during breaks or



when attending meetings, safety is present. This can be a powerful way to convey that safety is valued and part of the organization's culture.

These materials, however, are not without their potential drawbacks. Some are noted below along with their solutions.

Lack of change: Organizations regularly put up posters and table tents but leaving them there indefinitely is problematic. Although initially the messaging is effective, people generally pay progressively less attention to them over time. Consider swapping posters and table tents on a planned schedule. This keeps the message fresh, and the change catches people's attention. Consider swapping posters and table tents on a monthly or more frequent schedule.



Poor locations:

- Posters placed among many other messages, on bulletin boards or in break rooms may not be seen. This may be helpful for people who are seeking information, but the reality is that few individuals seek out safety messages.

Posters or table tents placed in groups end up competing for the viewer's attention so that none gets attention.

- The message should match the location with short messages being appropriate for hallways or entryways. More detailed messages are better located where people gather or spend more time, such as break rooms, by sinks or near pieces of equipment.
- Messaging should be located near the hazard. Having a reminder that is far away from the hazard is ineffective. For example, placing fall protection materials in a break room is not as effective as when the message is located next to the fall protection equipment.

GOING FURTHER

Posters and table tents tend to work best when combined with other methods to raise awareness and communication.

Reviewing past injuries, hazards or audits, can help find topics to address. For example, if safety audits have revealed problems with bench grinders, hanging a poster near each bench grinder that explains

RESOURCES

- Safety posters are available from many sources and organizations. The Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry, Minnesota Safety Council, federal organizations and safety consultants or companies offer a variety of safety posters.
- Work Wisely safety culture awareness materials: MCIT.org/work-wisely/
- Step Wisely slip, trip and fall prevention materials, including posters and table tents: MCIT.org/step-wisely/
- Vehicle-deer collision prevention posters and lock screens: MCIT.org/deer-collision-prevention/

the distance requirements for tongue guards and work rests may be more effective.

Similarly, posters used in conjunction with trainings or short discussions, reinforce the training by reminding people of the safety tips and expectations. This further demonstrates that an organization is committed to safety.

Even when used alone, posters can increase awareness of a safety topic. Also, consider using posters to bring attention to the organization's vision of safety or its mission statement. This reinforces the commitment to safety from the top down.

Safety Signs

Safety signs differ from posters. Signs are more permanent and provide a simple warning or message. Outdoor examples include speed limit signs or a reminder that policy prohibits cell phone use when driving. Indoors, these signs tend to relay important safety warnings, such as the need for eye or hearing protection, fire extinguisher locations, exits or important voltage and arc flash warnings on electrical panels.

When compared to posters, safety signs use simpler and shorter text and require little maintenance. The larger concern for signs is often their visibility. This may require trimming of foliage, snow removal or



housekeeping reminders to ensure that the signs are visible.

Certain signs, such as for exits, require they be illuminated and should be tested for this functionality.

No-cost Safety Posters from MCIT

MCIT provides several safety posters to its members at no cost as part of membership. Posters address common hazards of local government entities related to slips, trips and falls; and deer-vehicle collisions. All posters can be downloaded from MCIT.org under the Safety tab.

Beyond the posters, the safety messages are also provided as other awareness materials, such as mini fliers, table tents, e-mails and/or computer lock screen images. Members are encouraged to

be creative with how they use all of the awareness materials. For example, posters could be posted to the organization's intranet, and mini fliers could be published in the employee newsletter or used as a short training session.

When using posters (or any of the awareness materials), remember to pick the best location for the message and swap messages after a few weeks to a month to catch employees' attention.

MCIT Poster Campaigns



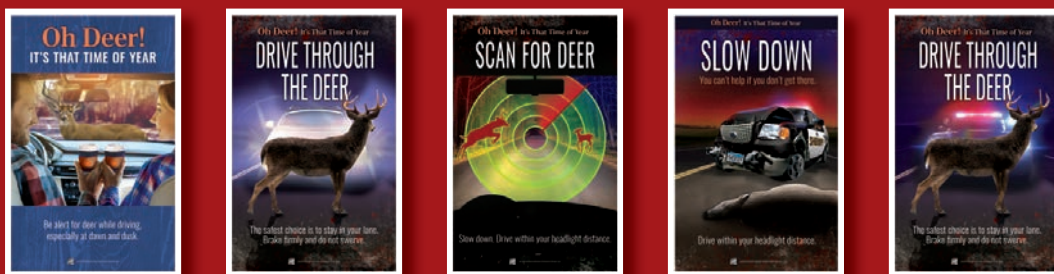
WORK WISELY SAFETY CULTURE IMPROVEMENT

This series helps improve general safety mindedness among employees.



