

THE MAGAZINE FOR ENVIRONMENT, HEALTH AND SAFETY LEADERS

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SECRETS OF THE Safety Leaders

The 2023 National Safety & Salary Survey uncovers what's on the top of the wish lists of hundreds of EHS leaders. p. 9



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ON-DEMAND WEBINARS

ITEM: “Safety 101: Understanding the Basics of Building a Successful Safety Program,” presented by Holly Pups and Robin Marth of J.J. Keller & Associates. Do you know what programs, plans and policies OSHA expects your business to have? Even if you don’t know that a particular safety standard applies to your business, OSHA can still cite for non-compliance. This webcast covers: a breakdown of OSHA’s program requirements; industry best practices for businesses of all sizes; and how to create and maintain an effective safety and health program.

ITEM: “You’ve Completed Root Cause Analysis on a Safety Incident, Now What?” presented by Abhinav Gajula of ComplianceQuest. This webinar explores the crucial steps that follow a root cause analysis to ensure sustainable safety enhancements. From

translating findings into actionable insights to fostering a culture of accountability, this webinar guides you through the intricacies of post-analysis activities. Discover techniques to distill analysis results into clear, concise reports outlining factors and root causes.

ITEM: “Have You Gone Mobile? Elevating Safety Programs and Boosting Productivity,” presented by Michelle Huizenga and Cameron Schwartz of Origami Risk. Discover the positive impact of mobile EHS apps on safety audits, inspections, incident reporting, and more. This webinar delves into real-world examples showcasing how mobile apps can elevate safety practices, streamline processes and improve data accuracy—all while significantly enhancing overall productivity. Learn best practices for successful mobile app adoption.

For more details, go to: www.ehstoday.com/webinars.

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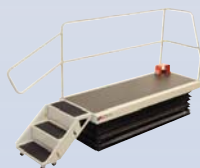
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The Challenging Nature of Workplace Safety

Resilience—that quality of never giving up and always moving forward—is one of the hallmarks of a safety leader.

It's that time of year again—the time when I turn over the writing of this column (well, most of it) to you, the readers. I've conducted quite a few salary surveys over the years, and I long ago learned that readers love to hear what their fellow industry peers are thinking. EHS professionals never fail to impress me with their willingness—sometimes eagerness—to share their thoughts about their jobs and profession, as you'll see in the sampling of comments below.

The *EHS Today* **National Safety & Salary Survey** is kind of like a virtual focus group, offering a direct conduit between our audience of safety leaders and their peers. The survey offers respondents the chance to opine—anonously—about anything and everything safety-related. As you would imagine, many of the comments we received the past couple of years were heavily focused on pandemic-related concerns, so this year is the first time this decade where COVID didn't dominate the list of “biggest challenges.”

So what is on the minds and in the hearts of safety professionals in 2023? Let's find out...

» *The biggest problem with the safety profession is burnout. There are too many skilled and motivated safety professionals leaving the profession due to a plethora of issues, ranging from lack of support from their employers to lack of buy-in from the workers they are now supporting. We should work harder to identify how to find and ultimately support those professionals who are at their wit's end.*

» *Safety is a community effort. We strive for the same thing. The most effective and efficient production is when it's done most safely. Safety shouldn't be brand-loyal. The safety department should be the bridge between companies and competitors.*

» *The EHS profession is too fractured. We should be an all-encompassing profession consisting of EHS professionals like the AMA [American Medical Association], which includes many disciplines but still allows individual professional groupings unique to their expertise. Since we're so fractured, we have minimal weight in political issues.*

» *The regulators and special interest safety groups appear to be led by social justice issues, which have been distracting them from their primary mission and function. This is a detriment for safety professionals who rely on these organizations for education, networking and professional growth.*

» *As a one-person EHS department with no definitive budget, you have to be creative in how you keep your team members safe.*
 » *Safety is not always the #1 priority of management. Dollars dictate what gets done, and safety is at the bottom of the list. Organizations need to start budgeting for safety as a line item so they can share with their staff that they care about safety.*

» *I enjoy my job. It's challenging. If I can change one employee's point of view on a single safety concept, I have succeeded for that day.*

» *It's important to prioritize safety and overcome any resistance to it, as neglecting it can have terrible consequences. In order to ensure a safe environment, everyone must be on board and engaged. Unfortunately, many safety professionals are not compensated adequately, leading to a culture of compliance rather than proactive safety measures.*

» *Safety needs to adapt more to technology and get with the times in the adoption of AI, wearables and real-time data analytics. The EHS profession is strong, but we need to modernize our approach to safety.*

» *I love safety. I feel it's a very rewarding job to be helping people stay safe at work. It's also very frustrating when people don't listen to the things you are trying to teach them, or when top management doesn't support the training or initiatives.*

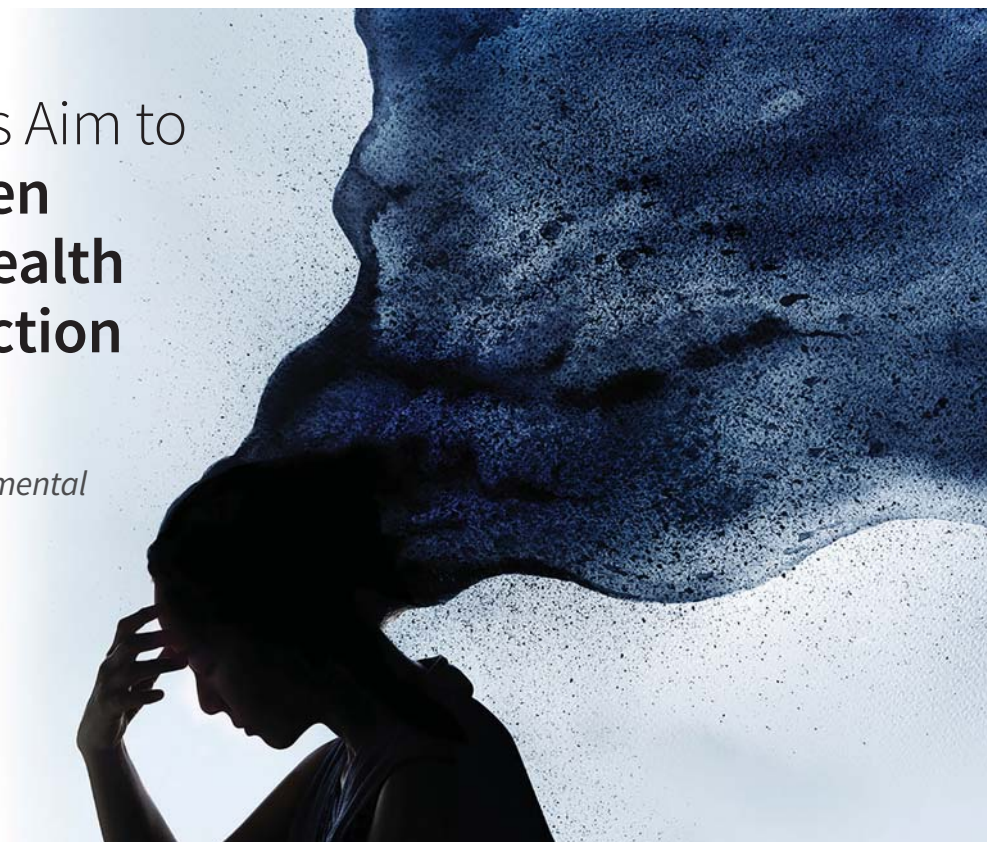
» *EHS often feels like the story of Sisyphus.*

Laboriously pushing a boulder up a mountain, only to have it slip from your fingers and roll back down, and then you try to do it all over again—that might be a fit metaphor for the worklife of a safety professional. Despite all the training sessions and PPE and cutting-edge technologies provided to employees, workplace incidents still happen. The “road to zero injuries” journey may indeed be as mythical as Sisyphus. And yet, confronted by so many challenges, safety leaders keep at it, doing what they do best every single day—keeping workers safe from harm, while protecting their organization's financial and reputational health. That kind of resilience deserves to be celebrated, so kudos to all of you!

Send an e-mail with your thoughts to dblanchard@endeavorb2b.com.

New Rules Aim to Strengthen Mental Health and Addiction Coverage

The goal is to put mental health on par with medical health.



SIRI WANNAPATIDREAMSTIME.COM

In what the US Government is calling an “important step in addressing the nation’s mental health crisis,” the Department of Labor and Treasury have proposed new rules aimed at better ensuring that people seeking coverage for mental health and substance use disorder can access treatment as easily as people seeking coverage for medical treatments.

“Mental health care is as important to the well-being of America’s workers as medical care, and we must eliminate barriers to getting people the lifesaving care that they often need,” said Acting Secretary of Labor Julie Su, in a statement.

The proposed rules seek to fully protect the rights of people seeking mental health and substance use disorder benefits and provide clear guidance to plans and issuers on how to comply with the law’s requirements. In developing their proposals, the departments drew from their combined and individual experiences in enforcing the act and in working with plans and issuers, as well as state regulators.

Enacted in 2008, the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act aims to make sure people seeking mental health and substance use disorder care do not face greater barriers to treatment than those faced by people seeking treatment for medical and surgical conditions. Generally, the act prohibits private health insurance companies from imposing copayments, prior authorization and other requirements on mental health or substance use disorder benefits that are more restrictive than those imposed on medical and surgical benefits.

Despite the law’s existence, people seeking coverage for mental health and substance use disorder care continue to face greater barriers when seeking benefits for that than when seeking medical or surgical benefits, the agency notes.

