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## Ask The Expert: Contractor Safety Programs

Contractors fill one of every five jobs in the United States and Canada, and are expected to make up nearly half our workforce within the next decade. They bring with them varying degrees of occupational health and safety knowledge, training and experience, making it difficult for organizations to manage workplace safety.

To mitigate the risks associated with disparate, and potentially inadequate safety training of contractors who work on their behalf, more than 75% of companies in a recent NAEM safety management benchmarking discussion, plan to advance their contractor safety programs. It's for good reason: Preliminary OSHA reports show that organizations across industries and trades continue to fall short when addressing critical safety hazards, including the use of personal protective equipment, operation of machinery and industrial trucks, and fall protection, among other hazards.

A strong contractor safety program - one that prequalifies contractors before they are hired and monitors and manages ongoing safety performance - can ensure that contractors are adequately equipped to mitigate hazards. This can help to prevent worker injuries, protect corporate reputation, support compliance with government regulations, and avoid hefty fines associated with violations.

When contractors perform services at employer worksites, a detailed contract and contractor safety program protects the health and safety of both employees and contractors. The employer and the contractor share an obligation to communicate planned work activities, the hazards involved, and the contracted tasks, as well as the training, tools, and equipment that all employees will need.

Under both the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 and regional OHS Acts in Canada, **employers are responsible for providing safe and healthful workplaces for employees.** The following are detailed Safety, Health and Security Rules embedded in General Terms and Conditions for all contract work.

All contract workers will be removed and replaced in failing to comply with those Terms and Conditions:

- The contractor and his employees shall comply with all federal, state and local safety regulations.
- The use of or the possession of alcoholic beverages or nonprescription drugs is not permitted on premises.
- All unusual incidents should be reported immediately to the company representative, (accidents, damage to property, etc.)
- A 24-hour phone number will be left with the company representative while the contractor has workers or material on premises. Likewise, a 24-hour company number will be supplied to the contractor representative.
- Before starting any excavations, the contractor must consult with the company representative for all known underground utilities or other pipe lines or tanks.
- All hazardous openings or excavations must be barricaded at all time unless the work requires their temporary removal. The area will be lighted one hour before sunset till one hour after sunrise.
- While overhead work is being performed, signs must be posted in a conspicuous manner "Danger - Work Overhead". If sparks from cutting, etc., or other materials are falling, the area below must be roped off completely.
- Work shall not be performed under or immediately adjacent to loads being hoisted and all loose items of equipment or material shall be secured from falling.
- No riders are permitted on moving equipment, rigging or loads.
- Guylines must be clearly marked where they cross the travel space of paths, walkways or roadways.
- Fire doors must not be blocked or fastened

... continued from cover

- open. Wires, cables or hoses, etc. shall not pass through a doorway and prevent the fire door from closing completely.
- Acetylene, oxygen, nitrogen and other compressed gas cylinders must be securely fastened in an upright position.
- Jumping from docks, trucks or other platforms is prohibited.
- Do not use packages, drums or other items in place of ladders.
- Do not run.
- The contractor shall report any malfunction or potential safety hazard to the company representative.
- The contractor is responsible for noting the clearance under pipe racks, conduit racks, doors, ramps and other such overhead obstructions and reconciling any possible interference with equipment.
- The contractor shall observe the facility speed limits when moving any type of vehicle.
- Contractor personnel shall not connect to, adjust or otherwise tamper with company equipment.
- The possession of any type of weapon on company property is prohibited.
- Under no circumstances should a contractor employee enter a tank or confined space without first having obtained a Confined Space Entry permit. This permit is available through the company representative.

## Did You Know? Sprains "Could be" Part of the Job.

In a physically demanding industry, strains and sprains could be considered "part of the job." But most workers would rather live without them—especially when the pain goes beyond being just an annoyance.

There are numerous tasks that can lead to what have become known as musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). Frequently, they involve the use of equipment and moving of materials, or working with big pieces of equipment. It often seems that everything is heavy and difficult to handle, so MSDs are certainly a concern. They can occur from a single event (such as a lift, slip or fall) or from the buildup of tissue damage caused by many small injuries. Sometimes the symptoms are obvious and painful; in other instances there is no evidence in the early stages.