STEP WISELY SLIP, TRIP AND FALL PREVENTION

Find messages for slip, trip and fall awareness related to weather hazards and general work conditions.



DEER COLLISION PREVENTION

Three messages for a general employee audience and two for law enforcement drivers raise awareness about how to prevent and minimize vehicle collisions with deer.

SAFETY CULTURE TOOLS



CHAPTER 13

Intranet, Articles and Newsletters

Providing safety information to employees where they are used to finding workplace announcements is an effective method for communicating with staff about safety initiatives, investigations, events and more. The organization's intranet and employee newsletter are two good examples of these spots.

INTRANET

An organization's intranet is ideal for posting:

- Safety programs
- Policies
- Incident investigation and hazard reporting form
- Safety data sheets for chemicals
- Coming safety event information
- Safety articles
- Safety committee meeting agendas and minutes

Some intranets are set up to allow individuals to reply or sign up for events. Organizations should consult with their I.T. team to determine how the organization's system can benefit the safety culture.

ARTICLES

Articles covering safety topics can be posted to the intranet, e-mailed to staff or included in a general employee newsletter. Articles offer an opportunity to improve communication and demonstrate a commitment to safety within an organization.

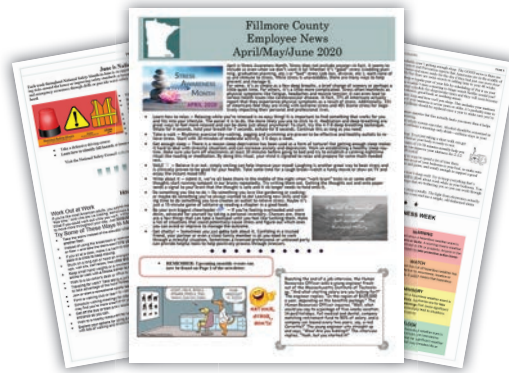
They provide valuable information to employees and can link to other resources. Articles can be written internally or obtained from credible sources outside of the organization. Articles, generally provide greater depth than other means of communication, such as posters, fliers or e-mails.

NEWSLETTERS

Employee newsletters are another tool that can be used to provide news, updates or additional information related to workplace safety. Newsletters are typically released on a regular schedule and address relevant topics to the occasion.

Often shared on the intranet or e-mailed to staff, newsletters help people stay informed about the organization. Including a safety section can further communicate everything from safety concerns and improvements, to coming events or even common hazards discovered during audits or other activities.

Newsletters or articles can be written by employees with knowledge on particular topics to help increase



Fillmore County Employee Newsletter

engagement. For example, a member of public health may write an article about cold and flu prevention for the newsletter to be released during peak flu season. Foresters or parks employees may write about noxious weeds or tick bite prevention, which not only increases engagement, but also recognizes and acknowledges the skills and experiences of employees.

GOING FURTHER

The intranet, articles and newsletters can be further enhanced by coordinating with other resources, programs and campaigns. These tools can support special safety campaigns by raising awareness or being a platform for sharing resources. Newsletters can highlight safety awareness related to national campaigns, such as fire prevention or severe weather awareness weeks, and Step Wisely (MCIT's slip, trip and fall prevention campaign).

Games and contests can also be shared and supported by newsletters and the intranet (e.g., submitting entries through the intranet). The intranet can also be a portal to recognize employees publicly for their safety efforts as an element of safety recognition.

RESOURCES

- Members can republish information available at MCIT.org without needing permission as long as they are used for internal purposes. Examples that may work well are Resource Library articles, sections from loss prevention best practices guides, Quick Takes on Safety and safety e-mails.
- The Minnesota Safety Council (MinnesotaSafetyCouncil.org) and National Safety Council (NSC.org) have resources that can be used to prepare articles for newsletters or an intranet. All MCIT members have a membership with the Minnesota Safety Council as part of membership with MCIT. Organizations should check with MSC and NSC for permission to republish their items before doing so.

SAFETY CULTURE TOOLS



CHAPTER 14

Fliers, Handouts and Fact Sheets

Providing safety fliers, handouts and fact sheets to employees reinforces that an organization values safety in the workplace. These materials communicate specific safety messages, but also communicate the general attitude toward safety by giving employees resources and showing the value of safety in another way. It can also help prompt employee engagement by providing employees with directions and empowering them to take actions to address hazards included on the handouts.

