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EHS Today®

America's Safest Companies 2023

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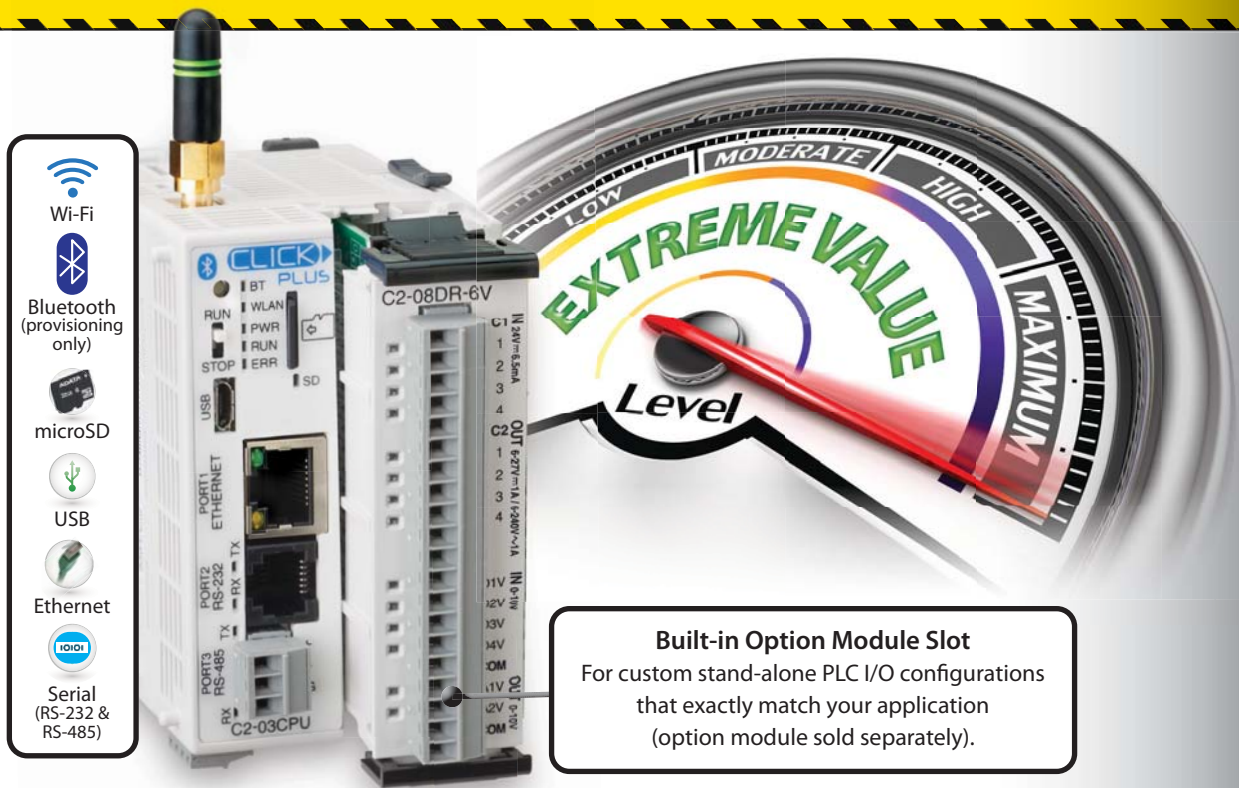
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ON-DEMAND EDITORIAL WEBINARS

ITEM: "C.A.A.R.E. for Safety: How to Create an Engaging Safety Culture," presented by Walter Fluharty, Simon Roofing. Learn how one of the largest privately owned commercial roofing companies created an engaging safety culture ranking them among the best safety performers in the industry. After attending this webinar, you will have the blueprint for a new set of tools to take your first steps toward an aligned safety culture.

ITEM: "A Renovation Project—It's Time to Add Mental Health as a Safety Training Topic," presented by Holli Singleton, Southeastern OSHA Training Institute, NC State University. This webinar provides practical guidance for incorporating mental health awareness into your workplace safety training in an appropriate way that will help protect workers from the fastest growing hazard in today's

workplace. Attendees of this webinar will be able to recognize how mental health challenges, in the form of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors can have an impact on worker safety. Attendees will also be able to effectively and appropriately address mental health as a workplace safety training topic.

ITEM: "Overcoming the Challenges with Hazard Identification," presented by Doug Pontsler, COVE: Center of Visual Expertise. Technical competence in safe work practices is important for protecting workers, but it is not enough. We must be able to see the hazard as well. Webinar attendees will be presented with a road map to improve their own hazard identification processes and learn why being visually literate is a critical competency to identifying hazards in the workplace.