The most common contributing factors to MSDs and similar problems are:

- Awkward postures
- Repetitive motions
- Forceful exertions
- Pressure points
- Vibration

Environmental factors can also lead to strains, sprains and even more serious injury. Extreme high temperatures increase the rate at which the body becomes fatigued. Alternatively, exposure of the hands and

feet to cold temperatures can decrease blood flow, muscle strength and dexterity.

Workplace lighting that is too bright or too dim can cause workers to assume poor posture while performing a particular task.

The duration of work tasks plays a key role. Both the total time per work shift and the length of uninterrupted periods of work can contribute to problems. As repetitive motions and forceful exertions increase, so does the need for muscle-relaxing breaks to help reduce fatigue and prevent injury.

Performing tasks that require use of different muscle groups is another way of allowing the fatigued muscles to recover.

General solutions for strains and sprains include:

- Use proper lifting techniques at all times.
- Hoist the load slowly to limit its momentum and seek assistance when moving awkward, heavy equipment and tools, boxes or other containers.
- Use the proper stance and slip-lifting techniques and use lifting equipment that limits the manual positioning of heavy loads.
- Practice proper hand placement and use of pullback ropes.

Whether your job has the possibility of a quick muscle pull or a nagging ache that will worsen with time, take all the precautions you can, in addition to recovery breaks.

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# 10 HEALTHY HABITS

for mental fitness



## Effects of Mental Illness



# 10 Reasons Your Trainees Don't Listen to You

Chances are, your safety training sessions include at least one or two persons who aren't getting your message. Why aren't you getting through? There is no one answer to this question. On the contrary, there are a variety of things that can cause trainees to tune out their trainers. Here are 10 reasons that training messages don't reach their target:

## **They Really Can't Hear You**

There's nothing more frustrating than to deliver what you think is a clear message only to have it ignored. It's as if the trainee doesn't hear you. In fact, maybe he doesn't. Do you mumble? Are you dealing with an employee with hearing loss? When explaining procedures, speak slowly, loudly and clearly. And make sure trainees are literally able to hear them.

## **You're Speaking Greek**

Don't assume your students understand more than they do. Define any words which may be unfamiliar. Give them all the information you can. If you're not sure how much background knowledge they have, you can say something like, "This may be familiar to you, but let's go over it again."

## **They Hear the Message but Don't Understand the Reason**

Many trainees want to know not just what but why. This is especially true if you're trying to get them to adopt a change in procedure or technique. Explain the purpose behind the change. Otherwise, trainees may not accept the change and do things the same way they always have.

## **They Don't Appreciate the Stakes Involved**

Before explaining a safety procedure, point out the hazard involved. It makes a lot more sense to wear protective gloves when you know about flesh-melting chemicals.

## **Your Jokes Are Garbling the Message**

Humor can be an important tool in training. But you don't want to

overdo it. If you kid around too much, it may be hard for trainees to tell when you are serious. Don't hide behind jokes when delivering difficult messages. Your audience might not get the point.

## **You're Not Listening to their Questions and Concerns**

Give your trainees lots of chances to ask questions. You can gauge the level of understanding by what they ask. Never laugh at questions. Respect your trainees and help bolster their confidence. If there are no questions, don't assume everything is understood. Trainees may have nothing to ask because they don't understand what you were talking about.

## **You're Not Tailoring Your Message to Who They Are**

Differences in literacy levels and culture may make it difficult for you to communicate with your trainees. Be sensitive to these differences and look for ways to bridge them.

## **You're Not Testing Their Comprehension**

A big mistake trainers make is assuming that the message has been comprehended without verifying it. Ask the group to repeat the message back to you. "Okay, now what is the procedure for disposing of oily rags?"

## **You're Relying Too Heavily on the Spoken Word**

Different people have different learning styles. Some need to hear. Some need to see. Others need to experiment hands-on under your supervision. Still others won't learn a thing until they get their hands on a training manual. Most need a combination of these methods.

## **You're Not Anticipating Obstacles**

There may be roadblocks to following your instructions. Force of habit and uncertainty about what is expected are common ones. Maybe the trainee doesn't have the tools, equipment or procedures to follow through on what you said. Look at things through the trainee's eyes and try to anticipate these difficulties.



