

A close-up photograph of safety equipment on a blue-painted wooden surface. In the upper left is a large, bright orange hard hat. To its right are a pair of orange work gloves with blue perforated palms and fingers. In the lower right is a pair of red and black safety shoes. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# Strategies to Improve Safety Training & Engagement

HOW TO ENSURE  
EMPLOYEES HAVE THE  
KNOWLEDGE THEY  
NEED TO STAY SAFE

**EHS**Today



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## Change for the Better

Lately, I've been thinking about societal attitudes toward change.

There are some tried and true sayings like "The only constant in life is change," "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," and "We've always done it that way."

These sayings reinforce the idea that the way things are (or were) is the best they'll ever be. What's more, the implication is that change is bad, undesirable or something to be feared.

If we allow ourselves to buy-in to the mindset that change is bad in the workplace, then that's opening the door to growing complacency, declining morale, erosion in psychological safety, increase in turnover and more potential for accidents. Seen this way, an aversion to change has serious consequences.

That's why, when it comes to training and engagement, we must shake ourselves out of our ruts. We need to try something new, be it virtual simulations, microlearning or new technology. We need to be bold and fearless when it comes to our approaches—and attitudes—toward teaching employees how to be safer on the job.

The truth is, we often don't know what will resonate with workers—until it does. It may seem daunting to try many

different approaches and develop a plethora of materials, but I challenge you to think of it as a broad attempt to find individual success. All it takes is one close call, good experience or a-ha moment to build momentum.

You may feel like you're toiling now, but in reality, you're planting the seeds that will take root and grow. You may not reap your harvest for weeks or months to come, but I encourage you to be patient and keep finding new ways to tend your garden of workplace safety.

Sometimes, change catches us off guard. Sometimes, it can be unpleasant. But sometimes, it's just what we (didn't know we) needed.

If we are inflexible or set in our ways, we deny ourselves the possibility to be surprised and delighted by the unexpected.

I hope you find something that surprises and delights you in the pages that follow.



**Nicole Stempak** is managing editor of *EHS Today* and conference content manager of the *Safety Leadership Conference*.



# Gap in Training Front Line Workers

*Just 24% of workers say they have the training needed to succeed at work.*

By EHS Today Staff

**D**etermining the correct amount of training is difficult. A recent survey, the 2024 Lighthouse Research & Advisory Frontline Development Trends Study, found a gap in training. The survey gathered responses from 737 different employers and 1,050 workers across frontline industries.

“In a world where nearly six in 10 frontline workers say that they have experienced additional stress due to low staffing levels over the last year, it’s time to turn our attention to this critical segment of the workforce in a practical, proactive manner to help them be more productive and engaged in their work,” the report says.

In addition to low staffing levels, just 24% of those surveyed strongly agree that they have the right types and amount of training they need to succeed at work. Respondents cited time/scheduling constraints, limited practice opportunities, and/or lack of resource access as the top three reasons why they have trouble developing their skills at work.

The top learning constraint for frontline workers new to their jobs? Limited opportunities to practice/apply new skills. For workers with less than six months on the job, 50% say they need to learn new things either on a daily basis or weekly basis.

Nearly 90% of those working in manufacturing said that safety training is critical. However, workers in this industry are the least likely of all frontline industries to say that they get the proper training to do their jobs well.

In construction, there’s an expected focus on safety training due to the nature of the work. Construction employers ranked onboarding training as more important than any other frontline industry.

Overall, the survey found that 40% of employees say that they aren’t fully sure what it is expected of them to perform on the job. This uncertainty leads to lower rates of retention.

Workers who feel they have the training necessary to perform on the job are three times more likely to stay with their employer. In fact, 50% of frontline workers who are planning to quit their jobs reported they don’t get the proper training to do their work.

As for their preferred method of training, 91% of frontline workers said they want access to training and resources on a mobile device. And when they rate their learning technology two out of three respondents say it’s “just okay.” But workers who like their technology are three times as likely to feel their company is invested in them and they are 50% more likely to stay in their job. **EHS**



# Employees are Concerned About Safety and Lack of Training

*Many workers said companies could be doing more to reduce incidents, and a majority said protocols are merely checkboxes.*

By EHS Today Staff

**T**he idea that job retention is related to how safe an employee feels at work isn't new, but it's coming up more often in general surveys.