By referring to the safety messages on fliers, handouts or fact sheets, employees can continually address hazards and help keep themselves and others safe. Care should be taken not to overuse this tool, however, as the more often it is used, the less effective it may become.

Fliers, handouts and fact sheets can be distributed by anyone, but often supervisors, safety committee members or safety coordinators provide them at meetings or trainings. These materials are an easy way to make safety a part of any employee gathering or meeting. They may also be tucked into payroll envelopes, as they are frequently smaller than letter size paper.

GOING FURTHER

Fliers, handouts and fact sheets coordinate well with many other safety culture tools. They can be used:

- To reinforce slogans or goals established by top management or the safety committee.
- With or after short training discussions (tool-box talks, Quick Takes on Safety) and other trainings.
- Before precise audits of certain equipment to help individuals know for what to look during audits.
- As part of a safety campaign with the handouts tying into the messaging of posters or broader safety campaign.
- As an e-mail message or attachment that is sent to staff. Although this would not be tangible unless printed, it still offers individuals a chance to read and retain the

RESOURCES

Fliers, handouts or fact sheets are available from a number of organizations. Here are a few:

- **MCIT:**
 - Quick Takes on Safety training scripts have corresponding employee handouts for each topic: MCIT.org/quick-takes-on-safety/
 - Step Wisely slip, trip and fall prevention program (MCIT.org/step-wisely/) and Work Wisely safety culture program (MCIT.org/work-wisely/) include handouts that coordinate with posters, ready-to-send e-mails and table tents.
- **Occupational Safety and Health Administration Fact Sheets, InfoSheets and Hazard Alerts (OSHA.gov/pls/publications/):** These offer information about a variety of topics and interesting tidbits, and are usually one page front and back in length.

information. It also allows people more easily to make additional copies for friends and family.

As a helpful reminder, organizations should encourage employees to post handouts in their workstations or near relevant equipment, such as putting data security fliers near computers or copiers. This has even more impact if supervisors recommend that employees switch them out when new fliers arrive to keep messages fresh. There are many ways to use fliers, handouts and fact sheets. Members are encouraged to be creative.



SAFETY CULTURE TOOLS



CHAPTER 15

Lock Screen Messages

For security reasons, most employers have computers lock after a period of inactivity, which requires employees to log in to them to regain access. The lock screen typically shows a background image. Because the screen is seen at least once every day when employees log in to their machines (often more than that), the lock screen is an opportune space to deliver safety messages to employees.

Having safety in front of employees in new and unexpected ways helps communicate the importance of safety to them. Informing people of hazards or best practices to avoid injuries should not only decrease injuries, but brings safety into the job for employees who may not often think about it. Making safety a part of every job can go a long way in promoting a culture of safety and encourage employees to think of ways to make their workspaces and tasks safer.

Organizations should consider engaging their I.T. professionals by asking them to upload an image to be the lock screen background for all or select computers on a network. When choosing images or messages, the organization should be mindful that the password window will obscure some of the image. The wording or graphics may need to be adjusted to make it fit the lock screen.



GOING FURTHER

Lock screen images can be used in conjunction with other awareness items such as posters, table tents, fliers, handouts, as well as short training discussions (Quick Takes on Safety or toolbox talks) or other specific department messages provided that I.T. staff can choose which computers get the lock screen image and which do not.

Employee feedback on topics or contests to design new lock screen messages can help with potential territorial concerns (see "Workspace Territory" below) and help engage more people. There are numerous options available for lock screen messages, and members are encouraged to be creative in their use.

Workspace Territory

Using lock screen messages could make some people upset or concerned, as employees may be territorial about their work computer. As such, MCIT recommends that members use this tool in moderation and only for a short period.

The lock screen is different from the monitor's background image that employees see after they have logged in to their computers. That image is often customized by employees. Altering the lock screen will not remove personalized images from employees' computers.

Changing the lock screen image may have the positive effect of reminding employees that the computers and workstations belong to the organization and to be wary for what they are used or the items saved to them.

RESOURCES

MCIT currently offers lock screen images as part of the Work Wisely safety culture campaign (MCIT.org/work-wisely/), Step Wisely slip and fall prevention program (MCIT.org/step-wisely/) and deer collision prevention awareness resources (MCIT.org/deer-collision-prevention/).

SAMPLE MEMO TO BOARD, BOARD RESOLUTION ON SAFETY

Editor's Note: Below is a sample memo to accompany a proposed board resolution/statement of intent. The content can be modified to reflect an organization's particular circumstances.