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

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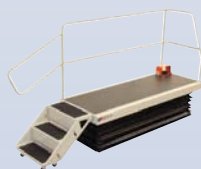
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Dave
Blanchard

Editor-in-Chief



Diagnosis: Workplace Safety

With workplace stress at an all-time high, safety leaders are in a unique position to improve the situation at their companies.

What causes workplace stress? Answering that question might be the most important thing a company can do, not only in terms of fostering better mental health for its employees but also to ensure the company's own financial health. According to the American Institute of Stress, workplace stress costs US companies roughly \$300 billion annually in losses due to absenteeism, diminished productivity and accidents. That number right there makes a pretty solid business case for better understanding—and managing—the causes of stress, since the effects can be devastating.

According to The Healthy Work Campaign (HWC), a public health project sponsored by the nonprofit foundation, The Center for Social Epidemiology, the top 10 causes of work stress are: 1) long work hours, 2) low job control, 3) work-family conflict, 4) shift work, 5) job demands, 6) job insecurity, 7) organizational injustice, 8) low support, 9) low rewards and benefits, and 10) unemployment.

In every one of those situations, there's an obvious lack of engagement between the employee and the employer. And as workplace expert Joe Robinson, principal of Optimal Performance Strategies, an HWC partner, explained, "Engagement is one of the most important factors for any organization, whether their employees are actually fully attentive and on the task that they're on." And for safety managers, ensuring that a worker is fully attentive is not only essential to productivity but to keeping that employee—and all other employees—out of harm's way.

"Stress automatically detours and distracts," added Robinson, author of *Work Smarter, Live Better*. He cited a study from the American Psychological Association (APA) that indicates we're at an all-time high for stress and burnout in the workplace. "People who are burned out are not slackers," he insisted. "They get that way because they're the most conscientious people and they're the hardest workers. So you're burning out your best people. You're disengaging them, which doesn't make any sense at all."

Another recent study from the APA points to the disturbing statistic that 19% of workers—nearly one in five—say their workplace is either very toxic or somewhat toxic. "The number of individuals who report experiencing a toxic workplace without protection from harm is troubling," said Arthur C. Evans Jr., APA's CEO. "No one should feel fear at work. It is clear there is much work to be done to foster a positive work environment for all workers in the nation."

At the recent ASSP Safety 2023 show in San Antonio, Texas, Shelly Meadows and Martin Franchi of Navigation Consulting & Training (NavCT) offered insights into what safety managers can do to help their workers—and their companies—deal better with workplace stress. As with everything else, senior management at companies tend to respond to problems when there are dollar signs attached, so Meadows and Franchi suggest safety professionals learn to make a strong business case for dealing with stressed employees.

"Organizations that implement psychological health and safety strategies usually perform better in all key performance categories: from health and safety to human resources, key performance indicators, and shareholder returns," they explained. To get senior leaders to pay attention, emphasize that a workforce that feels psychologically safe is a characteristic of organizational excellence. Bottom-line benefits from such a workforce include improved productivity, organizational effectiveness, worker engagement and morale, discretionary effort, recruitment and retention, and creativity and innovation.

And that's not all, according to the NavCT consultants. Companies will also see reductions in turnover, absenteeism and presenteeism; workplace conflicts and grievances; disability and injury rates; worker's comp premiums; and recruiting and training costs.

Some ways companies can address mental health in the workplace include:

- » Address the root causes of the stress to eliminate the psychological hazards.
- » Implement training processes and programs that identify and address mental health risks.
- » Teach workers resilience and other mitigating skills.
- » Provide mental health support once an injury has occurred. And then provide return-to-work facilitation.

That being said, Meadows and Franchi acknowledged that safety professionals are most definitely not trained psychologists so don't veer too far out of your lane. "The aim is not to diagnose a worker, or solve all the problems," they said. "The aim is to diagnose the workplace to create a psychologically health and safe environment where people can thrive."

Dave Blanchard

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

SLC 2023 Preview: Handling OSHA Inspections

Once OSHA comes knocking, everything you do needs to be carefully thought through.

By Nicole Stempak

It's inevitable that you will have to deal with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

As with most things in life, planning ahead for OSHA inspections will serve you well. It's true you may still be cited, but having a current and well-practiced playbook will almost certainly guarantee a more favorable outcome for your organization.

EHS Today spoke with Micah Dickie, a litigator for Fisher Phillips based in Atlanta. Dickie will offer guidance on preparing for those dreaded OSHA visits at the 2023 Safety Leadership Conference held Sept. 18-20 in Orlando, Fla. More information about the conference, including registration, can be found at www.safetyleadershipconference.com.