Case in point: A recent survey from Vector Solutions entitled "The State of Industrial Worker Safety and Well-Being report," which spoke to more than 600 full-time professionals across maintenance, production and operations, engineering, health and safety. The survey found that despite the value they place on safety, 46% of workers believe their employer could be doing more to reduce safety incidents.

Almost double that amount, 83%, said that their company's safety protocols feel like checkboxes rather than genuine commitments to employee well-being.

The good news is that 58% of those surveyed believe additional training would improve their workplace safety.

"Safety plays a critical role in the well-being and productivity of our workforce," said Clare Epstein, general manager of commercial at Vector Solutions, in a statement. "We conducted this study to better understand the current state of safety initiatives, training and technology within the industrial sector. The findings revealed that employers have a lot of room for growth when it comes to prioritizing the safety of their workers, especially with regards to providing staff with accessible and comprehensive safety training."

Additional findings from the report include:

In a turbulent economy, workers rely even more on training and safety precautions to keep them at their current company.

- » 81% report that their training makes them feel more inclined to stay at the company;

- » 62% believe that good training improves job satisfaction;
- » 57% say that safety issues make more seasoned workers leave, which contributes to the skills gap; and
- » 44% say that safety issues make it harder to hire, which contributes to the labor shortage and widening skills gap.

Implementing training solutions does not necessarily mean that content is accessible to all employees. The report revealed that non-native English speakers are dealing with concerning disparities:

- » Half of non-native English speakers say that their company doesn't offer training in their native language;
- » Non-native English speakers were 27% more likely than their native English-speaking counterparts to feel pressured to prioritize productivity over safety in the workplace; and
- » Non-native English speakers were 127% more likely to say they do not feel comfortable reporting workplace hazards than native English speakers.

When workers aren't given dynamic and up-to-date training materials, professional development lags. This results in knowledge loss, skills gaps and higher turnover.

More findings that show the link between safety and training:

- » 100% say that safety training is essential for fostering a safe workplace;
- » 50% say that their company's training is not engaging, with those in electrical maintenance being 100% more likely than average to say this; and
- » 29% of those who are unsatisfied with their training are considering leaving their job for this reason. **EHS**



# Better Ways to **Train Employees**

*Learning doesn't come naturally. Neither does teaching. But if you want to train your employees to be safe, you must first learn how to train.*

By **Nicole Stempak**

**A**s the saying goes, something is better than nothing. That's true—except when that something is amiss. Then, it can feel like one step forward and two steps backward.

Natalie Fox knows this all too well. Fox is a principal scientist at Roux and a health and safety professional with more than 20 years of experience developing and implementing compliance programs, conducting risk assessments, performing compliance audits, and developing and implementing management systems.

She says that businesses must provide health and safety training as part of their obligation to create a safe workplace. However, businesses need to determine what type of training to provide, who should provide it, how often they should provide it, and many other considerations beyond simply checking a box. And sometimes, poor training can create a liability for companies with respect to OSHA or third-party litigation.

*EHS Today* spoke with Fox about safety training best practices and mistakes to avoid.

***EHS Today:* Can you explain the simultaneous (and potentially conflicting) double-edged sword of employee safety and health training?**

**Fox:** Everyone thinks training is a good thing, but there is a lot of bad safety training out there. Bad training can encourage employee complacency, or worse, enforce improper work practices. Employers can also provide training to check a box, rather than to ensure comprehension. This can result in potential health and safety hazards not being controlled because employees do not comprehend the hazards in their workplace.

However, training, when done right, can help ensure employees know the hazards in their workplace—and how to protect themselves from these hazards. Good training also

helps employees engage in the safety process and can help foster an open, and collaborative, workplace.

**I've always assumed that some training is good and more training is better. Why (or when) isn't that the case?**

Ineffective training, or worse, training that is providing employees with incorrect information, could end up with negative effects. Ineffective training can cause employees to tune out because they don't understand the purpose of the training and find it a waste of their time. The worst training is training that teaches the wrong work practices or may make employees think they are protected when they are actually putting themselves at risk.