“HHS believes all Americans should have access to mental health and substance use disorder treatment, whenever and however they need it,” said HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra, in a statement. “In support of the President’s Unity Agenda, we continue to take actions to address the nation’s mental health crisis. We are ensuring that mental health is treated no differently than physical health and people in need of services have equitable access to care.”

The Department of Labor, in consultation with the Departments of Health and Human Services and the Treasury, also issued a technical release that requests public feedback on proposed new data requirements for limitations related to the composition of a health plan’s or issuer’s network.

The technical release seeks public comment to inform guidance for proposed data collection and evaluation requirements for nonquantitative treatment limitations related to network composition and requests input on the development of an enforcement safe harbor for plans and issuers that submit data indicating that their networks of mental health and substance use disorder providers are comparable to networks for medical/surgical providers.

The departments also released the second Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act’s Comparative Analysis

Report to Congress, as required by federal law. At the same time, the Department of Labor's Employee Benefits Security Administration and Health and Human Services' Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services issued a joint fact sheet on the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act enforcement results for cases closed in fiscal year 2022.

With the proposed rules and technical release, the departments aim to promote changes in network composition and plans' and issuers' medical management techniques to make mental health and substance use disorder provider networks more accessible and create parity in treatment limitations, such as network composition standards and prior authorizations, for people seeking mental health and substance use disorder treatment.

With the release of the Comparative Analysis Report to Congress, the departments are providing information on their continued enforcement efforts related to nonquantitative treatment limitations and the comparative analyses that health plans and health insurance issuers must provide upon request to show compliance with parity requirements. The report also identifies plans and issuers that failed to comply with the applicable requirements of the Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act.

"Anyone who has ever lived with a mental health condition or substance use disorder — or who has a friend or family member who has — knows how hard getting through the day can be at times and should not have to be worried about facing obstacles to getting treatment," said Assistant Secretary for Employee Benefits Security, Lisa M. Gomez. "Yet, throughout the U.S., people in need of help continue to encounter illegal restrictions on their mental health and substance use disorder benefits and struggle to find mental health and substance use treatment providers that participate in their plan's networks. Today's proposed rulemaking is an important step for the departments and stakeholders to work together to make parity a reality."

"Providing equitable access to health care services for everyone is vital, particularly for those in need of mental health and substance use disorder treatment," said Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure. "CMS, working in partnership with other agencies, continues to remove barriers and expand access to critical services. This rule is a demonstration of the administration's commitment to parity between physical and mental health services and helping to ensure people get the care they need."—**EHS Today staff**



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DOL Updates Employee Representation During Inspection

“This proposal aims to make inspections more effective and ultimately make workplaces safer by increasing opportunities for employees to be represented in the inspection process,” said Doug Parker.

On August 29 the Department of Labor announced a notice of proposed rulemaking to revise regulations regarding who can be authorized by employees to act as their representative to accompany OSHA compliance officers during physical workplace inspections.

The proposed rule clarifies that employees may authorize an employee, or they may authorize a non-employee third party if the compliance officer determines the third party is reasonably necessary to conduct an effective and thorough inspection.

The proposed changes also clarify that third-party representatives are not limited to industrial hygienists or safety engineers, two examples included in the existing regulation. Third-party representatives may be reasonably necessary because they have skills, knowledge or experience that may help inform the compliance officer’s inspection. This information may include experience with particular hazards, workplace conditions or language skills that can improve communications between OSHA representatives and workers.

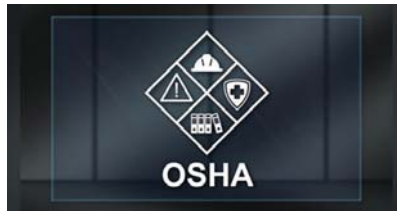
“Congress considered worker participation a key element of workplace safety and health inspections when it passed the Occupational Safety and Health Act,” explained Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health Doug Parker,

in a statement. “This proposal aims to make inspections more effective and ultimately make workplaces safer by increasing opportunities for employees to be represented in the inspection process.”

In addition to the NPRM’s proposed revisions, OSHA is also seeking public comment on the criteria and degree of deference OSHA should give to employees’ choice of representative in determining whether a third party can participate in an inspection. The Occupational Safety and Health Act gives the employer and employees the right to have a representative authorized by them accompany OSHA officials during a workplace inspection to aid the investigation. Employee participation

and representation is critical to an inspector’s ability to complete a thorough and effective workplace investigation and helps OSHA gather information about the job site’s conditions and hazards.

The proposed revisions do not change existing regulations that give OSHA compliance officers the authority to determine if an individual is authorized by employees and to prevent someone from participating in the walkaround inspection if their conduct interferes with a fair and orderly inspection, or to limit participation to protect employer trade secrets. —**EHS Today staff**



As Stress Levels Decrease, Employees Not Worried about AI

Most workers (62%) said they don’t feel AI will impact their stress levels at the job.

Employee burnout among the U.S. workforce remains high (45%), but the good news is that it’s at least trending downward.

In new research from Eagle Hill Consulting that surveyed 1,347 employees across the U.S. from August 3-8, burnout has dropped during the past year (49% in August 2022) and more substantially since the early months of the pandemic (58% in August 2020).

One thing that isn’t worrying employees so far is AI. When asked

their opinion about the impact of generative artificial intelligence (AI) on their jobs, most workers (62%) indicate they do not expect that the nascent technology will impact their stress levels at the job.

One reason for that is a growing body of research indicates that when properly deployed, AI can help improve worker efficiency and productivity. Millennials (30%) and male employees (27%) are most likely to say that AI can help reduce job stress.

“And for the first time, we polled workers on the potential impact of AI on their stress levels,” said Melissa Jezior, CEO of Eagle Hill Consulting, in a statement.

“This will be an important issue to watch as more companies rollout Generative AI. Handled well, AI has the potential to help workers get more done in a shorter amount of time while creating more value for their organizations. But handled poorly, it



could increase rather than decrease worker stress.”

The study found that age has an effect on stress levels with younger workers (52%) are reporting the highest level of stress.

Women are also reporting high numbers at (48%).

Employees who report burnout signal they are less comfortable telling their manager or employer they feel burnt out as compared to six months ago, with 57% of employees saying they're

open to the conversation, down 5% from August 2022.

The reasons for all the stress varies:

- » Workload (51%)
- » Staff shortages (45%)
- » Juggling personal and professional life (42%)

Among those who experience burnout due to staff shortages, 84% said the impact is covering the workload for unfilled positions. Thirty-nine percent said the impact is helping others learn their job, 36% said it's training new hires, and 22% said it's recruiting and interviewing new hires.

Solutions to help reduce burnout include:

- » Increased flexibility (65%)
- » Decreased workload (65%)

- » Better health and wellness benefits (60%)
- » Working from home (56%)
- » Reduced administrative burdens (53%)
- » More on-site amenities (50%)
- » Ability to relocate or work from multiple locations (39%)

While Jezior says the overall good news that burnout is trending downward, “employers shouldn’t be complacent when it comes to taking action to reduce worker burnout. Burnout levels are still too high and could inch upward as more workers are required to return to in-person work. While employees value in-person work, they have expressed concerns about work-life balance and commute times when they are in the workplace.”—**EHS Today staff**

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Safety Leadership Resides in Every Employee's Hands

Creating systems which embed safety responsibility into the fabric of every job is the path to safety excellence.

A key characteristic that distinguishes our **America's Safest Companies** (ASC) winners is the core value that responsibility for a safe workplace sits squarely on the shoulders of every single person in the company.

When everyone in the organization is able to not only speak up when identifying a risk but also to take action, disasters are avoided.

Therefore, the opposite is true—when the sum part of a company's workforce refuses to see or act upon risks, catastrophes can happen.

A very recent example of that is the situation that occurred on the island of Maui. As the initial shock of the hurricane and wildfires wears off, officials are still trying to piece together what went wrong. The county of Maui, for instance, has sued the local electric company claiming that the utility negligently failed to shut off power despite exceptionally high winds and dry conditions.

The Associated Press reported that witness accounts and video “indicated that sparks from power lines ignited fires as utility poles snapped in the winds, which were driven by a passing hurricane.”

Unfortunately, the number of instances when companies have failed to adequately prepare for risks is more common than we might think. Pacific Gas & Electric, as noted in an article by *The New York Times*, “has been responsible for wildfires in recent years that destroyed hundreds of thousands of acres.” In 2018, the most destructive wildfire in California's history (one that killed 85 people) started when a live wire broke free of a tower that was a quarter-century past what PG&E considers its “useful life.”

It's not just the utilities that are negligent. One of the most alarming aspects of Hurricane Katrina's devastation of New Orleans in 2005 was the fact that “the city's vulnerabilities had been well-documented and understood,” according to the *Atlantic*.

In addition to those that ignore risks there are some companies that are frequently being cited for unsafe actions and don't adequately address the situations. Case in point is discount retailer Dollar Tree, which also owns Family Dollar Stores. The two chains have received more than 400 violations since 2017, to the tune of \$13.1 million.

On the bright side, though, there are companies that not only have excellent safety records but have pushed hard to be

exceptional. One example is Roncelli Inc., a Michigan-based construction services firm. In 2020 they announced that they achieved the distinction of going 5 million hours worked without a lost-time injury, dating back to 2007.

A record like that is only achieved with the cooperation of all team members. Explaining this milestone, Gino Roncelli, vice president, made exactly that point. “I'd like to recognize the high level of safety awareness that team members bring to their jobs each day. It is a remarkable accomplishment to work not only one year with zero lost-time injuries but over a decade, especially in construction. He credited “everyone in the organization for making safety their number one priority.”

