

EHS Today

The background of the page is a complex, abstract composition of vertical bars and overlapping geometric shapes. The colors are diverse, including shades of green, yellow, orange, red, purple, and blue. The bars vary in height and are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement. Scattered throughout the composition are numerous small, white, circular dots, some of which are slightly blurred, giving the impression of a starry field or a digital data visualization.

2016 EHS
NATIONAL
SAFETY
SURVEY



sandy says

National Safety Survey: Safety Valued Over Production

In previous years, respondents to the National Safety Survey claimed safety and production were viewed as equally important to management and sometimes, production edged out safety on that question. All that has changed.

Back in 2002, when EHS Today (then named Occupational Hazards) initiated the first National Safety Survey, we didn't ask a single question about the value of safety versus production. Perhaps that's because, 15 years ago, safety still was viewed by many as a "program," not a process or as part of the business. Safety was viewed as necessary, but didn't come close to being perceived as an aspect of the business that contributed to leadership in an industry.

Over the years, that attitude has changed. Often, companies that are leaders in their industries also are viewed as leaders in safety and environmental performance. This year, for example, we asked, "Does your organization prioritize safety over production and/or other business demands?" I can't compare this year's answers to that question with those on the first safety survey in 2002 because we didn't ask that question.

This year, nearly 70 percent of respondents said that their company does prioritize safety over production and other business values. Over 80 percent said that top management provides active and visible support for occupational safety and health; again, another question that was not asked in earlier versions of the National Safety Survey. If it had been asked, I think the numbers might have been reversed, with fewer than 20 percent of respondents saying top management actively supported safety efforts.

What we did learn this year, when we asked, "If resources were not an issue, what would be at the top of your wish list in regards to ensuring employee safety?" is that EHS professionals now are turning to that mid-level of management – supervisors and managers – as the final frontier needed to push safety measures forward. Here is a sample of responses:

• "I do not believe throwing money will fix the issues. I believe that if all supervisors/managers truly walked the talk there would be a vast improvement."

• "More one-on-one engagement with middle management. While they want everyone working safely, they struggle to visibly demonstrate it to staff."

• "Upgrading plant & equipment to engineer out hazards. Targeted coaching of business leaders, managers and supervisors on how to set the right example."

• "Send the production supervisors and plant manager to an OSHA 30-hour course."

• "Leadership training for foremen/supervisors."

• "Supervisors and managers would encourage employees to utilize their stop work authority (and mean it!)."

What surprised me most about the answers to that question, though, was the overwhelming number of respondents (more than 50 percent) who said they would ask for more training: More training and professional development for themselves, as well as more and better targeted training for employees and supervisors, more hands-on training and more training for contractors. Many responded simply: "Training," and in more than one case: "Training, training, training!"

Said one such respondent: "Training, Training, Training. There is never enough and it is not administered in a fashion that is suitable for all. Also more employee involvement with the workings and functions of the EHS personnel and get a behind-the-scenes look. Getting everybody to work together as a unit."

Several respondents also noted they have a multi-cultural workforce and in an ideal world, would offer training in a number of languages.

One question we've never asked before – because it didn't exist – is the impact that OSHA's new public database will have on safety initiatives. Most respondents (78 percent) said it will have no impact on their safety initiatives.

The EHS professionals who indicated it would have an impact were divided as to whether that impact would be positive or negative. Nearly half indicated they worried that some workers – perhaps at the subtle urging of employers – would underreport injuries. They also complained that it focused on a lagging indicator, with one respondent calling it "basically a body count."

Others viewed it in a positive light, saying companies would be forced to be more transparent – with employees, customers, their industry and contractors – about injuries and illnesses that occur. Some felt they could leverage the threat of increased public scrutiny to increase corporate focus on safety, resulting in more resources.

"If everyone can see what we are doing wrong, including our customers or potential customers, there will be a big emphasis on getting it fixed," one respondent noted.

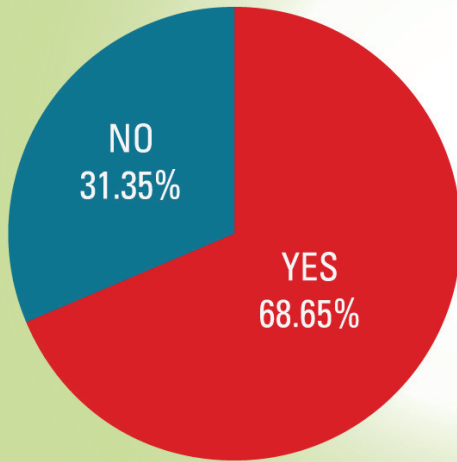
EHS

Send an e-mail with your thoughts to sandy.smith@penton.com.