People are smart. If the training is worthwhile and engaging, they will learn from it and be involved in the process. And, when the employees are engaged, they provide information. They can even educate the employer about hazards in the workplace that the employer may not have known about; that's because the employees will talk about how they are actually doing tasks during the training.

**What other mistakes, assumptions or potential pitfalls do you see companies make with training?**

Companies use basic, off-the-shelf training that isn't specific to their workforce or facility(ies), but allows them to fulfill their compliance obligations on paper. This training doesn't apply to the employee's day-to-day work and doesn't give the employees the knowledge they need to recognize and minimize, or eliminate, their site-specific hazards.

**What's one thing you always recommend clients do with respect to training?**

I recommend doing a combination of off-the-shelf training and site-specific training. For companies that have a learning management system or some other computer-based training system, I tell them to also include in-person training so employees can provide feedback and ask questions.

After the training, companies need to go out in the field and see if the training is effective. I like the systems approach: see if the training is effective and get feedback from employees as they are performing tasks, then update the training if necessary.

**What are some ways training can be a liability? Do you have any examples you can share?**

Yes, if the training is incorrect or not site-specific, that is a huge liability; it puts the employees at risk of doing something

wrong that could result in an incident. I recently had a site where employees were provided with basic fall protection training and then provided on-the-job training by their supervisor.

Everyone was using different fall protection equipment and different methods to access equipment. Each supervisor had a different method that they trained on because they had not been provided with documented, classroom training on how the process should be done. The result was that no one used their personal fall protection equipment correctly.

Also, if the training is not provided in a language the trainees can understand, the employees have not received the training. I have encountered many facilities that use a translator who is not technically competent, so they don't use the right terms and can't answer questions—or worse, provide the wrong answer.



**Natalie Fox**

**What are some training best practices? Do you have any examples you can share?**

Companies should use a trainer who is familiar with the site and the processes. Even if you are using a third party, they should understand the facility and the hazards associated with the employee tasks and develop the training around that. Also, during classroom and on-the-job training, the trainer needs to engage the audience/trainee using open-ended questions to encourage participation. At almost every classroom training I provide, I learn about work practices that have a high potential for an incident that the facility was unaware of.

Additionally, the effectiveness of the training needs to be assessed. You can't train a new employee for one week and expect them to remember everything.

Supervisors, and fellow employees, should continue to check-in with employees to ensure they understood the training and are applying the proper work practices every day.

**What's one free or low-cost thing a safety professional can do to improve their safety training?**

Talk to the employees, get their feedback on the training: what they liked about it and what they didn't. People aren't typically shy, so if you ask their opinion, they will give it. This allows you to make future training sessions more effective and get the employees engaged in the process.

**Any words of wisdom for safety professionals?**

That, although it may cost more money and take more time on the front end, effective training will pay you back threefold on your time and effort. Employees who receive effective training not only understand different hazards at their facility and how to control them, but hopefully will feel empowered to share that knowledge with their co-workers. **EHS**



# The Magic Formula for Safety Culture Training

*Learn how a global medical technology company is taking a local approach to training and engaging employees in safety culture.*

By Nicole Stempak

**W**hen companies roll out global corporate initiatives, they can sometimes face pushback at the local level.

This could be because of a difference in programs and processes, how a facility or team operates, or a variety of other factors. But usually, it boils down to the fact that people don't like having a culture imposed or mandated upon them.

That's what makes Baxter's safety culture training program so unique—and so successful.

Kristen Heitman, MSc, senior manager of EHS&S training and development, spoke with *EHS Today* about how Baxter's revitalized safety culture program is helping the company reach more employees and make the workplace safer.

***EHS Today:*** Can you tell me more about Baxter's Start When Certain program? What is it focused on?

**Heitman:** Start When Certain (SWC) is Baxter's safety culture movement. Initially launched as a stop work authority program, it has evolved into a safety culture training program that focuses on culture and how our safety DNA impacts our behaviors through safety critical conversations, safety gembas, recognition, hazard identification and reporting.