Similarly, HGL, an environment restoration company, was recognized for setting a safety record of 4 million hours worked from 2015 until 2021 without a single lost-time accident. The company received the “Million Work Hours Award, given by the National Safety Council, for its efforts. The company explained that the award was achieved because their “managers and staff actively participate in identifying and controlling work hazards under their control and promptly address conditions or actions that may be unsafe. Ensuring that work is performed safely is part of each manager's job, whether in the field or in the office.”

Creating a structure that places safety across an organization instead of in a hierarchy of roles is one reason that Plastipak Packaging, manufacturer of plastic containers, was one of this year's ASC award-winners. The company explains that safety is “owned” by operations, not the EHS function. “It is an integral part of every performance review for every associate in the company, including leadership,” explains Andrew Smigiel, the company's EHS manager, North America.

And that philosophy of “everybody owns safety” is repeated time and again, not only at the companies that have been honored throughout the years by *EHS Today*, but at numerous other firms—large and small—where every employee recognizes that safety begins with them. Or to put it another way, the best-run companies are those where *everybody* is a safety leader.

Adrienne Selko

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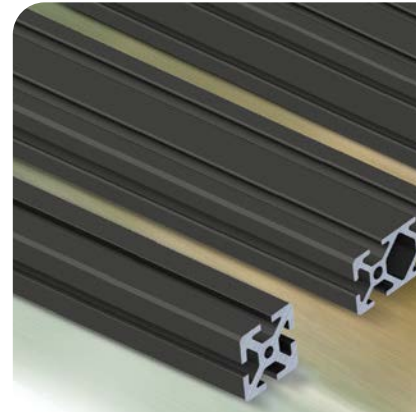


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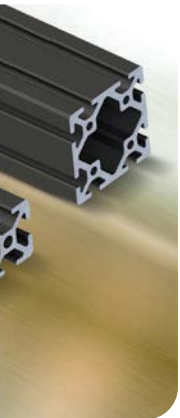
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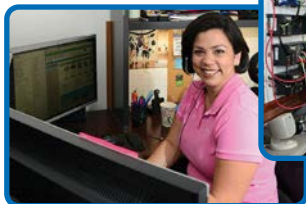
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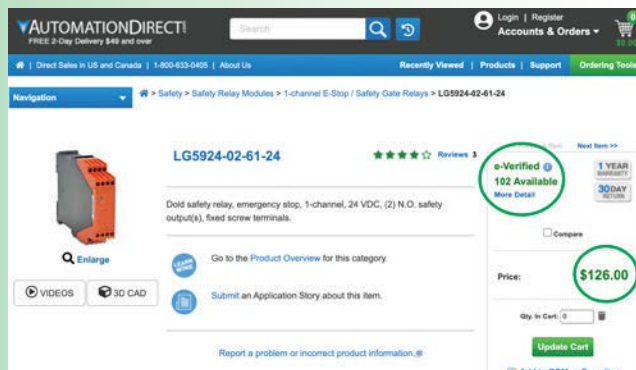
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Secrets of the Safety Leaders

The 2023 National Safety & Salary Survey uncovers what's on top of the wish lists of hundreds of EHS leaders.

By Dave Blanchard

"I wish making the case for safety didn't seem to always come down to ROI. Protecting people shouldn't be so laser-focused on money."

"My department doesn't get the needed respect for what we do by our peers and upper management."

"I would like to have a dedicated budget for safety initiatives. Currently, all safety expenditures come through the maintenance budget."

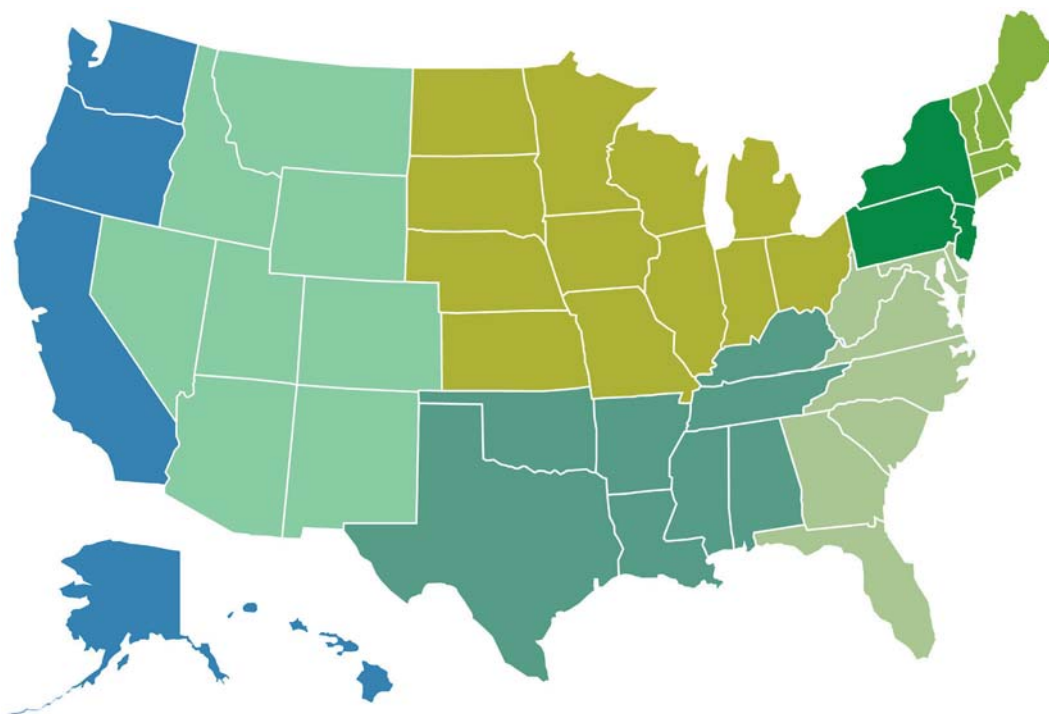
"Pay me what I am worth for what I do."

—comments posted by respondents to the 2023 National Safety and Salary Survey

What is a workplace safety leader? Sometimes it's one person, working alone; sometimes it's a small group of occupational health and safety managers; sometimes it's a large team of EHS professionals overseeing the safety of a multinational corporation. When *EHS Today* conducted its **2023 National Safety and Salary Survey**, we set out to learn exactly what a workplace safety leader does, and what follows is our special report on those findings.

Based on responses from 744 EHS professionals, we can tell you that most of the safety leaders in the United States have direct reports (55%), probably between one and nine, although 6% are responsible for 50 or more people. But what that also means is that 45% are on their own, especially those





MAP AND CHARTS: DEJA HSU

working for small to mid-sized organizations, where the safety leader often wears a lot of different hats. And one of their biggest challenges, make no mistake, is their workload keeps increasing while the size of their support staff does not.

Through the magic of spreadsheets and cross-comparisons, we crunched the numbers from the survey responses to develop a composite portrait of what a “typical safety leader” looks like (admittedly, there’s really no such person). Based on the most frequent responses to our various demographic questions, the typical safety leader has the job title of EHS manager, is a white male in his 50s, lives in the Midwest, has more than 20 years of experience, works for a manufacturing company, manages a staff of fewer than 10 people, earns \$99,212, and received a raise of roughly 4% in the past year.

By way of comparison to last year’s demographics, the basic description of a safety leader hasn’t really changed since 2022, although the average salary did dip slightly from \$99,609. So, for all intents and purposes, while the responsibilities shouldered by safety professionals increased, the average salary didn’t change appreciably over the past year. “Safety first” looks really nice on a break room poster, but supporting the EHS department with appropriate budgets and staffing isn’t always on the corporate agenda.

WHAT’S IN A TITLE?

To get a better handle on what an EHS professional is, take a look at the accompanying chart, “Average Salary by Job Responsibility.” From our survey, one-third of respondents have the title of EHS manager, EHS supervisor or an equivalent title, and they earn, on average, \$99,558. EHS professionals, who make up the second biggest bloc among

AVERAGE SALARY BY GEOGRAPHIC REGION

Region (% of response)	Salary
▶ Middle Atlantic (NJ, NY, PA) (7%)	\$105,337
▶ Mountain (AZ, CO, ID, MT, NM, NV, UT, WY) (6%)	\$94,267
▶ New England (CT, MA, ME, NH, RI, VT) (5%)	\$103,090
▶ North Central (IA, IL, IN, KS, MI, MN, MO, ND, NE, OH, SD, WI) (33%)	\$94,339
▶ Pacific (AK, CA, HI, OR, WA) (12%)	\$113,294
▶ South Atlantic (DC, DE, FL, GA, MD, NC, SC, VA, WV) (16%)	\$101,774
▶ South Central (AL, AR, KY, LA, MS, OK, TN, TX) (17%)	\$98,112
Other North America (4%)	\$85,177

our respondents at 25% of the total, earn \$83,722. EHS directors or VPs account for 12%, the third-largest group, and earn \$132,551.

This would be the appropriate time to issue our disclaimer that when it comes to your own salary situation, your mileage may vary (in fact, it almost certainly will), so just because you have a EHS director title, that doesn’t mean that you’re going to have any luck pressing for a hefty raise if you’re nowhere near making \$132,000. Numerous factors come into play when it comes to the salary ranges of safety practitioners.

Safety professionals work in a lot of different industries and professions. Based on our survey results, the largest percentage work in manufacturing, with the largest concentration being in light manufacturing industries (such as apparel or consumer electronics) or heavy manufacturing industries (such as automotive or aerospace), which combined add up to 29% of all respondents. The light manufacturing

respondents earn an average of \$87,228 while heavy manufacturing averages \$103,973.