To: [Organization Name Board of Commissioners/Board of Directors]
From: [Organization Name] Safety Committee
Re: Board [Resolution/Statement of Intent] on Building and Supporting a Positive Workplace Safety Culture
Date: [Date]

The [organization name] safety committee is undertaking a project to bring safety and positive safety culture to the forefront of all employees' minds. A good safety culture can have a significant impact on the operation of an organization by positively influencing productivity, morale, absenteeism, reputation and operational costs.

As a part of this effort, you will see an increase in the amount of employee communication and activities related to workplace safety. Safety initiatives have proven to be more effective when they are supported at all levels of an organization. To that end, we respectfully request that the board take action [by passing the attached resolution, approving the attached statement of intent, other specific action requested].

Board Resolution: Commitment to Building and Supporting a Positive Workplace Safety Culture

Whereas, [organization name] considers the health and safety of its employees and visitors to its buildings and grounds a priority.

Whereas, effective loss control strategies will reduce work-related injuries and illnesses, protect [organization name's] property from loss or damage, ensure the safety of others accessing the property and save the [county/organization] taxpayer money.

Whereas, fostering and supporting a workplace culture focused on safety awareness demonstrates [organization name's] commitment to protecting employees, property and citizens from injury or loss.

Whereas, a workplace culture focused on safety requires open communication among all stakeholders, education, supervision and enforcement of safety policies and practices.

Whereas, an effective workplace safety culture requires the commitment, support and dedication of everyone within the [county/organization].

Therefore, be it resolved to minimize work-related injuries and illnesses, protect the physical assets of the [county/organization] and ensure the safety of those utilizing [county/organization] operations the [(Name) County Board of Commissioners/(name of organization) Board of Directors] commits to support and encourage safety activities, training, policies and practices designed to enhance a positive workplace safety culture; further, employees are encouraged, regardless of their role in the organization, to take part in improving the safety culture of [name of organization], which may include developing and following safety policies, programs and procedures; reporting hazardous conditions and making corrective suggestions; and advocating for safety throughout the organization.

APPENDIX B

SAMPLE ACCIDENT/INCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

Editor's Note: A Word document of the below form is available to download at MCIT.org/work-wisely/.

(To be completed immediately after incident, even where there is no injury)

Information collected in gray box may be nonpublic data and should only be shared with those whose job reasonably requires access to it.

Name of Injured Employee _____ Unit _____

Dept. _____ Job Title _____ Years of Service _____ Time on Present Job _____

Does injured employee have other employment? YES NO If YES, where? _____

Contact person at other employer: _____ Telephone Number: _____

Hours/Week: _____ Hourly Wage: _____

Date/Time Injury Reported and to Whom _____ Date Received Medical Treatment _____

Severity of Injury: (check appropriate box and give brief explanation)

First Aid Only _____

Doctor's Care _____

Lost Time: Yes No First Day of Lost Time _____ Has Employee Returned to Work? Yes No Date _____

Near Miss _____

Date Injured _____ Hour _____ A.M. P.M. Time Started Work That Day _____

Description of Injury (Be as specific as possible)

- Type of Accident (fall, etc.): _____
- Type of Injury (sprain, etc.): _____
- Body Parts Affected: _____

Where did the incident occur? _____

How did the incident occur (to be completed by supervisor and employee)? _____

What unsafe conditions or acts contributed to the incident? _____

Who are the witnesses to the incident? _____

Have similar incidents like this occurred in the past? YES NO

If YES, what corrective action was taken at that time? _____

What is the root cause of the incident? _____

Given the root cause(s), what can be done to prevent a recurrence of this type of incident? (List action plan in step sequence)

Who will take this action? _____

Date Prepared: _____
Signature of Supervisor _____

DEPARTMENT HEAD'S RECOMMENDATIONS

How will you ensure that the plan of action to prevent or control recurrences is implemented? _____

Recommendation(s): _____

Date: _____
Signature of Department Head _____

DATE OF SAFETY COMMITTEE'S REVIEW _____

PERSONNEL OR SAFETY COORDINATOR REVIEW

Comments: _____

Date: _____
Signature of Personnel/Safety Coordinator _____

Is review and follow-up analysis on corrective action required? YES NO

If yes, outcome _____

If work order or repairs needed, date completed: _____

Comments: _____

SAMPLE SAFETY EXPECTATIONS FOR JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Editor's Note: Many components are needed to build a positive safety culture. Some begin before an employee is initially hired. Strong consideration should be given to including safety responsibilities within job descriptions to set expectations and requirements at the time of hire and revisiting them again at performance reviews. The following are examples of safety-focused requirements that have been incorporated into various employee job descriptions. These requirements are overall expectations and independent of specific organization, job or task-specific safety rules.