This message cascades down to frontline employees through monthly SWC messages and discussions on these leading indicators of safety. The training program balances knowledge transfer, practical application and engagement

activities. SWC will continuously improve, with sites delivering new training sessions, programs and experiences that support safety culture growth.

### **Why did Baxter start this program, and what were the goals for this program? When did you launch the program?**

Baxter had historic iterations of safety culture programs, and SWC was initiated in 2022 as a revitalization. It became obvious through incident analysis and leadership feedback that tackling our toughest safety challenges was going to require strategically addressing our safety culture. SWC was developed to address Baxter's highest hazard and frequency safety risks through the lens of leading indicators and safety.

The goal of the training program was to integrate key safety topics into a cohesive and effective program scalable to local needs and aligned to a global direction. We knew we had to build a program that blended technical skills and applications with the interpersonal and intrapersonal connection to safety that really drives change.

Last year, we visited six international sites, training 150 people leaders and surveying 650 frontline employees in a Powered Industrial Truck (PIT) focused mission. This year, we have 50 SWC trainers in scope and 30 sites identified for deployment.

### **What achievement are you most proud of?**

I am proudest of the fact that we are building accountability and ownership into the program at all levels of the organization. A lot of EHS programs get formulated from the top down. SWC opens up 360-degree communication using our already embedded organizational systems and processes to discuss leading indicators of safety, from the leadership level to frontline employees.

Sometimes EHS messaging can be a one-way street. As leaders, we are always giving direction and providing feedback, which can sometimes make it seem like safety is just our job. By intentionally inviting others to participate and lead the conversation on safety, our biggest population of experts has a chance to expedite culture growth and change.

### **Your program is focused on leading indicators. How are you monitoring, measuring and quantifying those?**

SWC focuses on hazard identification, safety gembas and safety recognition. Baxter already has very successful systems for tracking other areas of performance, so we tapped into those. Most of our locations already monitor leading indicators of safety, so it was mainly a matter of adjusting or adding

an additional component. If there is a gap, we rely on best practices from other sites. Hazard ID rates, safety gemba completions and employee recognition are then systematically reviewed as a part of the larger process.

From a global level, we measure success as adoption of our training objectives through a post-training survey, track hazard ID reporting trends across SWC sites and assess outputs against our safety climate scores as we plan for improvements.

### **Why was it important for Baxter to create a global program that could be adjusted locally?**

We knew that to succeed in establishing a global vision for safety culture, we had to provide a lot of different pathways to get there. Because Baxter is a broad, distributed organization, there are many unique features and strengths among our sites. By anchoring our vision to a few guiding principles, we have been able to work with each site to customize the training program to meet them where they're at, which has helped develop a sense of ownership and partnership.

**It's easy to sell training to new employees, as they need to learn standard operating procedures for the industry and the employer. It can be tougher to engage experienced employees who know the ropes (or think they know the ropes). How did you approach training for all levels of employees?**

Make it interactive and personal! Safety may not be new, but we can certainly come up with new ways of introducing these topics to learners. Make it fun by including games, interactions and practice sessions that reinforce the learning objectives. Build in experiences that allow the learners to connect personally with the material—and give them the chance to develop their own 'why' behind the desired outcome. Find innovative ways to look at safety with a new light.

### **Why did you focus on tactile safety skills in both technical and professional applications? Can you give some examples of what that looks like?**

We planned this training with a holistic viewpoint. It needed to deliver knowledge around technical topics while also developing personal skills and competencies to support safety. For example, with our focus on safety gembas we train learners on how to use the electronic gemba system as well as how to approach safety critical conversations that may emerge. It can't just be one or the other.

It takes a lot of personal and emotional skills to navigate the workplace. On the other hand, technology is also rapidly evolving and can be hard to keep up with. Training needs to



**Kristen Heitman**



be the opportunity to tie all the pieces together and set up our learners for success.

#### **How is Baxter incorporating data, such as safety DNA profiles and safety climate scores, as part of its larger efforts or operations?**

Baxter is using safety climate data to inform our safety strategies and programs as we grow and evolve. We have a lot of safety metrics around events and incidents that are already incorporated into planning. Safety climate data provides another perspective on our strengths and opportunities as an organization. It can be used as a road map, both locally and globally, to drive decision-making around safety initiatives and programs.