Construction is also well represented in our survey, accounting for 14% of respondents, at an average salary of \$102,580. The highest paying industry, according to the survey, and consistent with what we've seen in previous surveys, is research & technology, with an average salary of \$137,191 (but only accounting for 2% of the survey respondents). Insurance (\$114,860), chemicals (\$114,573) and consulting (\$114,108) are also among the highest-paying industry sectors.

When asked about their areas of personal responsibility, safety leaders reported back with a very long list of responses. The most common answers were safety (91%), occupational health (67%), risk management (64%), ergonomics (61%) and emergency management (60%). The wide variety of responses speak to the range of things that "safety" means to an organization, an organization's priorities, the maturity and size of the organization, and the industry it serves.

DIVERSITY IS STILL MORE OF AN IDEA THAN A REALITY

Safety leaders tend to be seasoned professionals. In our survey, we found that 68% have more than 10 years of experience, and more than one-third (37%) of all respondents have at least 20 years of experience. As you would expect, the more experience you have, the higher your salary, as the salaries rise the longer you've been on the job. Those with less than five years of experience earn \$76,109, while those with more than 20 years earn \$116,599.

When we look at the age of the respondents, the results are similar but not quite identical to the years of experience. Those aged 65 or older are making less, not more, than some younger age groups. In all likelihood, many of those over 65 are semi-retired or are in consulting roles, which would account for why their salaries are somewhat lower than safety professionals in the 45-64 age range.

All told, more than three-quarters of the respondents (76%) are over the age of 45. And when we asked respondents to cite the biggest challenges they face in their jobs, many of them said that recruiting and training young people is a constant challenge, while others mentioned the difficulty in replacing the experience of older workers when they retire.

Safety professionals are also a well-educated group, with 70% having earned a bachelor's degree or higher. The salaries tend to reflect that, as those with a doctorate earn the most, \$135,111, followed by those with a master's degree at \$112,195. Those with a bachelor's degree, the largest group among respondents, earned \$98,822.

Every year, we look for any sign that the gender gap is starting to narrow between the number of males and females in the safety profession, but unfortunately, 2023 doesn't look like it's the year that will happen. Males account for more than two-thirds of all respondents (70%), and they earn nearly \$13,000 more on average than females. A year ago, males accounted for 68% of the total and earned nearly \$12,000 more than females, so if anything, the gap has widened over the past year—not an encouraging sign at all.

AVERAGE SALARY BY EXPERIENCE

Years in EHS field (% of response)	Salary
Less than 5 (13%)	\$76,109
5-10 (19%)	\$84,435
11-15 (16%)	\$95,801
16-20 (15%)	\$99,602
More than 20 (37%)	\$116,599

AVERAGE SALARY BY AGE

Age (% of response)	Salary
18-24 (1%)	\$78,850
25-34 (7%)	\$80,817
35-44 (16%)	\$93,489
45-54 (30%)	\$100,449
55-64 (34%)	\$106,093
65 and older (12%)	\$96,350

AVERAGE SALARY BY ETHNIC BACKGROUND

Ethnic background	Salary
Asian or Pacific Islander (2%)	\$122,203
Black/African-American (3%)	\$96,241
Hispanic/Latino (7%)	\$105,187
Native American or Alaska Native (1%)	\$84,361
White/Caucasian (82%)	\$98,382
Other/Prefer not to say (5%)	\$98,948

AVERAGE SALARY BY JOB RESPONSIBILITY

Position (% of response)	Salary
Consultant/Academic (5%)	\$104,753
Corporate/Executive/Senior Management (4%)	\$138,586
EHS Director/VP (12%)	\$132,551
EHS Manager/Supervisor (32%)	\$98,558
EHS Professional (27%)	\$83,722
EHS&S (Sustainability) Professional (4%)	\$99,047
HR Manager (1%)	\$68,143
Industrial Hygienist (2%)	\$100,884
Operations/Plant Manager (4%)	\$90,704
Risk Manager (2%)	\$88,927
Training Manager (1%)	\$94,925
Other (Engineering, Maintenance, Admin, etc.) (6%)	\$87,940

FOR WHICH OF THESE AREAS DO YOU HAVE RESPONSIBILITY?

Emergency management	60%
Environmental compliance/ESG	53%
Ergonomics	61%
Fire protection	57%
Industrial hygiene	55%
Occupational health	67%
Risk management	64%
Safety	91%
Security	28%
Wellness	28%
Workers' compensation	42%

WHAT IS YOUR HIGHEST LEVEL OF EDUCATION?

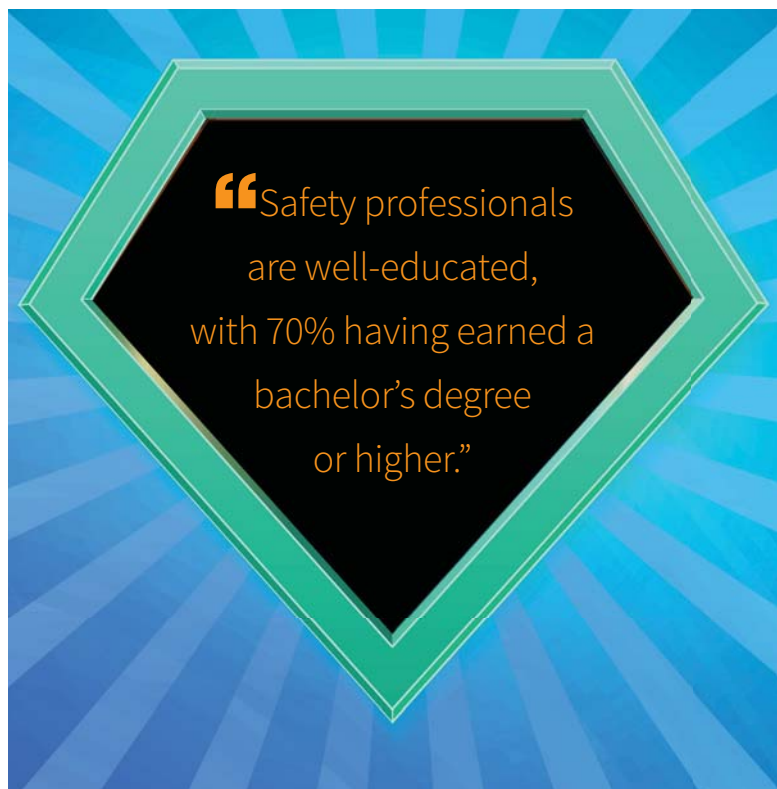
High school (4%)	\$84,662
Some college (16%)	\$90,809
2-year degree (10%)	\$80,493
4-year degree (35%)	\$98,822
Some graduate study (8%)	\$101,529
Master's degree (26%)	\$112,195
Doctorate (1%)	\$135,111

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH EHS AS A CAREER PATH?

	(% of response)
Very satisfied	45%
Satisfied	39%
Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	13%
Unsatisfied	2%
Very unsatisfied	0.4%

HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH YOUR CURRENT JOB?

	(% of response)
Very satisfied	31%
Satisfied	45%
Neither satisfied nor unsatisfied	15%
Unsatisfied	7%
Very unsatisfied	2%



There's also not much evidence that the safety profession is becoming more ethnically diverse, as 82% of all respondents are whites/Caucasian—the same percentage as we saw in 2022. The next-largest group, Hispanic/Latino, accounts for 7% (up from 5% in 2022). As we noted earlier, our survey draws most of its respondents from the manufacturing and construction industries, which obviously still have a lot of work to do in encouraging and promoting a more diverse workplace.

While our survey results don't really reflect it, more than two-thirds of respondents (68%) say their companies have launched diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives, a slight tick up from the 67% we saw in 2022. If nothing else, that at least offers some hope that things could be changing for the better in the not-too-distant future.

IT'S NOT JUST WHAT YOU DO BUT WHERE YOU DO IT

The most populous region of the United States for safety professionals is the North Central region, also known as the Midwest. One-third of all safety leaders lives in one of the Midwest states, which makes sense since that's where most of the manufacturing facilities in the country are located. The area with the highest salaries is the Pacific region (with most of those respondents living in California). Now before those of you living in Iowa or Wisconsin start daydreaming about moving out West to gain a big salary bump, you'll want to factor in the differences in the cost of living between the Midwest and the West Coast. That \$19,000 gap between Midwest salaries (\$94,339) and West Coast salaries

(\$113,294) narrows considerably when you start comparing, for instance, the average cost of housing.

EHS professionals work in various settings, with the largest percentage (37%) working in a plant or facility. One-quarter (25%) are corporate staff, and 11% work at a worksite or construction site. That coincides with EHS Today’s readership demographics, which focuses largely on the manufacturing and construction industries.

When we asked how satisfied they were with EHS as a career path, 84% of those surveyed said they’re either satisfied or very satisfied with the safety profession. Only 2% said they’re unsatisfied, and hardly anybody—less than a handful of the 744 respondents—said they’re very unsatisfied. That’s very positive news for the EHS profession, and an illustration of how EHS people view their careers as more of a calling than simply a job.

Respondents aren’t quite as satisfied with their current jobs as they are with the EHS profession as a whole, but the numbers are still encouraging. More than three-quarters (76%) said they’re satisfied or very satisfied with where they’re working and what they’re doing. Only 9% said they were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied with their jobs.