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## Safe Respirator Use

### What's At Stake

If a respirator is required for a job you're doing it means there is a risk of inhaling contaminants such as harmful dust or gas. Often the contaminant is difficult or impossible to see. For this reason, it is essential that any respirator is fitted and used correctly to ensure you are fully protected.

### What's the Danger?

Some airborne contaminants can cause nerve damage, burns to the skin, or irritation to the eyes, or respiratory system. Other contaminants are so toxic that inhaling them, or having them be absorbed through the skin, can lead to immediate death.

In other cases, inhaling contaminants over a prolonged period causes no immediate symptoms but eventually results in a chronic breathing illness such as asthma or a disease such as cancer.

A respirator must be appropriate for the work being done and the hazards of the environment. It must work and fit correctly. Using the wrong type of respirator or one that doesn't fit, means there's the chance you could breathe in these harmful airborne contaminants.

### How to Protect Yourself

5 easy ways to make a safe choice when choosing a respirator

#### 1. Be prepared

- Know the risks in your work environment.
- Use the safety data sheet (SDS) for extra guidance on a respiratory hazard.
- Before entering a space that requires the use of a respirator, check:
  - What the respiratory hazards are and what safety controls are in place.
  - The respirator you are using is suitable for the hazards

#### 2. Breathe safe air

- There are two major categories of respirators. Supplied-air respirators and air purifying respirators.
- Supplied-air respirators SARs, include airline respirators, self-contained breathing apparatus or SCBA and emergency escape respirators.
- Protective suits that totally encapsulate the wearer's body and incorporate a life-support system are used are also included in this category.

#### 3. Keep the bits out

- Air-purifying respirators (APRs) include:
  - particulate respirators, such as dust fume, and mist respirators or masks.
  - chemical cartridge respirators which combine chemical

cartridges and a dust filter;

- gas masks; and
- powered air-purifying respirators (PAPRs).

#### 4. Have the correct barrier

- Filters are made of material that traps particles, so you do not breathe them in. Check and change them frequently to make sure they don't get clogged up with particulates.
- Cartridges contain a material that absorbs gases and vapors.
  - Check and change them frequently as they become full or saturated with the contaminant.
- Check the barrier is suitable for oily environments. N series means it is not resistant to oil and should only be used if no oil particles are present. R series are resistant to oil and can be used in an oily environment but only for a limited time, such as one shift. P series, or oil-proof may be used in any atmosphere but carry out filter checks and changes per manufacturer's instructions.

#### 5. Make it fit

- Ensure there is a good seal between the skin and the respirator mask. Avoid beards, long sideburns, or even a two-day stubble and wearing eyeglasses.
- In some cases, facial scars or an acne problem can prevent a proper seal.
- Have the right type for the hazard:
  - A mouth-bit respirator fits in the mouth and comes with a nose clip to hold nostrils closed and is used for escape purposes only.
  - A quarter-mask covers the nose and mouth; whereas a
  - Half-face mask covers the face from the nose to below the chin.
  - A full facepiece covers the face from above the eyes to below the chin and protects the eyes from exposure to irritating chemicals.
- Do a fit test
  - In a negative fit test, the facepiece should collapse or "squish in" slightly on your face.
  - In a positive fit test, the respirator should expand or "puff out" slightly.

### Final Word

Breathing in airborne contaminants can cause breathing problems and lung problems in both the long and short term. The more often a worker is exposed to these contaminants, the greater the risk of them developing a long-term illness. Respirators are very effective at removing the risk of exposure, but you must have the right kind and use it correctly.



## Making the Best Use of Lifting & Handling Aids

### What's At Stake

Workers who perform frequent and heavy lifting are at risk for back injuries and abdominal straining that can cause hernias. Arm, shoulder, neck and wrist pain is also a risk if materials are lifted improperly.

The use of lifting and handling aids can help remove or reduce the risk of worker injury.

Most lifting and handling aids fall into one of five categories:

- 1. Powered Trucks and Vehicles:** Forklifts, battery operated hand trucks and pallet converters.
- 2. Non-Powered Trucks and Aids:** Pallet hand truck, pallet tilter, keg hand truck, hand truck with hydraulic lift.
- 3. Conveyor Belts, Tracks and Chutes:** Conveyors with turntables, gravity rollers, roller tracks and ball tables.
- 4. Adjustable Height and Tilt Tables:** Adjustable height turntable, sheet tables, auto-levelers and rotary tables.
- 5. Mechanical Hoists and Vacuum Lifting Devices:** Vacuum hoists, tub hoists and conveyor hoists.