#### **What is something safety professionals can start doing today to improve their safety culture?**

There is so much you can do! The secret is to have a well-thought-out idea and a reliable process for making it happen consistently. Some of my favorite small actions are:

- » bring leadership and different levels of employees into incident and near-miss reviews;
- » start an EHS tip of the week and assign volunteers to lead a discussion;
- » partner with employees and supervisors to review risk assessments;
- » start a peer-to-peer safety recognition program that involves doing the right thing;
- » ask for feedback on safety changes and projects from effected employees;
- » host a wellness event, such as an exercise challenge; and
- » nominate safety champions to partner with new employees for safety onboarding.

#### **What's one piece of advice you want to impart on safety professionals?**

Safety culture training doesn't need to be complicated. You can build a program that is unique to your organization and drives safety performance by following a straightforward formula and plan. **EHS**



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# How to Overcome Safety Complacency in the Workplace

*Training supervisors and frontline employees to ask effective questions at strategic moments can help trigger critical thinking and situational awareness.*

By Sharon Lipinski

**S**uccessfully combatting complacency starts by understanding that the root cause of complacency is how the brain handles repetitive behavior. In other words, complacency is a by-product of habit.

In casual conversation, people often talk about habit as a behavior. But that's not quite right. A habit is a behavior that results from a neural pathway. Advances in neuroscience have revealed that habit results from the collaboration of two parts of the brain.

The first is the prefrontal cortex (PFC), which sits above the eyes. It's responsible for advanced executive functions, such as paying attention, predicting outcomes and prioritizing information. The PFC is critical to activities such as planning a critical lift, having interactive job briefs or taking a site walk.

The second is the striatum. The striatum is about the size of a walnut and sits on top of the brain stem. It's the habit center, reward center and goal-motivated behavior center.

When the brain is doing something new, a communication loop fires up between these two parts in the brain, and all the neurons during the activity fire. However, the brain is a quick learner. The next time it repeats that action, it's a little more familiar. Fewer neurons fire.

As this process is repeated, the action gets easier and easier, so fewer and fewer neurons fire. When something has been repeated often enough to become a habit, the PFC does not need to be involved. Not all the neurons fire during this activity, just the ones at the beginning and the end.

## REPETITION IS THE MOTHER OF HABIT

In a nutshell, repetition is the mother of habit. By repeating an action over and over, the brain carves a deep neural pathway that requires very little work in order to operate.

In many ways, this is a good thing because the brain must process an unquantifiable amount of information. This includes everything from our own autonomic nervous systems (e.g., internal temperature, heart rate, eye blinking and more) to taking in external stimuli (e.g., colors, shapes, locations, movement and more) to just doing our jobs.

Unfortunately, the processing capacity of the brain is limited. There is so much information to process that the brain needs to prioritize, and it uses shortcuts to accomplish as much as possible. There are many different types of shortcuts, but the one applicable to our topic here is habit.

A habit is a neurological shortcut the brain can use when engaged in a repetitive task. The range of repetitive tasks is

quite large. Not only does it include actions like brushing your teeth and wearing personal protective equipment, but also behaviors like asking for help, reacting calmly in stressful situations and problem solving. Beyond behaviors, people have created habits to process emotions, thoughts, decisions and actions.

Habits are a double-edged sword. They provide human beings with the ability to learn rapidly and perform repetitive tasks with as little energy and effort as possible, freeing up those cognitive resources to be used for other tasks. But there is a price exacted when habits are triggered: the PFC is often no longer actively involved in brain processing. When the PFC is not engaging, then we have lost an important safety resource.

Based on this understanding of the biological process of the human brain, we can offer a more accurate definition of complacency that opens the door to more effective strategies.

Complacency is a state of decreased external awareness and reduced sensitivity to hazards caused by the brain's ability to activate neural pathways that require less PFC activity.

This definition reflects the current neurobiological assessment of what happens in the brain when habits are established, and it reveals that complacency is a physical state. It's a by-product of the part of the brain people can use by virtue of the fact they've done an activity so many times.