Duties/Responsibilities

- Follows organization and industry safety guidelines and regulations.
- Ensures work areas remain safe, clean and orderly, adhering to all organization, local and state guidelines regarding health, safety and sanitation.
- Performs visual preventive safety inspections. Reports dangerous building or equipment conditions to appropriate staff. Takes steps to correct disruption caused by a failure in the assigned area and if unable to do so, reports the failure immediately to the supervisor.
- Safely operates tools and equipment required for the job.
- Consults machine specifications and safety procedures for specific tasks.
- Follows standard safety precautions; adheres to operators instructions when using power tools; wears recommended protective equipment, such as goggles, hearing protectors and/or work gloves.
- Performs spot checks on equipment to ensure proper working condition, services tools and equipment as needed, and returns damaged items for repair or replacement.
- Ensures safe handling of hazardous or potentially dangerous materials.
- Ensures that assigned departments comply with company policies and safety standards.
- Ensures compliance with federal regulations, policies and laws regarding construction, repairs and proper environmental protection, hazardous waste disposal or use of chemical substances.

Required Skills/Abilities

- Ability to follow safety rules and guidelines.
- Ability to read material safety data sheets and follow manufacturers' directions for handling dangerous chemicals.
- Knowledge of safety hazards and proper use of various cleaning and sanitizing solutions.
- Ability safely to operate tools as needed.
- Ability to complete safety awareness training.

READY-TO-SEND E-MAILS SUPPORT A POSITIVE SAFETY CULTURE

A regular e-mail sent by the safety coordinator or safety committee to employees can help create safety awareness and remind employees that a safe workplace is important to everyone in the organization. MCIT offers ready-to-send safety messages to members at no cost. They are easy for anyone to send.

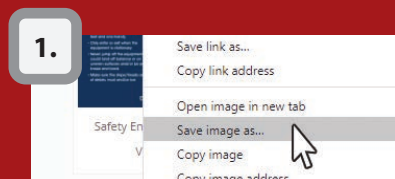
MCIT continually adds messages to the series. The e-mails include safety topics related to environmental exposures, chemicals in the workplace, slip and fall and more.

Messages are available to download from MCIT.org under the Safety tab on the Safety E-mails, Work Wisely and Step Wisely sections.

The messages are provided as jpeg images that are designed to be pasted into an HTML-formatted e-mail. In Outlook, the sender simply chooses HTML under the Format Text menu.

How to Send Images in E-mails

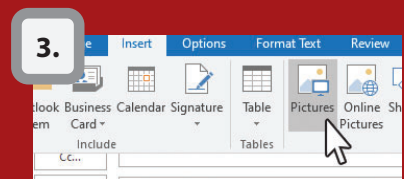
Sending the e-mails takes just a few simple steps. Members are encouraged to add some custom messages to make the e-mail more effective for their employees:



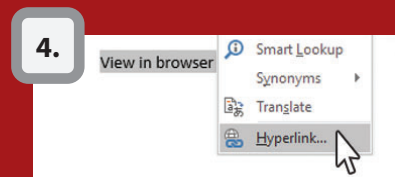
1. Left click on the message image you want to send. Then right click and select "Save image as." Choose the location where to save the file on your computer.



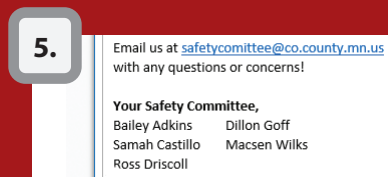
2. Open an e-mail message and click the cursor in the body of the message.



3. Choose "insert a picture" (in Outlook, this is under the Insert menu) and navigate to the image saved on your computer.

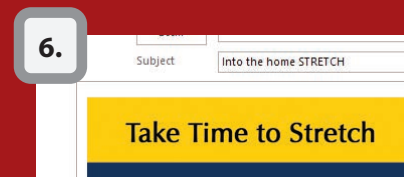


4. Add a "View in browser" link for recipients who may not be able to see images in e-mail messages. Create a hyperlink of the words "View in browser" to the URL address for the image you downloaded. This is the Web address on the page that opens when you click on the image on the website page.



5. Customize the message:

- If the message is part of the safety committee's efforts, include a signature with the names of committee members.
- Include information about to whom employees can go with their questions or concerns.



6. Use a catchy but relevant subject line for the e-mails to entice employees to open the message.