Below is a preview of what to expect from his presentation.



Micah Dickie

EHS Today: Let's say OSHA's at the door. What's the first thing safety professionals should do?

Dickie: Refer to the written plan the company put in place ahead of an OSHA inspection. First steps in such a plan would, after checking the OSHA inspector's credentials, involve:

1. Asking OSHA to wait in a conference room or office for a reasonable period of time until the company attorney or other designated contact can also participate in an opening conference with OSHA to discuss the reason for OSHA's visit;
2. If the company reported an accident recently, planning out the route from this initial area to the site of the accident;
3. Sending a team quickly to ensure that no hazards are in plain view of the route OSHA will travel to the area of the accident;
4. Ensuring OSHA logs are available and accurate upon OSHA's request; and
5. To the extent possible, limit the use of powered industrial trucks (PITs) and lockout/tagout (LOTO) work on the route where OSHA may observe them.

What shouldn't safety professionals do?

They should not admit any violations when speaking to OSHA, no matter how informal the questions posed. Also, other than OSHA logs and hazard communication documents, they should not provide any documents during OSHA's first visit.

Instead, they should ask for other documents to be requested in writing. Safety professionals also cannot alter the scene of any accident, and they should not do a complete work stoppage during an OSHA visit. Doing so raises more questions in OSHA's mind and distracts from the purpose of their visit.

How should safety professionals prepare employees if OSHA wants to ask them questions?

Supervisors, leads and managers should not be interviewed on the first OSHA visit, as they can be prepped by the company's attorney or EHS professional before being interviewed. For non-supervisors, while the company cannot be present during those interviews, the company should apprise those employees that the company is cooperating in the OSHA inspection.

As such, the company must make the employees available for an interview and emphasize that it is the employees' choice about what to say or not say to OSHA. Lastly, the company should remind the employees of the relevant and recent training that may relate to OSHA's visit.

What are some common mistakes you see companies make when OSHA investigates?

Companies make the mistake of confusing cooperation and professionalism with being helpful. One example is telling OSHA things that OSHA has no right to know. OSHA has the burden of proving safety violations against an employer, and it has the authority to investigate workplace safety complaints and accidents.

However, OSHA's authority is limited to the reason for the inspection. Employers often discuss items with OSHA that are wholly unrelated to the reason for OSHA's inspection.

Similarly, companies allow OSHA to walk through areas it has no right to access and to speak to supervisors without first understanding the legal ramifications of any admissions by those supervisors on the employer once a citation is issued.

What rights and protections do companies have?

OSHA inspections are governed by the Fourth Amendment, so companies have rights related to their property. Without a warrant, any inspection is based on the company's cooperation.

If OSHA will not stick to the scope of discussion agreed to during the opening conference, the company should object and insist on limiting the area OSHA sees.

What's one thing you hope attendees learn from your session at the Safety Leadership Conference?

I hope attendees learn that having a plan before OSHA shows up on what a company's rights are—and sticking to that plan to protect those rights—can improve safety and save employers thousands in citations and lost business.

OSHA Urges Employers to Protect Outdoor Workers from Poor Air Quality

To help employers deal with the fallout from the Canadian wildfires as they continue to produce unhealthy air pollution in parts of the country, OSHA has developed a comprehensive website (www.osha.gov/wildfires) with safety tips and resources to help workers reduce their exposure to smoke during wildfires.

“Wildfire smoke exposure can create major health hazards for outdoor workers. These hazards can be reduced with knowledge, safe work practices and appropriate personal protective equipment,” said Assistant Secretary for Occupational Safety and Health Doug Parker in a statement.

The most significant hazard from wildfire smoke is exposure to particulate matter, tiny particles of partially burned material less than 2.5 micrometers in diameter, that can enter the lungs and even the bloodstream. Particulate matter is linked to serious health problems such as lung, heart and kidney disease.

Workers exposed to smoke-polluted air may experience heat stress, eye and respiratory tract irritation, and suffer from exposure to other respiratory hazards caused by hazardous substances, such as heavy metals entering the atmosphere. Employers should prepare for, and plan to,

implement procedures to reduce exposure to smoke when necessary.