### What's the Danger?

Worker lifting injuries can result in excessive retraining costs for an employer, wage and overtime expenses and even increased insurance premiums.

Those injured on the job might find it hard to sleep at night, lose job opportunities and find it difficult to enjoy leisure activities.

### Example

A worker needed to move a heavy length of timber to the top of a stack. He knew that it was very heavy, but he was in a hurry. Rather than taking the time to determine what equipment and assistance he needed to move the timber safely, he tried to pick up the timber and push it to the top of the stack alone. The timber fell off the stack and the worker tried to catch it, suffering an injury to his lower back. He is still in daily pain and can't stay sitting or standing for long. The worker lost his job when he was no longer able to perform his duties, and he is still searching for work several years later.

### How to Protect Yourself

Here are five ways to protect yourself.

1. Don't get in a rush. Take time to assess whether you can safely lift an item or if you will need the assistance of a lifting or moving aid.
2. Make sure that you have the right equipment for the job. Some materials that need to be moved are simply too heavy or awkward to for an aid and will require a forklift operator's assistance.
3. Check terrain in terms of stability and ground surface. Ensure

that the path you need to travel with the material will work with the equipment you have available to move it. Is there enough headroom? Can you maneuver the load around any corners or obstacles in the path?

4. Check the weight rating on the equipment. Don't exceed the safe working load.
5. Follow the equipment manufacturer's instructions for safely loading and unloading the equipment.

If you're at all uncertain about how to move materials without risking an injury, talk to your supervisor about the safest way to transport a load.

### Final Word

Lifting injuries can be costly for an employer, and have long-term consequences for a worker. But almost all incidents can be avoided by making use of the correct lifting or handling aid.

## Quiz

1. Heavy materials should be lifted in the fastest way possible.  
 True  
 False
2. Back injuries caused from improper lifting can last a lifetime.  
 True  
 False
3. Workers should do which of these things to protect themselves from lifting injuries:  
a. Take time to assess whether a load can be safely lifted.  
b. Check the safe working load on a lifting or handling aid prior to moving a load.  
c. Check the moving path for obstructions prior to moving a load on a lifting or handling aid.  
d. All of the above
4. Workers who perform frequent and heavy lifting are at risk for hernias caused by abdominal strain.  
 True  
 False
5. A supervisor will not be able to help you determine the correct lifting or handling aid for moving a load.  
 True  
 False

## How to Stack and Store Materials Safely

### What's At Stake

There's hardly a workplace that doesn't handle or store materials. Whether your company has a large warehouse or a small storage room, whether you have loading docks and forklifts or just garages and pallet jacks, there's material that needs to be moved around. And you need to make sure you approach this common task with safety in mind.

### What's the Danger?

Manually handling objects—that is, carrying, unpacking, stacking or storing materials by hand—has its risks. Lifting objects can cause injuries from strains and sprains. Improper storing and handling of material and equipment can result in materials striking or crushing workers.

### Here's an example:

A 26-year-old Yale student who was working on his master's degree in technical design and production, had his dreams and his life cut short while unloading materials from a truck in advance of a theater production.

The 32 sheets of particleboard should have been placed on the floor of the truck. But instead they were loaded upright and strapped to one side. When the straps were loosened, the load toppled and the student was fatally crushed. He'd been wearing a hardhat, but it was knocked off when he was struck by the wood, which weighed at least 1,000 pounds (454 kilograms).

### How to Protect Yourself

#### *Personal Protective Equipment*

Protecting yourself starts with the basics. Wear the right PPE. Find out what you're moving, what the hazards are and what PPE is required. This may range from head, foot and hand protection to special PPE if hazardous chemicals are involved.

#### *Use Correct Lifting and Carrying Methods*

Follow these four steps:

1. Study the shape and size of the load. Get help if it's too much to handle yourself. For large or awkward loads, use a team lift or a mechanical device.
2. Plan your route and rest stops ahead of time. Before you pick it up, know where you'll put it down and if there are workers, materials, or surface hazards along your path. Make sure you can see over the top of the item. To change direction, turn your feet. Do not twist your body.
3. Stand with your feet about shoulder width apart to lift the object. Bend your knees, keep your back straight, grasp the item and raise it slowly.
4. Set the load down by keeping your back straight and the load close to your body. Bend your knees and move slowly and

smoothly.