Now the solution to complacency becomes clear: to move the brain activity and reengage the PFC. While we've identified several different practices that can accomplish this task, one of our favorites is asking good questions. A good question can only be answered by the PFC.

Another reason asking questions is such a powerful strategy is that it can be used to short circuit complacency in ourselves and in others. Any individual can ask themselves a question that will reengage their PFC, and safety professionals can use questions as they're doing their audits or site walks. In addition, supervisors can ask questions as their teams are starting a job or in the middle of their work.

## GOOD TIMES TO ASK QUESTIONS

There are at least four good times to be asking questions:

1. When a group is starting the day or a task together.
2. When an individual is starting a task or switching to a different task.
3. When there is some type of pressure element, such as time, visibility or interpersonal conflict. The human brain under pressure is much more likely to use existing neural pathways, so these are prime opportunities for a strategic pause to reengage the PFC.
4. When people are engaged in repetitive work.

Our research has identified at least five different types of questions that accomplish different goals:

### 1. Planning

People will often naturally start here as they think about how to do a task. Pre-job planning checklists often include a number of planning questions that may not be formed as questions but nevertheless serve the same purpose. For example, when a team member is filling out the tool section of the checklist, the implied question is, "What tools do we need? Do we need a grinder?" Yes. "Do we need fall protection?" No.

### 2. Perceiving

The purpose of these questions is to gather information using the senses. What do I see, hear and smell? How does that compare to my past experiences? What do the job aids tell me about potential hazards I might encounter? Many of these questions can also be systemized into a pre-job planning checklist.

### 3. Predicting

These are questions that play the movie forward and imagine what the future looks like if things continue on this path. Or they might play the movie backward. If this is where we want to go, what are the steps that will take us there? What unexpected events could interfere with that?

### 4. Perspective Changing

These ask people to put themselves in someone else's shoes or look at the situation from a different angle. These are often closely related to predicting questions, because answering them often involves imagining what will happen as the movie plays forward from that point of view.

### 5. Prioritizing

In any given situation, there is a lot of information. Your employees have to sift through information quickly to identify what's most important and what applies to the situation versus what's just noise and can be ignored. The more experience people have, the more intuitively they'll be able to prioritize. To accelerate learning, leaders and senior staff should be explicit about what they're seeing and why they're paying attention to specific items.

## TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

You can think of these categories as forming a circle. Typically, employees start with planning questions. They ask perceiving questions to gather more information. Next, they play the movie forward to predict what could potentially happen. Then they look at the situation from a different point of view. With that additional information, they can prioritize what's most important and what needs to happen first. Finally, they return to planning questions to incorporate the insights they've gained.

Proceeding through these different categories of questions should occur regularly, but they may not happen in order. For example, after the initial planning phase, perceiving questions may reveal hazards or a problem with equipment that requires them to return immediately to the planning phase.

Training supervisors and frontline employees on how to ask effective questions at strategic moments can reengage the PFC, which triggers critical thinking and situational awareness. It's a powerful strategy to combat the ever-present hazard of complacency in the workplace. **EHS**

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# How Effective is Your Forklift Safety Training?

*To identify gaps in your forklift safety training, ask these eight questions to evaluate your current program.*

By **Stephanie Kovach**

**A** fragmented and inconsistent approach to safety is inadequate when applied to today's dynamic, fast-moving work environments. The result can include increased risk to employees, disruptions in operations, damaged equipment and exposure to compliance issues.

Implementing an integrated and individualized approach to a safety training plan can help bring a consistent focus to safety management. It also stresses the important role everyone plays in creating and maintaining a safe work environment.

A robust training program is a vital component of an integrated and individualized approach to safety. It needs to be a program designed to do more than simply check a box on a safety checklist. The effectiveness of a forklift safety training program can vary significantly depending on how it is delivered and who within the organization is receiving it.

Effective safety management requires extending training beyond forklift operators to include managers, supervisors

and pedestrians, as well as making it readily accessible and convenient for everyone involved. By focusing on both comprehensive classroom and hands-on training, training programs have the potential to encourage meaningful behavior changes that can enhance warehouse safety and form the foundation for a strong safety culture.

