

Training at All Levels

Construction companies in partnership with workers are responsible for ensuring that jobsite hazards are eliminated or at least minimized. These partnerships are most effective when they exist within a positive safety climate.

The **safety climate** on a specific construction project refers to managements' and workers' shared perceptions of the adequacy of the safety and health programs and the consistency between the organization's espoused safety policies/procedures and the actual conditions at the jobsite. It is the combination of safety climates from multiple organizations including the project owner, construction manager/general contractor, and subcontractors and it may be influenced by local conditions such as project delivery, scheduling, planning methods and existing norms amongst involved trades.

All employees need to know and understand where and how they fit into the safety culture and climate. The best way to ensure this happens is to provide ongoing, effective training tailored to the specific roles and responsibilities at each level of the organization. Training should be provided by qualified trainers using adult learning principles; including active and interactive learning techniques. Which best describes your company?

UNINFORMED	→ REACTIVE	→ COMPLIANT	→ PROACTIVE	→ EXEMPLARY
Company does not engage in on-going employee training and education. It assumes workers are trained properly when they come on-site and that supervisors have leadership skills. Fraudulent training cards may even be accepted.	Only the OSHA 10-hour certificate is required for both workers and supervisors. The training that exists is aimed exclusively at individual worker behavior. Training is only implemented after an incident, and the commitment to training diminishes over time.	Workers are provided OSHA 10 training. An off-the-shelf curriculum is used to meet OSHA and management system training requirements. Majority of training is provided via toolbox talks. Trainers meet minimal qualifications. Training records are kept, but not reviewed.	Supervisors are required to obtain OSHA 30-hour certificate. Management provides adequate resources needed to ensure high quality training, and testing for knowledge and skills obtained. Safety curriculum is developed and administered by highly qualified trainers. Training needs may be identified by workers. Supervisors get training on safety skills, as well as OSHA standards.	Company implements a Safety Trained Supervisor (STS) certification program. Training programs are ongoing versus one-shot opportunities and trainers use adult learning principles. Supervisor-specific training as well as peer training is implemented. Field personnel are integral to identifying training needs and developing materials rather than simply passive recipients.

How to become exemplary

Review the ideas below and check the short-term (1-2 months), mid-term (6-12 months), or long-term (1-2 years) circle to indicate which you will commit to adopt and by when. *Congratulations, if you've already adopted the idea!*

Idea 1—Supervisors: Front-line supervisors are the linchpin for safety on the jobsite. Therefore, it is critical that they are trained in the skills necessary to foster a good jobsite safety climate. Some ideas include:

1a. OSHA Training

Supervisors should have OSHA 30-hour training at the very least. It would be ideal if they received certification as safety-trained supervisors.

- Already Adopted
- Short-term
- Mid-term
- Long-term




1b. Leadership and Communication Skills

For most people, leadership skills are not innate; they must be learned through education and experience. Supervisors should be given the opportunity to participate in leadership training where they would learn how to effectively communicate their vision and expectations, act as a positive role model, and be able to coach workers on how to create a strong jobsite safety climate, and provide constructive feedback. Supervisors should also receive training in the elements of an effective safety management system to better understand processes and expectations.

- Already Adopted
- Short-term
- Mid-term
- Long-term





1c. Team Level Root Cause Analysis

Provide supervisor training on how best to work with their crew to conduct root-cause analyses to examine environmental, organizational, and human factors that contribute to jobsite incidents and close calls. Establish a process to easily share findings from these investigations across the whole organization.

-  Already Adopted
-  Short-term
-  Mid-term
-  Long-term

1d. Role Modeling





Educate supervisors on the importance of being a good safety role model. For example, they should always use proper personal protective equipment (PPE), insist their workers (and managers who come on-site) do so as well, and uphold accountability measures. Training on coaching skills is critical to help supervisors be more effective at motivating their team to participate in creating a strong safety climate. Supervisors need to be aware that their perception of risk may be different than the workers and keep that in mind when evaluating and responding to worker complaints.

-  Already Adopted
-  Short-term
-  Mid-term
-  Long-term

Idea 2—Workers: Training should provide workers with the tools they need to identify and report hazards, and the knowledge to protect themselves. Some ideas include:


2a. OSHA Training

All workers should have at least an OSHA 10-hour training certificate and preferably the OSHA 30-hour certificate.

-  Already Adopted
-  Short-term
-  Mid-term
-  Long-term




2b. Empowerment

Training should include methods for empowering workers to actively participate in recognizing potential hazards on the jobsite and understand their right (and obligation) to stop work when a hazard is identified that is serious or presents an imminent danger to themselves or their co-workers.

-  Already Adopted
-  Short-term
-  Mid-term
-  Long-term





2c. Communication Skills

Workers would benefit from training on how to communicate effectively with co-workers and supervisors, including how to listen and how to provide constructive feedback.

-  Already Adopted
-  Short-term
-  Mid-term
-  Long-term



2d. Proper Use of PPE

Workers should be able to demonstrate their knowledge of, and ability to use, proper PPE. If the worker is unable to do so, the worker should receive training and a skills evaluation prior to going onto the jobsite.

-  Already Adopted
-  Short-term
-  Mid-term
-  Long-term




Idea 3—Management

Provide management with safety leadership training so they understand the critical role they play in leading and maintaining safety implementation efforts. The training would include how best to communicate, provide feedback, and be a good role model for workers, particularly when visiting jobsites. Management should also be educated about and have a comprehensive understanding of how safety fits into and complements quality, production, marketing, and the financial aspects of their organization.

-  Already Adopted
-  Short-term
-  Mid-term
-  Long-term

Idea 4—In-house architects and engineers

Provide training for in-house architects and engineers on Prevention through Design (PtD) strategies that they could use during the planning and design stages of a project to design out potential hazards from equipment, structures, materials, and processes that might adversely affect workers or end users of the project.

-  Already Adopted
-  Short-term
-  Mid-term
-  Long-term