#### *Stack Materials Safely*

There are three simple steps for stacking materials safely:

1. Start with a level, solid base for a stack.
2. Observe the maximum load limits for floors, shelving, elevators and other surfaces.
3. Materials should be stacked with weight, size and shape taken into consideration so they do not fall over. For example, Heavy materials should never be stacked too high. While bags or boxes may be stacked in layers, cylindrical objects must be racked on solid supports to prevent them from shifting and rolling.

#### *Stack Materials Correctly*

1. Pay attention to what materials and other substances are stored together. Some examples: A fire might occur if flammable materials and fuels or solvents are placed close to each other. Incompatible chemicals might explode. Do not store liquid chemicals above dry ones.
2. Know how to properly store chemicals and other potentially hazardous materials. Read the safety data sheet (SDS).
3. Make sure there is adequate space in storage areas for an emergency escape route, emergency equipment and personnel.

### Final Word

To stack and store materials safely you must use your body, engage your mind, and use equipment the right way.

## What Would You Do?

Everyone knows that heavy objects should never be stacked high up on shelves—everyone it seems, except some of your co-workers who unsafely stack materials on a regular basis. It's only a matter of time before a heavy object rolls onto an unsuspecting worker below. What would you do?

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# SAFETY TALK *CRANE SAFETY*

## Crane Safety

### What's At Stake

A crane is one of the most versatile and important pieces of equipment usually found on a construction job. It can be used to accomplish a lot of otherwise heavy lifting tasks. It is often one of the largest pieces of equipment on a work site with many different operating functions. This means the operator must be able to concentrate on the tasks and be aware of their surroundings.

### What's the Danger?

Few experiences may be as frightening as when a crane becomes unbalanced while a load is being lifted or when the crane collapses under the weight of an excessive load. An unbalanced load or crane collapse can cause death to the operator, other construction workers, can cause damage to property or equipment.

A crane operator's view of the full crane is often limited, putting them at risk of coming too close to people, property or power lines.

Other dangers include the crane's boom, cable, or load contacting power lines and causing electrocution, or arcing if the crane is too close the power lines. Weather and environmental conditions including:

- Extreme heat or cold;
- Heavy rain and lightning; and
- Snowstorms or heavy snow; and windy conditions.

### How to Protect Yourself

#### Power lines

Before assembling or disassembling:

1. Notify owner/utility company – and consider it to be energized until utility company confirms power line has been de-energized and visibly grounded at the worksite; or
2. Ensure that no part of the equipment, load line or load (including rigging and lifting accessories), gets closer than 20 feet to the power line; or
3. Determine the line voltage and the minimum clearance distance permitted.

#### Weather

*Cold/Freezing* Conditions can add weight to the boom or load; affect the hydraulic system; and can cause the operator's hands to become cold—making it harder to operate the controls.

Stay Safe and never operate a crane when the boom is covered with ice or snow – this increases the weight and can cause collapse. Keep warm, especially hands, so you can carry out the crane movements accurately.

*Winds* speeds increase as you go higher in the air. This increases load movement/swing and instability. Power lines may also swing, so increase the safe working distance from the lines.

1. Check the crane's manufacturer guide to see the safe wind speed conditions.
2. If no guide is available, consider postponing the lift if the wind speed/gust is in the range of 15-20 mph (7-9 m/s). Above 20 mph (11 m/s), the lift must be canceled.

#### Rain and Water

1. Heavy rain and water can increase the weight of load and overall weight limits of the crane. Muddy surroundings increase the risk of crane becoming unbalanced and workers have an increased risk of slipping in the mud. And wet weather gear can reduce peripheral vision and hearing.
2. Adjust your load weight because snow and rain increase load weight.
3. Remove mud and water from the load because it can pull it down.
4. Check your base ground is safe because rain, snow and mud can make the support surface unstable.

#### Poor Visibility

1. Double check what your colleagues are doing, because poor visibility makes it hard/impossible to see hand signals.
2. Use radio communications or wait until visibility is better if possible.