2016 EHS NATIONAL SAFETY SURVEY

Every year, EHS Today surveys our readers to discover emerging challenges and trends. This year, nearly 1,000 EHS professionals responded.

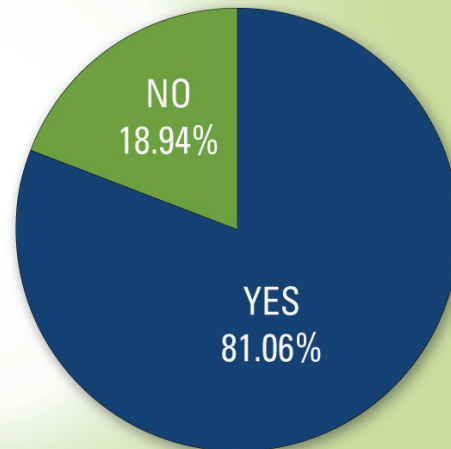
Does your organizations prioritize safety over production or other business demands?



PRIORITIES CHANGE

Now, companies that are leaders in their industries also are viewed as leaders in safety and environmental performance and more than two-thirds of safety professionals say their employers prioritize safety over other business demands.

Does top management in your organization provide active and visible support for occupational safety and health?



LEADERS AS SAFETY CHEERLEADERS

When asked if corporate leaders offered "active and visible" support for safety, the answer was a resounding "YES!"

2016 EHS NATIONAL SAFETY SURVEY

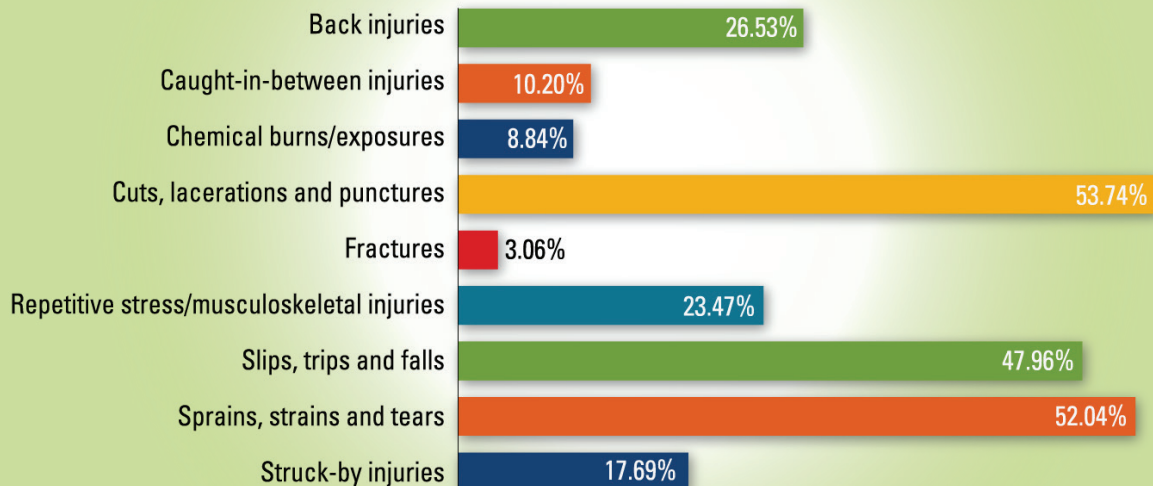
What leading indicators do you track?



LEADING INDICATORS

Previous National Safety Surveys focused on injury and illness statistics, now referred to as lagging indicators. Leading indicators are where it's at in 2016.