Additionally, taking a top-down approach to forklift safety training is an effective method to increase organizational buy-in and effectiveness while helping to communicate the importance of a comprehensive and integrated approach to safety.

Organizations need to continually evaluate safety programs to minimize gaps in training, as well as to ensure that everyone has an understanding of the role they play in your organization's safety culture.

To identify gaps in your training, you can evaluate your current program by asking the following questions:

## 1. HOW EFFECTIVE IS THE TRAINING YOU ARE DELIVERING?

Relying too much on classroom training and not providing hands-on training can limit the ability of operators to translate learning into practice. The classroom can provide the foundation, but new skills are best internalized when operators can get on a forklift and apply their new knowledge under the supervision of an experienced trainer. A fleet and operator management system can support training effectiveness and evaluations and help identify improvement opportunities.

## 2. WHAT IS THE FREQUENCY OF YOUR SAFETY TRAINING?

Like any form of education, the positive effects of safety training can erode over time. In the United States, OSHA states that training is required every three years, at a minimum, but more frequent refreshers can have positive effects. Establish a frequency for operator refresher courses and maintain discipline in ensuring established guidelines are followed. As much as possible, integrate regular training into your operations, leveraging online learning systems that allow operators and supervisors to regularly refresh their knowledge at their own pace with minimal disruption to operations.

## 3. ARE NEW OPERATORS RECEIVING TRAINING IN A TIMELY MANNER?

In today's fluid job market, you will inevitably see some transition in your team of operators. It is essential to have a process to ensure new employees receive the training they need early in onboarding. Some forklift telematics systems can provide real-time feedback to operators that reinforces correct behavior and recognizes incorrect behavior. They can also give supervisors the performance data they need to showcase exemplary operators and their good choices while also identifying areas for additional training.

## 4. ARE SUPERVISORS TRAINED TO IDENTIFY AND ADDRESS INCORRECT OPERATING PRACTICES?

Positive reinforcement by supervisors can be one of the most effective methods for sustaining safety improvements initiated by formal training programs. However, supervisors must be appropriately trained to spot incorrect behavior and deliver positive and constructive feedback in a way that creates long-term behavioral changes.

## 5. ARE NON-OPERATORS TRAINED TO WORK SAFELY AROUND FORKLIFTS?

Forklift operators are not the only ones who could be involved in forklift-related accidents. Distracted or inattentive pedestrians can also put themselves in harm's way. A comprehensive approach to training should include those team members who work around but do not operate forklifts. This training helps pedestrians better understand the do's and don'ts of working in environments where forklifts are present.

## 6. HOW IS TRAINING BEING USED TO SUPPORT THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW TECHNOLOGY?

As you introduce new technologies into your operations, training plays a key role in accelerating adoption and addressing safety considerations associated with the new technology. Training may even help realize the benefits associated with the new technology. Listening and collaborating with front-line workers can help determine if additional adjustments to training programs regarding the new technology are required.

## 7. HOW IS NEW TECHNOLOGY BEING USED TO SUPPORT YOUR TRAINING?

Several operator-assist technologies are available on today's forklifts that can work passively or actively to reinforce training and guide operators to employ best practices consistently. Advanced sensors and software can adjust

**Training is a fundamental element of the safety equation and is vital to building and maintaining a strong safety culture.**

forklift performance parameters based on the load, task, location and environment to promote safe, productive operations. For instance, a system that uses LiDAR sensors installed on the lift truck scans for objects, pedestrians and other forklifts to alert the operator of their presence and actively slow the vehicle.

## 8. DO YOU HAVE THE RESOURCES AND EXPERTISE TO MANAGE TRAINING IN-HOUSE EFFECTIVELY?

Effective training requires a high degree of expertise in equipment operating practices and how people learn—in addition to the time to plan, execute and manage training programs. Even the best designed training programs can be derailed or lose effectiveness if internal resources don't have the expertise, up-to-date knowledge and time to prioritize it.

Training is a fundamental element of the safety equation and is vital to building and maintaining a strong safety culture. Asking these eight questions of your training program can help you identify gaps in your training that need to be addressed to help leverage your investment in safety and implement a successful safety program. **EHS**

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