#### General Safety

Let's wrap up with six general rules for crane safety.

1. See and be seen
2. Always be aware of swing radius
3. Never work or walk under a boom or load
4. Never ride the hook
5. Always wear a hard hat and other PPE
6. Stay off and away from the crane

#### Final Word

Cranes are invaluable for moving heavy loads on construction sites. Treat them with respect, stay alert and stay safe.

## What Would You Do?

You are part of a big shutdown and timelines are tight, the pace is hectic, and the hours are long. You've got one more lift to make for the shift and the wind has picked up considerably in the last 20 minutes. You are being pressured to get the lift done but you know the wind makes the lift riskier than usual. What would you do?



## Keep Improving Your Safety Meetings

You are a safety professional, but being a professional means constantly looking for new and better ways to incrementally improve your game. Here are some tips and tricks to help you improve your next safety meeting.

### Do a Post Mortem

After your meeting, do a review to determine what you can improve. Did you get the message across? Do your workers understand what you have tried to teach them? Can you think of better ways to convey the information?

### Use Plain LANGUAGE! Avoid Biz Speak!

*"It says here on the SDS you should be wearing PPE. I mean this stuff is acutely toxic. What if OSHA shows up?"*

*"You'll be working swing on the next rotation, and after that straight mids. Now get down to HR for your documentation."*

*"We need to take the helicopter view and think outside the box. Let's foster an attitude of value-adding while we repurpose this byproduct."*

We all engage in workplace jargon. We use shortcut words, phrases and abbreviations. And we use terms specific to our jobs, tools and procedures. When everyone involved understands the language, we can communicate well.

But consider the plight of a new worker. They're in a strange place trying to do unfamiliar work. They don't understand half of what is being said, and nobody slows down long enough to explain. Instead of asking for explanations, they just nod and hopes to figure out what is going on.

The new worker is unlikely to ask all the necessary questions unless you encourage them to do so. Fear of failing at the job and fear of embarrassment are compelling reasons to stay silent. Lack of understanding can be fatal, when safety instructions are misunderstood.

Try these tips for clear COMMUNICATION:

- Speak and write in plain language.
- Avoid jargon, abbreviations, acronyms and industry slang. When you find yourself using these terms, back up and explain them.
- Consider the listener or reader. Would they understand? If in doubt, spell it out.
- Start with simple explanations before going into detail.
- Use visual aids to help explain matters. Illustrations, charts, videos and demonstrations can clear up confusion.
- Encourage your trainees to ask questions. Have them stop you right away when you say something they don't understand. They should be encouraged to keep after you until they are clear on the idea.

- Have them repeat instructions back to you so you can identify misunderstandings.
- Use the language of the workplace. If you do not speak the language of your workers, get help from translators such as other employees.

If you want people to understand YOU, consider talking like this :

- *"It says here on this paper this chemical is really bad for you and you need to wear something to protect yourself. We will train you so you will understand and work safely."*
- *"You will be working from 3 p.m. to 11 p.m. for two weeks, and then from 11 p.m. to 7 a.m. Let's get you signed up."*
- *"We should figure out a new way to sell this scrap and make more money for the company."*

### More Public Speaking Pointers

At some point or other, many of us will have to get up and speak to a group — if not as part of our job, then perhaps at a PTA meeting, company picnic or a bowling league banquet.

When the time comes, remember that just as important as what you say is how you say it. Properly using your body language can go a long way toward capturing your audience's attention.

Here are some hints to make your next speech (or even your first) a winner:

- Walk confidently as you approach the podium and take long, steady strides at an even speed.
- Don't dive right into your speech. Smile first and make eye contact with the audience, scanning right and left for about five seconds before speaking. Acknowledge any applause with a nod and a smile and then pause.
- Stand up straight with your shoulders square, but not too stiffly. You can lean forward slightly, but don't hunch over.
- Don't fidget with your hands. Use easy, natural gestures to express your message; for example, drawing a horizontal line with one hand, palm down, emphasizes a non-negotiable point.
- Deliver important points slowly, leaning forward and placing hands on the podium.
- Be natural, but a little "larger than life," slightly exaggerating your gestures and facial expressions because the audience sees you from a distance.
- Stand at the podium when you are finished speaking. Again, look directly at your audience. Acknowledge any applause with a smile and a nod, then calmly turn and walk offstage or back to your seat.