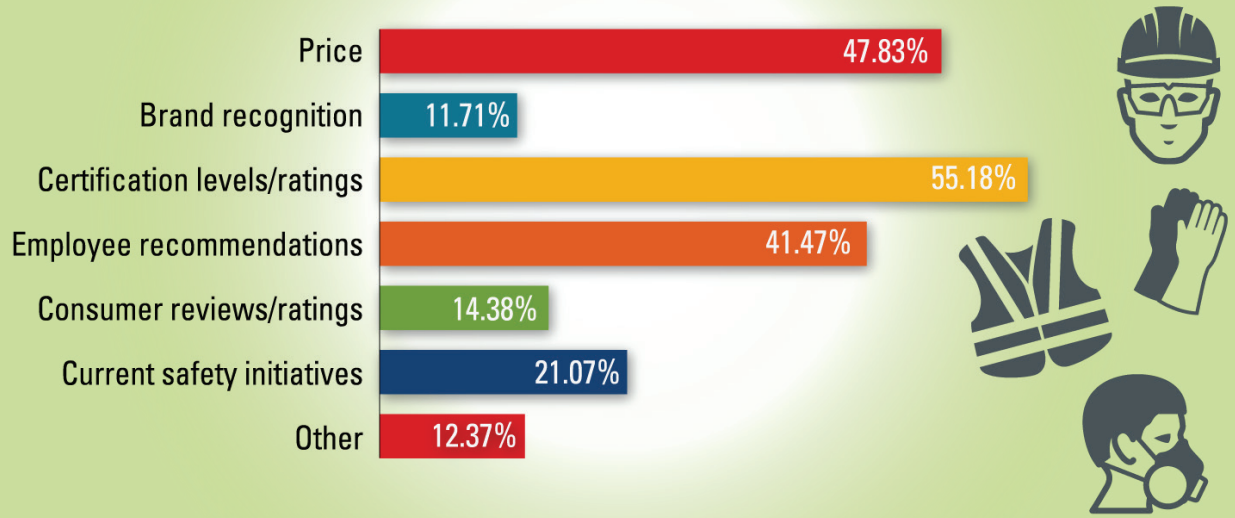
What are the most common types of injuries at your facility?



TOP INJURIES

Cuts/punctures, slips/falls and sprains/strains top the list of workplace injuries.

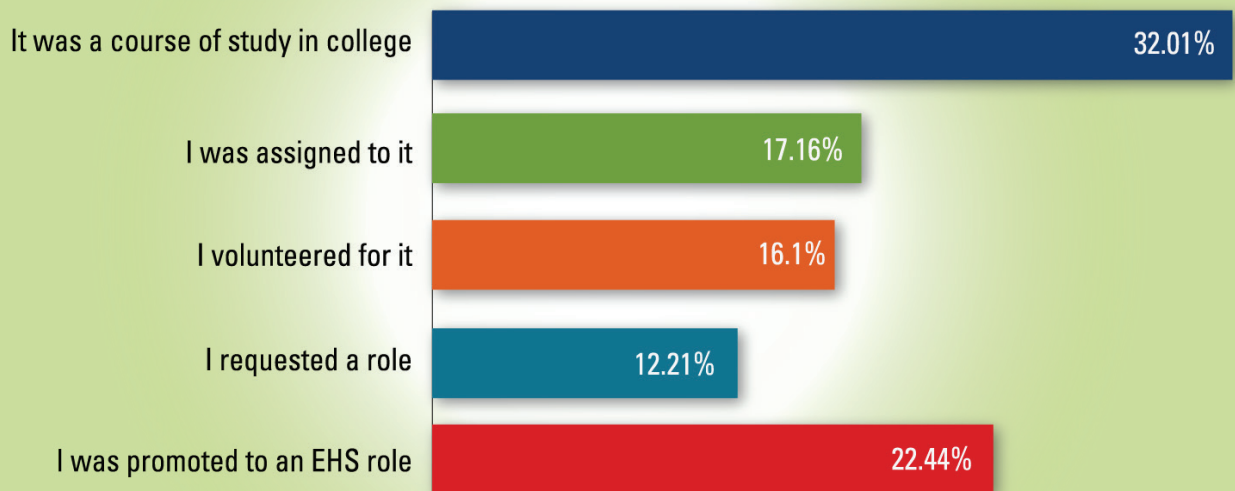
When purchasing PPE for your company, which two factors do you most consider?



PPE PURCHASES

The global personal protective equipment (PPE) market was valued at \$38.38 billion in 2015. Hand protection dominates that PPE market, accounting for over 23 percent of the overall personal protective equipment revenue in 2015.

How did you become involved in EHS?



HOW DID I GET HERE?

How did EHS professionals become involved in occupational safety and health?

The Price of Safety

Survey respondents detail what is important when purchasing PPE, what they would do if resources were not an issue.

By Stefanie Valentic



Despite an increase in spending from the previous year, managers are still working with limited resources when it comes to safety. About 71 percent of those who took EHS Today's National Safety Survey said that their budgets increased in the 2015-2016 year.

However, budgets are still miniscule when it comes to providing a world-class safety and wellness to their employees. Survey takers listed they would improve their company's wellness programs, provide top-of-the-line PPE and, above all, greatly increase the amount of training if they had more money to spend.