Our thanks to all of those safety leaders who were willing to share the challenges, frustrations, accomplishments and celebrations that characterize a life dedicated to occupational health and safety, and for letting us in on some of the secrets of your success. You’re all heroes! **EHS**

IF YOU COULD CHANGE ONE THING ABOUT YOUR JOB, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

- » “Assistance with safety. I am the only safety professional here.”
- » “Increase budget for training.”
- » “New leadership that puts the same importance on EHS as they do on production.”
- » “More autonomy in decision-making.”
- » “The mindset of people when it comes to safety—recognizing the importance of doing the right thing all the time.”
- » “More investment in innovative technology.”
- » “Having more authority to change and implement change without red tape.”
- » “Safety needs to become a stand-alone department. Safety should not report to other departments.”
- » “More time in the field.”
- » “Not being considered the “safety police.”
- » “Fewer environmental compliance issues.”
- » “I love my job, so nothing.”

THE REST OF THE STORY You can find more salary information and insights from the 2023 National Safety and Salary Survey at www.ehstoday.com. Learn what safety leaders had to say about leading indicators, the most common injuries at their companies and their opinions about federal/state OSHA.

AVERAGE SALARY BY INDUSTRY

Industry sector (% of response)	Salary
Chemicals (6%)	\$114,573
Construction (14%)	\$102,580
Consulting (5%)	\$114,108
Education (5%)	\$87,797
Food & Beverage (3%)	\$108,550
Forestry & Agriculture (1%)	\$86,400
Government (8%)	\$89,419
Heavy Manufacturing (14%)	\$103,973
Insurance (2%)	\$114,860
Light Manufacturing (15%)	\$87,228
Medical/Healthcare/Pharmaceutical (7%)	\$100,051
Mining (1%)	\$104,300
Oil & Gas (2%)	\$109,284
Research/Technology (2%)	\$137,191
Retail (1%)	\$61,100
Transportation (1%)	\$81,680
Utilities (3%)	\$99,571
Warehousing/Distribution/Logistics (4%)	\$91,021
Waste/Recycling (1%)	\$94,000
Other (e.g., Engineering, Entertainment, Printing, etc.) (5%)	\$95,601

DESCRIBE YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT

Plant/facility	37%
Corporate staff	25%
Worksite/construction site	11%
Division staff	7%
Government office/laboratory	6%
Educational institution	6%
Other (Consulting, Healthcare, Utilities, etc.)	8%

AVERAGE SALARY BY GENDER

Gender (% of response)	Salary
Female (28%)	\$89,766
Male (70%)	\$102,695
Non-binary/Prefer to self-describe/Prefer not to say (2%)	\$107,814

Making 'Cents' of Workplace Safety

During times of economic uncertainty, safety programs are more important than ever. Learn how to make the business case with upper management.

By Shawn Gregg



4,260,000 medically consulted work injuries occurred in 2021

X



Each of these injuries cost approximately **\$44,000**

= Over

\$187 Billion

Programs



In this time of uncertainty in global markets, organizations are reevaluating their operations and looking to restructure or reduce costs. While many critical investments keep your business running no matter the market conditions, perhaps none are as important as the one you make in workplace safety.

Instead of looking at environment, health, and safety (EHS) programs as cost centers, now is the time to double down on the long-term benefits these programs can bring by measuring and showcasing the robust return on investment (ROI) they can deliver. Seen this way, continuing safety programs is a way to protect the bottom line—not something that adds to it.

HIGH STAKES, HIGH COSTS

Workplace injuries and fatalities cost the U.S. billions of dollars annually, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). These events are categorized as direct and indirect costs.

Direct costs can include medical expenses, wage indemnity, claims administration fees and OSHA fines. But they're just the tip of the iceberg. For every dollar a business may lose in direct costs, indirect costs could be double—or more.

Indirect costs can include litigation, schedule delays, damage to reputation, damaged equipment, lost productivity and quality, and retention of talent. That last one can be especially expensive in a tight labor market.

Let's get specific on what these numbers could mean to an individual business. For example, the direct costs of a fatal workplace injury could cost \$1.31 million. The indirect costs of workplace disruptions, loss of productivity, worker replacement, training, increased insurance premiums and attorney fees could total \$1.44 million. This number is calculated by multiplying \$1.31 million by 1.1, which represents the cost multiplier for direct costs of \$10,000 or more when time and materials are taken into consideration. Altogether, a single fatality could cost a business \$2.75 million.

In simple, but stark, terms the direct and indirect costs associated with workplace injuries and fatalities can have a major impact on a company's ability to be profitable—or even stay in operations. Put this way, safety programs that can reduce even a single injury or fatality represent significant savings for companies. And, on the whole, there's plenty of opportunity for companies to improve.

There were 4.26 million medically consulted work-related injuries in 2021, according to the National Safety Council's (NSC) analysis of the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries (COFI) report. Each injury cost approximately \$44,000.

In addition, there were 5,190 fatal work injuries in 2021, according to the BLS. That means a worker died every 101 minutes from a work-related injury over the course of the year. But perhaps what's most alarming is that the NSC estimates 4,472 (86.2%) of those fatalities were preventable. Perhaps unsurprisingly, construction is the industry with the most preventable fatalities.

The data clearly shows that prevention is key to avoiding harm to your employees and foregoing increased costs of

doing business. If you want to improve your record, you must first invest in your safety program.

SAFETY PROGRAMS ARE A BUSINESS IMPERATIVE

Unfortunately, even today, many companies still view their workplace safety programs as a cost center rather than a business imperative. During times of economic uncertainty, one of the best ways to protect your bottom line is through continued investment into your safety program.

Too often, companies choose to slash workplace safety programs as the first measure taken to reduce costs. What's more, expanding and emphasizing safety programs may be one of the last things companies do when they experience growth.

There are expenses associated with offering safety training, but the costs—and subsequent savings—are difficult to see on a profit and loss (P&L) statement. Safety training program expenses can include staff time, consultant fees, equipment purchases and production delays (i.e., employee downtime for attending training sessions). Those are clear, upfront investments.

However, calculating the ROI in response to these services can be difficult for many companies. For example, the only immediate benefit business managers might see is that workers do not receive an injury due to their increased safety awareness. In addition, they might assert nothing can be measured besides expenses related to a hypothetical injury.

Of course, they are wrong.

To show them why, you need to make a compelling argument for the implementation or continued existence of your safety program by linking their EHS functions to your company's business value objectives, as shown in the chart below. This snapshot is a helpful tool we use at Wesco with customers that combines both our approach and lessons learned, as well as various industry metrics.

Making the business case can be as simple as showcasing how safety training is a business imperative, emphasizing its ability to increase productivity while mitigating compliance risk. These business operations function as a direct result of the EHS tasks. For example, demonstrating how the proper personal protective equipment (PPE) can benefit the business by reducing compliance risk, boosting profits and protecting business reputation, all while reducing worker injury or illness, will underscore the very real value these programs can provide to the bottom line.

Once you have made the connections between your safety program's functions and your company's business objectives, you can demonstrate ROI to your executives. This is especially relevant given the current state of economic uncertainty and the ongoing labor shortage.

Emphasize to your senior leadership team that safety can no longer be considered a cost center; rather, it is a strategic imperative to the business that not only keeps workers safe

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on-site but is also a productive conduit to business operations. Speaking to this executive audience in a language they understand—dollars and cents—is the key to building consensus.

In addition, a strong safety program with a proven track record of excellence is a competitive advantage, both now and in the future. Today's customers have high expectations regarding corporate social responsibility and workplace safety. For instance, organizations are required by law to dispose of hazardous chemicals properly. The employees tasked with this responsibility must know how to execute the task—and they must also know how to do so safely and ethically.

Having an environmental, social and governance (ESG) strategy that invests in safety programs allows your company to emphasize its employees' well-being, proven performance record and continued relevance in the market. Perhaps this is why EHS has been credited as the foundation to the success of any ESG program. Safety programs offer tangible tasks and initiatives that can help organizations take concrete steps to align their operations with ESG goals and improve their ESG rating.

THE EVOLUTION OF WORKPLACE SAFETY PROGRAMS

The goal for any business focused on creating and maintaining an effective safety culture should always be zero incidents, injuries and illnesses. Your company is responsible for getting your employees home safely every day, no matter where they work or what they do.

However, the process of building and maintaining a world-class safety program remains an arduous one. Thankfully, new technologies have emerged to help further your efforts.

Examples of these solutions and their use cases include:

- » Video analytics can identify trip hazards and spills, evaluate occupancy requirements, ensure compliance with regulations, and assess ergonomics and PPE compliance.
- » Wearable devices can provide immediate haptic feedback to users based on their unsafe motions, thereby helping to prevent injury and provide critical training in real-time. Wearables can also assist in tracking and managing expensive equipment, such as fall protection devices, and provide notifications for when these items must be taken out of service or inspected.
- » Environmental sensor technologies can monitor Indoor Air Quality (IAQ), floor sweat detection (i.e., dew point), leak detection and more.
- » Robotics can handle walk-around visual measurements, thermal inspections, toxic atmosphere monitoring and more. They can assist with hazardous or difficult tasks; detect and respond to human movements; and perform repetitive, physically demanding tasks to reduce the risk of injury and fatigue for workers.
- » Safety management software helps businesses manage their safety program and assets and track metrics associated with their EHS efforts.

We found the benefit of these technologies in one of our own Wesco warehouses. In 2021, Wesco's EHS team assessed how wearables could ensure safety and reduce risk within our warehouses. The team focused on movements that can have negative effects and often result in spine strains, such as



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awkward static posture, poor bending, back twisting, repetition and intense bending.