## Proving the ROI of Safety

In a perfect world, companies would invest in safety because protecting workers is the “right thing to do.” While some of you may be lucky enough to work for companies like that, most safety managers have to make their case in terms of return on investment (ROI)—that dollars invested in safety improve the company’s financial performance. Since safety doesn’t generate revenue, safety managers must show that it cuts company costs. But saying that “safety saves money” is a cliché. The real challenge for safety managers is to back up the assertion with substantive economic arguments. There’s a report from Liberty Mutual Insurance that can help you do that.

### SAFETY AND ROI

Liberty Mutual, the nation’s leading provider of workers’ compensation insurance, interviewed 200 executives responsible for workers’ compensation at their companies—75 from mid-size companies with 100 to 999 workers, and 125 from big companies with over 1,000 workers. A whopping 95 percent of these executives said that workplace safety has a positive effect on financial performance.

The really juicy stuff: of this 95%, 61% reported that they get an ROI of at least 3 dollars for every dollar they invest in safety. Understanding how the executives calculated this ROI should help you understand how your own corporate officers think and thus enable you to make a stronger case for safety.

### DEMONSTRATING THE ECONOMIC VALUE OF SAFETY

When workplace injuries and illnesses occur, a company incurs 2 kinds of costs:

**Direct Costs:** This includes payments to injured workers, reimbursement of medical bills and other expenditures covered by insurance.

**Indirect Costs:** This includes loss of productivity, cost of training replacement workers, damage to the company’s reputation, increased future premiums and other losses not covered by insurance.

Direct costs are the obvious thing that companies look at when analyzing ROI on safety. Indirect costs are the hidden costs that tend to get overlooked. But as the Liberty Mutual report suggests, focusing on direct costs underestimates the real savings of injury prevention. Ninety-three percent of the executives Liberty Mutual surveyed say there’s a direct relationship between direct and indirect costs. Forty percent report that \$1 of direct costs generates between \$3 and \$5 of indirect costs. Thirteen percent of respondents (and findings from other studies) report that the relationship between indirect and direct costs is as high as 10 to 1.

Here are highlights of the survey:

- Safety positively affects financial performance: 95%
- Safety has a substantial positive effect on performance: 24%
- Safety has a positive ROI: 86%

- Each \$1 invested returns \$3 or more: 61%
- Each \$1 invested returns \$10: 13%
- There’s a close relationship between direct and indirect costs of accidents: 93%
- There are between \$3 and \$5 of indirect costs for each \$1 of direct costs: 40%

### DECIDING WHICH SAFETY INITIATIVES DELIVER THE MOST ROI

There’s another important finding of the Liberty Mutual report: Most business executives, even the ones who understand the economic value of safety, don’t understand how best to invest their safety-related resources.

### ACCIDENTS: THE GAP BETWEEN PERCEPTION AND REALITY

In addition to asking for perceptions about ROI, Liberty Mutual asked business executives what they thought were the leading causes of workplace accidents and compared the responses to an actual ranking of accident causes based on the direct costs to companies in 1998. The result: The report found a big gap between business executives’ perceptions and reality as far as the cause of accidents is concerned.

For example, executives listed repetitive motion as the most important cause of accidents and said they planned to focus most of their safety resources in preventing repetitive motion accidents. In reality, however, repetitive motion was only sixth on the list of actual leading causes of accidents, generating \$2.3 billion in direct costs to companies in 1998, or less than 25 percent of the \$9.8 billion in direct costs generated by the leading accident cause—overexertion. We’ve listed all of the numbers at right so you can see the disconnect between perception and reality.

### WHAT IT MEANS

Showing that safety has a positive ROI for other companies can help you get your executives to open their wallets and invest in safety. But that’s only half the battle. It’s incumbent upon safety directors to see to it that the dollars invested generate a positive ROI for your company. As the Liberty Mutual report shows, the business executives can’t necessarily be relied on to make the most prudent investments in the safety realm. They need your help identifying the company’s needs and directing resources to where they’ll do the most good.

