



7 tips for boosting safety performance

If improving safety performance is one of your organizations rocks, we've identified seven essential elements to help you get there. Read on to learn what others have done to reach the top.

- 1. Engage employees.** Involving employees in the safety process permits them to demonstrate their commitment while building pride, ownership, and skills. Start with an employee survey to identify the issues that matter most to your workers and where they feel improvement is needed. Involve employees in safety planning. Send them out to divisions of your company or other businesses to learn about best practices.
- 2. Identify and report hazards.** The process of eliminating a hazard starts with identifying and reporting it. One large industrial site posts a safety logbook at each of its locations. Employees are encouraged to enter risks or safety concerns into the book. Another proven tactic is maintaining a library of up-to-date job hazard analyses (JHAs).
- 3. Get the most from your managers and supervisors.** Managers and front-line supervisors have the most direct access to workers. Their actions, reactions, and attitudes can have a huge impact on employees' safety performance. Make sure your managers and supervisors:
 - Routinely discuss safety at staff and employee meetings;
 - Attend and participate in safety committee meetings;
 - Conduct facility walkarounds, noting best practices or areas in need of improvement;
 - Use coaching and feedback to encourage safe behaviors;
 - Launch accident investigations as soon as possible and follow up to identify corrective actions; *and*
 - Make it clear to employees that they may shut down an operation if they believe conditions are unsafe or unhealthful.
- 4. Put it in writing.** OSHA considers a written safety and health program the gold standard. If you don't have one, you should. You also need a safety and health mission statement that aligns with your corporate goals and culture. Communicate the statement to all employees, customers, contractors, and suppliers and feature it on your website. Codify your safety policies and practices into a document that is easy for managers and employees to consult and use.

5. **Be ready.** Emergencies don't just happen to the business down the road. You've got to be prepared for a wide range of unexpected events. An emergency plan should be inclusive and reflect all possible contingencies. It should be site-specific and based on a thorough hazard assessment as well as an understanding of risks specific to location, weather patterns, etc.
6. **Use OSHA resources.** True, OSHA is the enforcer. But the agency is also interested in helping employers comply with the law, protect workers from illness and injury, and stay competitive in the market.
7. **Get involved in health and wellness.** Compliance with safety and health regulations is your duty under the law. While there are no comparable laws governing diet, exercise, and stress, many experts agree that these factors play a role in keeping employees present and productive. Research points to a drop in medical costs of more than three dollars for every dollar invested in wellness, and a drop in absenteeism costs of more than \$2 for every \$1 spent. Programs range from informal walking groups at small workplaces to comprehensive programs at larger sites with onsite clinics, classes, healthy cafeteria options, and sponsored sports teams.

Don't just wish it, make it happen

As you focus on wrapping up 2018 in a positive manner, keep your eyes on the opportunity to send workers home to their families healthy and uninjured and keep your organization profitable.