By working with a third-party vendor, we developed an Internet of Things-based pilot program that provided warehouse employees with a wearable that was placed on the back of their shirt. The device alerted employees via vibrations and beeps any time a hazardous movement was detected. To make the device stop beeping or activating, employees had to adjust their posture and stand, bend or move differently in real-time, providing “active education” for employees.

During the pilot, we observed that in a three-week period, one of our primary warehouses experienced remarkable results: Over 60% of workers lowered their average hazards per hour by at least half. As a global business, we continue to prioritize EHS efforts, such as through pilots, investments in our safety programs and maintaining our safety culture. At Wesco, our employees are safe by choice, not by accident, and we know that our ability to protect our workforce is paramount to our business’s continued success.

As the landscape of workplace safety continues to evolve, many businesses are eager to apply technology within their workplaces to help decrease warehouse hazards, avoid costly fines, and improve employee productivity and well-being. These technologies deliver the much-needed data and analysis that are critical to illustrating and identifying existing gaps in your current safety program. This information can help you

make impactful changes and ultimately save your business real dollars and cents.

At the end of the day, companies must do more than talk about a comprehensive safety program. They need to truly walk the walk because employees, shareholders and customers are keeping a watchful eye.

Safety is an iterative process, and there is always room for improvement. While it can sometimes be difficult to calculate ROI, safety always pays dividends to any organization. By working with your management teams to help shift the safety mindset from one of a cost center to one of strategic business value, you can position your organization for EHS success and benefit the bottom line. **EHS**

Shawn Gregg is vice president of global safety for Wesco, a multinational supply chain and distribution services company. He started his career as a safety engineer and over the past three decades has focused on producing and delivering innovative safety solutions and programs to keep workers safe. He brings deep experience in key end markets, such as manufacturing, along with first-hand industry knowledge and technical expertise in industrial safety. A Minnesota native, Shawn earned his bachelor's degree at Bemidji State University and his MBA from the Keller Graduate School of Management at DeVry University.

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3 Ways to Modernize Your Wildfire Preparedness Plan

Climate change is making it more difficult for organizations to keep workers safe and maintain operations. As a result, businesses must keep updating their wildfire preparedness plans.

By Peter Steinfeld

Wildfire “season” no longer exists. In years past, most U.S. wildfires occurred between June and August. Now, blazes are breaking out in early spring and lasting well into November. Rising temperatures and dry vegetation have created the need for yearlong wildfire vigilance.

In 2022 alone, the U.S. experienced 66,000-plus fires and more than 7.5 million acres burned—well above the 10-year average. Already in 2023, we’ve seen more than 40,000 fires and 2.1 million acres burned. Today, one in six Americans are exposed to significant wildfire risk, and climate change is expected to exacerbate that over the next 30 years. We are already seeing evidence of this with the York Fire in late July,

which burned more than 100,000 acres of the Mojave National Preserve in California, and the Maui, Hawaii, wildfire in early August, which leveled the historic town of Lahaina and killed more than 100 people.

The U.S. has experienced staggering losses because of wildfires, especially in the wildland urban interface (WUI), the area between undeveloped and developed land that is home to nearly a third of the country’s population. Additionally, recent population growth and decades of growing housing development in the WUI leave our nation vulnerable to further loss.

Experts have sounded the alarm on more severe wildfire seasons, both now and in the future; however, many organizations have not adjusted risk mitigation strategies to

ensure the safety of their people and assets. Organizations of all sizes and industries should modernize their wildfire preparedness plans to minimize losses for both the business and employees—and they should go well beyond traditional evacuation routes.

Here are three areas of focus to consider as you revamp your wildfire readiness plan.

1 LOCATION AUDITS

Wildfire preparedness plans are not one-size-fits-all. For a plan to be effective, it's essential to conduct a thorough risk assessment of each location and record anything unique to that facility.

Location-specific policies and procedures can include guidance on tasks, such as propane tank removals, directions on handling important documents and providing multiple evacuation routes. Although the details will vary by location, using a standard format will create consistency across plans so safety leaders can quickly provide direction on where to find information and checklists during stressful moments, even if they're not on-site.

“Effective communication assures safety and business continuity are maintained despite wildfire dangers.”

In addition to auditing each location, it's key to plan for how to transfer processes, supplies and tools from one facility to another in the event of wildfire evacuation or fire damage. This will also help you maintain safe operations if wildfires result in temporary staffing changes, such as if employees are injured or displaced.

2 EMPLOYEE TRAININGS

Updated and frequent training is crucial to ensure plans are actionable and new procedures stay top-of-mind for all employees. Regularly hosting tailored tabletop exercises and in-person simulations at each individual location can aid memory retention and uncover areas for improvement.

And research shows that as risks for severe weather and natural disasters increase, employees want updated and consistent training. In a recent study from AlertMedia, 84% of employees surveyed said their employer could do more to make them feel prepared to handle emergencies at work. The research shows a strong correlation between the frequency of safety training and employees' ability to navigate a crisis.

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Frequent safety training helps employees feel more adequately equipped to handle emergencies and execute official emergency response plans. This ensures employee safety—and it increases an organization's resiliency.

Wildfire preparedness training should include remote employees, too. Make sure they determine the proper evacuation routes for their home offices, have access to wildfire information resources and understand wildfire evacuation order stages to keep themselves—and their families—safe.

3 COMMUNICATION TOOLS

Effective communication assures safety and business continuity are maintained despite wildfire dangers. Modernized emergency communication tools enable safety leaders to reach the right people at the right time with relevant information, quickly. Platforms with multichannel, two-way messaging capabilities allow safety leaders to confirm deliverability and identify employees who need help, thereby reducing emergency response times and eliminating confusion. Leveraging wildfire communication templates for the most common scenarios can also accelerate access to information when sharing time-sensitive updates.

Wildfires can also cause significant operational downtime. Efficient communication can mean the difference between a resilient organization and heavy revenue loss. A reliable, easy-to-use communication system means leaders can confirm employees are aware of temporary operational changes and status updates along the way, minimizing lost productivity.

WILDFIRE PREPAREDNESS IS GOOD FOR BUSINESS

Wildfires will pose a threat to nearly every organization in some shape or form. If it is not the fires themselves, it may be the smoke that stretches hundreds, if not thousands, of miles away, as we have seen with the recent wildfires in Canada.

Today's organizations must build cultures rooted in safety and security to prepare for the effects of climate change. Organizations must involve every employee, maintain connection and transparency with those employees during emergencies, and assess and reassess the entirety of emergency situations to determine the actual—or potential—impact from wildfires.

Emergency preparedness plans must be ever improving as wildfires continue to increase in number, size and severity. **EHS**

Peter Steinfeld is senior vice president of safety solutions at AlertMedia, a provider of threat intelligence, emergency communication and travel risk management solutions. He has been involved in the emergency communications industry for more than 20 years and has advised organizations of all sizes on matters related to employee safety. Steinfeld is also the host of The Employee Safety Podcast, where he interviews leaders from major organizations and agencies on safety, security, business continuity and emergency management.



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Healthy Sleep Habits

for Enhanced Workplace Productivity and Safety

Understanding the impact of sleep on employee performance, safety and overall well-being is essential.

By Brad Smith, Maude Bouchard, Philippe Stenstrom

Sleep is a fundamental pillar of health, and its importance in the workplace cannot be overstated. In this article, we'll explore the prevalence of sleep deprivation among shift workers, the powerful connection between healthy sleep habits and employee performance, and practical tips on how you can improve your sleep hygiene. By arming EHS professionals with the knowledge and strategies they need, we can create a work environment where employees feel rested, can perform their duties safely and the full potential of the team is unlocked.

Let's start by shining a light on the prevalence of sleep deprivation in the workplace. Industries that require round-the-clock operations face unique challenges when it comes to sleep deprivation. Irregular schedules and disruptions to the circadian rhythm can have a significant impact on the sleep quality of workers, putting them at a high risk of experiencing sleep-related issues, such as insomnia, in comparison to traditional daytime workers. Moreover, shift work is associated with chronically impaired cognition and increased risk of chronic disease. This alarming statistic underscores the need to address sleep-related challenges in the workplace to safeguard the well-being and safety of these employees.

Now, let's discover how to spot sleep deprivation among your employees. By recognizing the signs and symptoms of sleep deprivation, EHS professionals can truly move the needle in creating a healthier, safer work environment. Understanding the impact of sleep on employee performance, safety and overall well-being is essential. Look out for excessive fatigue, reduced alertness, difficulty concentrating, mood disturbances and a greater likelihood of making errors. When you notice these red flags, you can act quickly and intervene to support their well-being.

The good news is that the data shows that healthy sleep habits play an important role in employee performance. On the other hand, sleep deprivation can lead to decreased productivity, impaired judgment, slower reaction times and an increased risk of accidents.

EHS professionals can create safer work environments within their organizations by championing healthy sleep habits. By creating awareness about the benefits of good sleep and educating staff on sleep hygiene, EHS professionals can positively support employees' sleep health.

An organization and its employees can be allies to promote healthy sleep habits. First, by understanding



that more quality sleep can lead to more resilience, better concentration and memory, but also better mood and less mistakes at work. Second, by arranging flexible schedules and having a bright environment when possible. Just starting a conversation and asking how your employees are sleeping can be a good start.

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES TO HEALTHIER SLEEP HABITS

Here are some practical strategies that organizations can implement to promote healthy sleep habits among shift workers:

Design comfortable rest areas and encourage their use: Employees can maximize their rest breaks in comfortable, sound-proof environments with dim lighting. Want to take it up a notch? Encourage them to close their eyes during their break if they feel fatigued or drowsy; some might even fall asleep for a few minutes, boosting their energy and decreasing drowsiness. When they need to be vigilant for work during evening or night shifts, ensure they have appropriate and bright lighting.