Focus on leading and not lagging indicators, by explaining that overexertion cost business about \$9.8 billion in repetitive motion strain claims. or communicate how falls from the same level cost \$4.4 billion compared to falls to a lower level at \$3.6 billion.

Being able to communicate in real ROI goes a long way in helping your executive seem the value in workplace safety initiatives.

*SOURCE: Liberty Mutual Insurance Co.: Executive Survey of Workplace Safety*

# Don't Let Safety

## Prevent slips, trips and falls at work

### **Take steps to prevent**

- Wear proper footwear with good treads.
- Fix loose or curled carpets, mats and floor tiles.
- Make sure lighting is bright enough to see properly.
- Mark walkway slopes and changes of levels.
- Secure trailing cables.

### **Keep it clean and clear**

- Keep floors clean and dry.
- Wipe up spills quickly.
  - Keep aisles and walkways clear of clutter and obstacles.

### **Watch out**

- Watch for holes, cracks, or uneven, rough areas on walkways.
- Take extra care on steps or painted wood or concrete surfaces that could be slippery.

Slip



# MEMO

## Coronavirus and Flu Prevention

Date:

To: All employees

From:

The world health community continues to monitor closely the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the disease it causes, named "coronavirus disease 2019" (COVID-19). At this time, no one knows how severe this outbreak will be. Given this uncertainty, and the fact that the seasonal influenza (flu) virus is also widespread, we are taking proactive steps to address a number of business concerns. First and foremost, we want to maintain a safe workplace and encourage and/or adopt practices protecting the health of employees, customers, visitors or others. We also want to ensure the continuity of business operations in the event of a pandemic.

We ask all employees to cooperate in taking steps to reduce the transmission of communicable diseases in the workplace. Employees are reminded of the following:

- Stay home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands frequently with warm, soapy water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your mouth with tissues whenever you sneeze, and discard used tissues in the trash.
- Avoid people who are sick with respiratory symptoms.
- Clean frequently touched surfaces.

[Company name] will provide alcohol-based hand sanitizers throughout the workplace and in common areas. Cleaning sprays

and wipes will also be provided to clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces such as telephones and keyboards.

Employees are encouraged to use telephone and video conferencing instead of face-to-face meetings as much as possible during this outbreak. IT support services are available to employees who need assistance with this technology.

It is critical that employees do not report to work while they are experiencing respiratory symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills or fatigue. Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that employees remain at home until at least 24 hours after they are free of fever (100 degrees F or 37.8 degrees C) or signs of a fever without the use of fever-reducing medications. Many times, with the best of intentions, employees report to work even though they feel ill. We provide paid sick time and other benefits to compensate employees who are unable to work due to illness. Employees who report to work ill will be sent home in accordance with these health guidelines.

While we currently do not offer formal telework arrangements, [company name] will consider, on a case-by-case basis, requests from employees to work from home during this time. While not all positions are conducive to telework, those positions with primary job duties that can be effectively performed remotely will be given consideration.

Please contact the human resources department with any questions or concerns.

## FATALITY FILE

### Falling Crane Shears Off Light Standard

A worker received massive head injuries when a crane lifting a 54,600-pound piece of steel tipped over.

The crane was unstable because one outrigger device, which extends from the crane to balance it was inoperable. The crew was concerned about the crane tipping over, so one person was appointed to watch the crane wheels and sound the alarm if the wheels lifted off the ground. He tried to communicate to the crane driver by way of a hand-held radio as the wheels began to lift. The crane operator was unable to hear what he was saying. Seconds later, the crane tipped over.

The victim was also equipped with a radio and was watching to make sure no bystanders were in the way. As the crane began to tip over, all the ground personnel began to run. The crane boom struck a 70-foot wooden light standard, shearing it off. The falling pole struck the victim and killed him. The crane operator was trapped in the crane

and had to be rescued. He received extensive injuries but survived.

When machinery is not in good working order, it poses a danger to everyone around it and should never be used until properly repaired. Devices such as the outrigger for this crane are made to prevent mishaps. Formal, hands-on training under qualified supervision is needed to learn how to safely operate machinery. Whenever you use equipment, become familiar with the manufacturer's instructions, such as the load lifting charts for cranes.



**Find hundreds of Fatality Files at ILT. SafetyNow.com to help reinforce your next safety meeting by illustrating the real risks with workplace hazards.**