Improving wellness programs was a common theme. One survey respondent said they would build an effective wellness program, an onsite gym and safety sponsored programs/activities that would boost employee morale if their budget allowed. Another safety manager said they would hire a professional cleaning staff and provide onsite health care.

In addition, the pressure of a limited budget means safety managers more closely consider price when purchasing PPE. In fact, out of the six choices provided on the survey, price was a close second to the product certification level. Another top answer was comfort/fit of the PPE. If resources were not an issue, respondents agreed that they would provide better quality protection for their employees.

Being able to give them exactly what they ask for (More expensive boots on an annual basis, uniform service)

We do a lot of welding and I would love to have to the PAPR systems that basically double as welding hoods and respirator free supplied air. I think these would make the associates want to wear the PPE as well as put less stress on their respiratory system by eliminating the need for respirators.

Install air conditioning in the facility production

areas. In the summer time, the heat and humidity do pose an issue. We promote frequent breaks and hydration. If we had air conditioning, it would help reduce the heat stress on the employees.

Some PPE on the wishlist of survey respondents included prescription safety glasses, ergonomic mats, lift tables, guardrails for roof and fall protection for ladders.

Still, the majority of safety managers said overall they would greatly expand training and programs for employees in the areas of fall protection, lockout/tagout and proper equipment operation, just to name a few. In addition, they would increase the frequency of training programs to keep employees up-to-date.

Training, Training, Training. There is never enough and it is not administered in a fashion that is suitable for all. Also more employee involvement with the workings and functions of the EHS personnel and get a behind the scenes look. Getting everybody to work together as a unit.

In the transportation industry there is an extreme shortage of qualified and dedicated drivers to the trade. Additional internal resources to expand training to the point of a person becoming fully qualified in the areas of safety and productivity would reduce accidents and injuries.

Although spending more in different areas could decrease the instance of injuries and illness, money cannot solve all problems. Safety leaders and company management need to make sure their programs and training are truly effective, and regular engagement with employees is crucial, respondents said.

I do not believe throwing money will fix the issues. I believe that if all supervisors/managers truly walked the talk there would be a vast improvement.

More one on one engagement with middle management. While they want everyone working safely, they struggle to visibly demonstrate it to staff.

OSHA Database Will Cause Inaccurate Data Analysis

National Safety Survey respondents comment about the impact of OSHA's public database and online reporting standards.

By Stefanie Valentic



The debate over what information constitutes a public record and what should remain confidential has been long and storied.

With OSHA's new reporting guidelines and public database in the forefront, respondents of EHS Today's 2016 National Safety Survey provided insight into whether they think their business will be affected when injury reports are displayed in a publicly-accessible forum.

Although slightly more than 78 percent of those who responded to the National Safety survey indicated that they think there will no impact on company safety initiatives, the implications of what this means to workplace safety, confidential company information and reputations is causing concern to some safety managers.

The biggest concern mentioned is distrust in the government and the general public to accurately handle, analyze and disseminate the data.

"The government has proven unworthy of the public trust. This influx of data will be used to force political agendas in-lieu of valid safety issues and thereby further deteriorate public trust," one respondent said.

"I believe that many will take the data and make it say what they want without properly analyzing the data."

"A focus on lagging indicators. It's basically a body count."

In addition, some survey takers also question whether the database will cause a decline in the number of incidents reported, and whether releasing confidential records will improve safety overall.

"Negatively - because it is publicizing confidential records for people to see and they base it off of numbers and statistics which effect bidding on work."

"OSHA has become a 'Big Brother' in way too

many dealings on a daily basis and these initiatives are good but need to help not hinder the progress of a company."

A public database could provide reasons for OSHA to make more thorough inspections and increase accountability, respondents also said.

Still, some survey takers took time to comment on the public database's positive impacts.

"Given the visibility, it will show managers and employees how each injury can affect our customer's business based on their standards."

"The public database should help to show common risk and indicate training and areas of emphasis to check."

"With the public eye viewing past incidents, I will be able to leverage internally the continued focus on our safety strategy from top level management."

"If everyone can see what we are doing wrong, including our customers or potential customers, there will be a big emphasis on getting it fixed."

One respondent said the database will provide easy access to information, learning opportunities and be an information resource.

The new guidelines require businesses with 250 or more employees that currently keep records to electronically submit information from forms 300, 300A and 301. Companies with fewer employees that fall within a list of 67 specified industries such as manufacturing and construction must submit incident information from Form 300A.

The records will then be entered into the public database after all sensitive, identifiable information is removed, according to OSHA.

The new reporting regulations are in effect as of August 10, 2016 with electronic submission requirements beginning in 2017.