Support stress management: Be aware of your employees' stress level. High levels of stress can significantly impact sleep quality (and sleep quality and quantity impact stress). One way to help manage stress in the organization is to encourage your employees to get enough sleep and to respond to their individual needs in that regard. If there's a rush at work, sleeping less is very unlikely to help the organization or the individuals. Better sleep is an efficient tool to deal with stress and one that is accessible to everyone.

Be a game changer: Educate employees on the spectrum of benefits to prioritize sleep. Offer educational programs and resources that provide information on healthy sleep practices. Topics to cover may include maintaining a consistent sleep schedule, creating a sleep-friendly bedroom environment, practicing relaxation techniques before bed, limiting caffeine

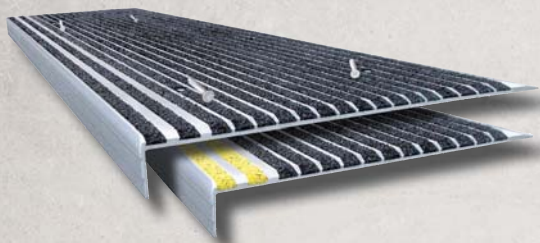
and electronic device use close to bedtime, the importance of winding down before sleep, and much more.

Implement Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia programs: Consider incorporating Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Insomnia (CBT-I) programs as an option to support employees in improving their sleep. CBT-I is recommended as the first line treatment for insomnia, according to the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. It involves techniques such as sleep restriction, stimulus control and cognitive restructuring to help individuals develop better sleep habits and manage sleep-related issues. By offering CBT-I programs, organizations can provide employees with effective tools and strategies to overcome sleep difficulties and improve their overall well-being.

Establish consistent schedules: Shift work disrupts circadian rhythms. Some employees are more flexible than others when it comes to changing schedules and sleep time. When possible, maintaining consistency in work schedules can help regulate employees' sleep-wake cycles. If you can align the work schedule with your employee's preferences (some are night owls and prefer working evenings and nights, while others perform better in the early morning), you are onto something. When employees' schedules rotate over weeks, make sure to give them enough time to recuperate in-between different schedules.

Investing in sleep health is a strategic decision that directly impacts productivity, safety and the bottom line. Organizations

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that prioritize healthy sleep habits gain a competitive edge in today's dynamic business landscape.

Sleep deprivation in the workplace poses significant risks to safety, productivity and employee well-being. Shift workers are particularly at risk of being sleep deprived. By learning how to optimize sleep in shift work situations and equipping

“Sleep deprivation can lead to decreased productivity, impaired judgment, slower reaction times and an increased risk of accidents.”

EHS professionals with the necessary tools and knowledge, organizations can proactively address sleep-related challenges in their workforce.

Recognizing the unique needs of shift workers and implementing strategies to promote quality sleep will unlock the full potential of the workforce, leading to improved

productivity and a safer work environment. This includes recognizing signs of drowsiness, allowing employees short nap breaks during evening and night shifts, and being flexible with the start and end times of shifts when possible. As EHS professionals take the lead in fostering a culture that values and prioritizes healthy sleep habits, organizations will reap the benefits of enhanced workplace productivity, safety and employee well-being. **EHS**

Brad Smith is the founder and CEO of HALEO, a virtual sleep clinic. HALEO's mission is to improve health and performance by increasing access to quality care for poor sleep. HALEO provides professional, clinically proven solutions for sleep disorders and is accessible through a mobile app.

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Injury to Recovery: How to Support Your Workers

Create a return-to-work plan that supports the holistic well-being of your employees.

By Jean Feldman

Workplace injuries can disrupt life—physically and emotionally. Employees injured on the job are *twice as likely* to experience serious psychological distress compared to those without injury.

Simple tasks, such as caring for children, cooking, walking pets, or managing finances, can feel like hurdles.

It leaves workers asking: What's next?

That's why your employees need your help through every step of their recovery. Let's look at what you can do to care for your injured employees and their well-being.

TRUST YOUR EMPLOYEES

After an injury, trust becomes a pillar of support. I've worked in managed care for nearly 30 years. In my experience, most workers' compensation claims are real, valid cases. Don't focus on the few that might not be.

Listen to your employees and encourage open, two-way communication. They're feeling the effects of a physical injury and the uncertainty that comes with it.

Dialogue builds trust, and it can lead to information that helps you tailor your support.

UNDERSTAND THEIR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Behind every injury is a person. That person has thoughts and emotions. They also have responsibilities outside of their job.

Remember, your workplace provides more than a paycheck to employees. It offers social connections, normalcy and security. Injuries can take that away.

Here are challenges your injured employees may face:

- » anxiety and stress;
- » lack of social support from family, friends, and work;
- » financial uncertainty;
- » fears of re-injury or job security;
- » chronic pain; and
- » difficulty adapting to physical and emotional changes.

Each of these risks can affect an employee's recovery and extend their time away from the job. The result can have serious financial implications for your business and your employee.

Just by understanding these risks, you can become a better advocate for your injured workers. When you maintain frequent communication with your employees, you can help

spot these stressors early on. This enables you to offer better support, which can lead to better recoveries.

An outcome that benefits your employee, their family and your business.

EMBRACE YOUR ROLE AS AN EMPLOYER

If you strain your back unloading a pallet on the job, you could miss work for a few weeks. How would you want your employer to treat you?

Most workers I've met want compassion, empathy and support.

If you aren't communicating with your employees, you leave room for uncertainty. That can soon lead to feelings of fear, isolation and distrust. It can disrupt their progress and damage your business' culture.

Make your injured worker feel valued—as a person and employee. Here's what that looks like:

- » Express genuine care about their recovery through the entire process
- » Schedule regular check-ins and communication.
- » Offer support and resources.



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- » Outline flexible work arrangements and modified duties.
 - » Collaborate on their return-to-work goals.
- Now, let's take a closer look at how to put that into practice.

INVOLVE THE RIGHT PEOPLE

The people who support your injured employees can serve as first-line advocates. They're the eyes and ears that can help recognize when an injured worker needs more support, or other resources. A successful program includes open communication among several parties:

- » the injured employee,
- » the employee's supervisor,
- » your human resources representatives,
- » your insurance claims representative, and
- » the employee's treating provider, who will work closely with the insurance claims representative.

Together, your support team plays a vital role in helping employees overcome physical and mental barriers.

Technology, with human service, can also aid your efforts. Don't hesitate to explore potential services available through your insurer. Resources such as telehealth and virtual reality therapy can provide greater access to care. Meanwhile, data analytics may offer insights that help identify trends and risk factors.

DEVELOP AN EARLY RETURN-TO-WORK PLAN

The Colorado Division of Workers' Compensation suggests that *up to 10% of all workers with injuries may experience delayed recovery.*

An early return-to-work plan can help employees stay engaged and ease them back to work. By developing a formal plan with injured employees, you show them you value their contributions. That type of commitment can help them regain their confidence and a sense of normalcy.

As a result, you can help promote better outcomes and control medical costs. It's a win-win for you, and your employees.

Here's how to start:

Assign a leader to manage your program. They should work with your business's safety and human resources teams to create consistent messages and expectations.

Develop a policy statement that emphasizes your commitment to offering flexible accommodations. Highlight your focus on supporting their holistic recovery.

Establish clear goals to monitor results. Include specific criteria for employee eligibility. Outline milestones and administrative details needed to support injured employees.

Connect with the care team and your insurer to discuss accommodations and the employee's ability to return to work. Identify potential resources that may help employees manage social, emotional or psychological concerns.

OUTLINE LIGHT DUTY TASKS

Depending on an employee's medical restrictions and the needs of your business, a modified program can offer a variety of options to help them reacclimate to work. In your business, that could look like:

- » inventory management;
- » data entry and documentation;
- » office tasks;
- » machinery and equipment maintenance;
- » training other workers, including new hires, in their area of expertise;
- » property and safety inspections; and
- » customer communication and support.

Regardless of their tasks, ensure it's meaningful and engaging work. Your main objective is to make sure your employee still feels like a valuable member of the team. If they do, it can aid their recovery and help them overcome the psychological barriers that can impact their return to work.

CONTINUE PRIORITIZING WORKPLACE SAFETY

Prevention is still the best medicine. It's more productive and more cost-effective to reduce injuries altogether.

Invest in safety measures and regular training programs to minimize the risk of workplace injuries. Conduct safety audits, address potential hazards and ensure employees have the necessary protection to do their jobs.

When your workforce feels safe, they can focus on their tasks with peace of mind.

THE TAKEAWAY

The longer an employee is out of work due to injury, the greater the mental and emotional toll it can have. Remember, employees are more than their job descriptions. They're moms and dads, Little League coaches, friends, and doting grandmas and grandpas.

They need your support after an injury.

When you prioritize the well-being of your injured workers, you send a powerful message—one of compassion, empathy and commitment.

Create a workplace environment that focuses on your employees' overall well-being. An open channel of dialogue with your injured employees can make a world difference in their recovery.

In the meantime, use these tips as a starting point. Then, talk with your team and local experts to develop a plan specific for your business. Your employees will thank you. **EHS**

Jean Feldman, RN, BSN, is the senior director of managed care for Sentry Insurance, and is responsible for the managed care programs and clinical strategy for workers' compensation.



4 Ways Your Safety Program (and the Bottom Line)

EHS professionals have a key role to play not only in the data they can provide to fuel ESG measurement.

By Jade Brainard

Whether your organization's environmental, social and governance (ESG) efforts are well-established or still being formed, there's a good chance that, as an EHS professional, you have an important role to play in carrying them out.

In fact, safety programs (and the data they track) often provide invaluable information to the other stakeholders responsible for establishing ESG goals and monitoring their progress. Here are four ways your existing safety program can support your organization's larger ESG efforts.

1 ESTABLISH YOUR CARBON EMISSIONS BASELINE

One of the most important measurements at the start of any ESG endeavor is the assessment of an organization's current carbon emissions. It's impossible to set reasonable reduction goals—never mind determine how close you are to reaching those goals—if you don't know where you starting from.

Many EHS professionals use compliance software that tracks an organization's emissions. Sharing this data with key stakeholders working on ESG efforts is a simple way to facilitate those efforts and add value to the organization as a whole.

Naturally, as the organization defines its goals and strategy, emissions data from EHS software will continue to be vitally important to assessing where you are on the path to reaching those goals.

In the future, if the <https://www.sec.gov/news/press-release/2022-46> SEC's proposed rule on reporting

greenhouse gas emissions takes effect, EHS professionals who already collaborate with larger ESG teams will be well positioned to help their organizations comply with any new regulations.

2 MAINTAIN COMPLIANCE WITH ENVIRONMENTAL REGULATIONS

The primary metric of ESG programs may be carbon emissions, but environmental stewardship involves more than reducing greenhouse gasses.

Again, thanks to data they're likely already tracking, EHS professionals can provide ESG teams with useful information on a variety of organizational environmental impacts, including use and disposal of regulated chemicals, and use of hazardous materials.

There's a kind of beautiful harmony to the EHS-ESG relationship. Both roles work to reduce harm, whether the primary focus is on an organization's employees (as with EHS) or its broader community (as with ESG). The work that reduces harm also tends to reduce risk, which happens to make an organization more attractive to investors as well.

This is why I like to remind people that ESG is a financial metric. By demonstrating environmental responsibility, organizations signal they are careful and that they invest time in thinking things through from end to end. This approach to an individual component of the business suggests a similar approach organization-wide, meaning organizations with strong ESG and EHS credentials tend to be better risks overall, not just on paper.



Will Support ESG Efforts

3 DEMONSTRATE YOUR COMMITMENT TO THE COMMUNITY'S SAFETY AND HEALTH

Another way EHS professionals can support ESG efforts is by helping document and demonstrate the organization's commitment to community safety and health.

The first way this manifests is in the treatment of the organization's employees. As community members, each employee's individual health and safety is part of the larger community's overall health and safety. Moreover, when workplaces consistently demonstrate that they treat employees well, those employees tend to stay longer. It's easier for the company to hire and easier to grow.

This creates a virtuous circle for the community: When businesses have a steady workforce, they can grow steadily. That creates demand for services among employees and their families, which leads to increased economic activity and eventually increases prosperity for the entire community.

4 PREVENT REPUTATIONAL DAMAGE AND REVENUE LOSS

I mentioned above that ESG is a financial metric. That's most obvious when a failure to embrace ESG efforts leads to a major incident that costs a business serious money (and often more).

On the environmental side, think how a chemical leak might impact local drinking water. When local media report on the leak's origins, the responsible organization takes a serious reputational hit. It

may have difficulty hiring employees and even signing new business partners. It may be outright ineligible to partner with large firms that have their own ESG standards, such as Amazon. A bad workplace accident could have a similar impact, especially if the cause of the accident was organizational negligence.

On the governance side, a revelation about excessive executive pay or unsavory business practices at a partner or provider could cause similar reputational risks and ultimately damage the business.

While EHS teams may not have as much impact on the governance side, their careful attention to data and commitment to health and safety absolutely help build the kind of transparent workplace that stands up to scrutiny when it comes and doesn't bring unwelcome scrutiny for preventable reasons.

EHS Professionals Have a Key Role to Play in ESG Efforts

ESG efforts are complex and nuanced, and they are likely to evolve within any organization as third-party requirements change and regulations emerge. EHS professionals have a key role to play, not only in the data they can provide to fuel ESG measurement but also in their contributions to the larger organization's culture of compliance and safety. **EHS**



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Hearing Protection

Milwaukee has developed a new in-ear device for on-the-job hearing conservation. The REDLITHIUM USB Bluetooth Jobsite Ear Buds are water, dust and impact resistant and also offer passive hearing protection. When the Jobsite Aware Mode is activated, the ear buds provide enhanced situational awareness by actively sensing external noises and reduces volume pass-through of loud sounds until levels reach a designated listening volume. The Bluetooth earbuds feature Noise Reduction Rating (NRR) tips in foam (25 NRR) or silicone (22 NRR), workers prefer. The earbuds last up to 10 hours of run time on a single charge. The REDLITHIUM USB case battery provides up to 70 hours of run time with multiple in-case charges.

Milwaukee

www.milwaukeetool.com



Face Protection

Bolle Safety has launched a new collection of use-specific trial goggles as well as a compatible ANSI rated face guard for even more protection. The new goggle collection, Universal Goggle, adapts to a wide range of industrial uses. Each of the four goggles is designed for different uses and work environments while protecting workers' from external hazards, such as impacts, gases and liquids, and radiation. When clipped onto the face guard, Bolle's Safety's latest offers entire face protection. The Universal Goggle also features a new form-fitting innovation called The Wave technology, an accordion-style bellows system that allows the goggle to conform to a user's face and evenly distribute the goggle's pressure across the face ensuring an optimized fit for each individual. The Universal Goggles compatible with prescription glasses and features Level B impact resistance, according to EN166.

Bolle Safety

www.bolle-safety.com/us



Hand Protection

Brass Knuckle's latest glove is a cut above—and offers medium-to-high cut resistance. The company's latest A4 cut resistance glove features a high-density polyethylene (HDPE) knit shell provides ANSI cut level A4 protection without bulk, with a strength-to-weight ratio 8 to 15 times higher than steel. The SmartCut's (BKCR4420) added superior grip, moisture protection and a high degree of dexterity make it a comfortable wear. The glove's palm and finger-based coating helps hands stay dry even when working with liquids while the sandy grip finish enhances abrasion resistance and cut protection.

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Nicole
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Everyday Marvels

The road to improvements can be long and arduous, but the end results never cease to amaze.

Last summer, I received notice that my city would be replacing the pipes and redoing the storm drains on my street. I was excited about not having my water run through old lead pipes, but I didn't find the estimated time line of work exciting: one year.

After a few false starts, work began in November 2022, around Thanksgiving. As I write this column, the work is still ongoing.

There have been phases of work involving all sorts of heavy machinery digging several feet into the ground, tearing up driveways and sidewalks, laying pipes and pouring concrete. There have also been changes in traffic patterns, road closures, gigantic holes covered by steel grates, planned water shutoffs and unplanned water shutoffs.

In fact, I've gotten so used to the noises between the hours of 7 a.m. and 5 p.m. that it was once several days before I realized no one was working outside my windows. (I honestly think it took me so long to notice because I was hearing phantom beeps!)

Prior to this project, I knew very little about infrastructure, but I have learned some by talking with the construction crew and through my own observations. The biggest lesson I have learned is that projects—even ones seemingly as straightforward as replacing pipes and storm drains on a residential street—are serious undertakings that require significant time. One year has proved to be an accurate estimate, unfortunately.

I'm sure many of you have similar experiences with getting safety programs and other safety-based initiatives up and running. You may not be digging down 14 feet into the ground, but you are drilling down into long-standing beliefs, practices and company culture—and that can be just as arduous to deconstruct and rebuild.

Safety, as with infrastructure projects, requires exhaustive preplanning to scope the program. That's followed by extensive research to find a viable solution. Then, there's the persuasive art of selling others on the idea and securing the resources (e.g., time, funding and people) to help bring the idea into fruition.

No matter how good an idea is in concept, implementation is a completely different beast. That's assuming you are fortunate enough to not run into any

unexpected bumps in the road that could delay or derail any project. All projects, no matter how big or seemingly small, are difficult. They require serious commitment, dedication and perseverance. They are not for the faint of heart.

For much of the time, a project can seem like it's one hair shy of breaking the camel's back. It can often feel like nothing's going right, or progress isn't being made. In fact, it can often seem worse than before your project began.

With construction, the machinery, supplies and road signs are clear indicators of work in progress. They may even post a cutesy sign saying, "Pardon our dust." It's understood that things are messy, but that's part of the process.

With safety projects, the process is pretty similar, but the work isn't as visible. In my opinion, that can make it more challenging for people to be patient and remain dedicated. That's because you're asking people to have faith in the end result without having anything to show for it in the meantime. Plus, they might not think anything was wrong or that change was needed in the first place.

There's the saying, "It's always worse until it gets better." It's cliché, but it's also true. You can be trudging along for days, weeks or months before a metaphorical flip is switched and everything starts falling into place. Once it does, the changes gain momentum and it feels like the project is completed in a matter of seconds. Afterwards, it's impossible to stop admiring the end result.

That may all be true, but it doesn't mean that there aren't curveballs and headaches along the way. Perhaps the best we can do is remember they will not last forever. Progress takes work, but in the end it's all worth it. At least, that's what I keep telling myself.

One of these days, hopefully soon, I will marvel at the new curbs, pristine driveway aprons, smooth asphalt and guzzle water that's not touched any lead pipes. For now, I continue to drive slow, dodge giant craters and remind myself that this will one day be a distant memory.

Nicole Stempak

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