Protective measures to reduce smoke exposure for outdoor workers can include:

- » Frequent monitoring of air quality conditions using a source such as the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s AirNow website (www.airnow.gov).
- » Relocating or rescheduling work tasks to smoke-free areas.
- » Reducing levels of physical activity, especially strenuous and heavy work.
- » Requiring and encouraging workers to take breaks in smoke-free places when possible.
- » When possible, making accommodations for employees to work inside with proper HVAC systems and high efficiency air filters. —EHS Today staff



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Workforce Well-being Metrics are Getting Worse

Improving the well-being of employees has been a goal of most companies. But it's still a struggle, according to consulting firm Deloitte's Well-Being at Work Study. The recent report revealed that employee well-being has worsened across all dimensions.

The authors of the report advise that moving forward will require a strong focus on "delivering immediate impact but ultimately should shift toward a more long-term view—one that prioritizes people over profits. To achieve this, leaders should increase their support for their managers, and they also should hold themselves and their organizations more accountable."

Accountability is something that the C-suite is ready to do, as 85% of respondents feel organizations should be required to publicly report their well-being metrics, for example, in their annual reporting. However, only around half say their company is currently doing this.

Metrics are one form of measurement, while employee satisfaction is another. In the study, some employees reported that executives were not meeting their expectations when it comes to advancing human sustainability, which Deloitte defines as the long-term, collective well-being of individuals, organizations, climate and society.



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Key findings from the report include:

Workforce well-being is declining, but employees feel that some executives don't recognize this. Most employees feel their health worsened or stayed the same last year—only one-third say their health improved. However, more than three-quarters of C-suite leaders believe their workforce's health improved.

For some, work remains an obstacle to well-being. Eight in 10 respondents are struggling to improve their well-being, with a heavy workload and stressful job topping the list of obstacles they face. Also, 60% of employees, 64% of managers and 75% of the C-suite say they're seriously considering quitting for a job that would better support their well-being.

Managers can play a pivotal role in employee well-being, but they're lacking organizational support. Seven in 10 managers say obstacles like rigid company policies, a heavy workload and an unsupportive workplace culture prevent them from doing more to support their team members. Only 42% feel completely empowered to help their company achieve its well-being commitments. —EHS Today staff



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Adrienne
Selko

Senior Editor



Are We Doing Enough to Keep Workers Safe from Harmful Substances?

When profits take precedence over people and public trust, bad things can happen.

Haven't we moved past headlines such as this from *The [Everett] Daily Herald*: "Boeing workers long exposed to carcinogens far above legal limits"?

At the aerospace giant's Everett, Wash.-based plant, levels of hexavalent chromium were found that "greatly exceed the legal permissible exposure limit" in the factory's paint operations. This was a statement from the company's own compliance manager, Jennifer Allen. She wrote this in an email to colleagues arguing for the elimination of the chemical in the manufacturing process.

Allen went on to warn the Everett plant leadership in 2020 that "literally hundreds of Boeing employees are at risk" of developing lung cancer or other forms of cancer regardless of respiratory protection" from the chemical, which has been a key ingredient in airplane production for decades.

Another apparent case of knowing about the use of hazard chemicals is Goodyear. The company uses ortho-toluidine in its production process and has been monitoring the air for the chemical since 1976. According to an article from NPR, since 1974 dozens of the plant's workers have developed bladder cancer. And according to an article from the Center for Public Integrity, DuPont, the manufacturer of this chemical, "knew in 1955 that the chemical caused bladder cancer in laboratory animals and protected its own workers from it but didn't issue warnings to Goodyear and other customers until 1977."

And a July 2023 *Wall Street Journal* investigation revealed that telecom companies have known about the dangers of lead in their underground cables for decades, not only posing a health risk to workers but potentially to those living in nearby communities.

Why are companies exposing workers to chemicals and other materials that are known to be dangerous? Do we rely on the companies to self-regulate? The above examples would show that in many cases, even when companies know of the danger, they don't always take action.

So that leads to the role of government. Are OSHA standards high enough? An OSHA document called "Permission Exposure Limited- Annotated Tables" says, "OSHA recognizes that many of its permissible exposure limits (PELS) are outdated and inadequate for ensuring protection of worker health. Most of OSHA's PELs were issued shortly after adoption of

the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act in 1970 and have not been updated since that time."

In an NPR article on the subject of ortho-toluidine, Doug Parker, assistant secretary of labor for occupational safety and health, said: "The requirements of the rulemaking process, including limitations placed by prior judicial decisions, have limited our ability to have more up-to-date standards. Chemical exposure, including ortho-toluidine, is a major health hazard for workers, and we have to do more to protect their health."

To that end OSHA has updated its Severe Violator Enforcement Program (SVEP). Changes include expanding program criteria to include all hazards as well as placing employers in the program if they have two willful or repeated violations. Follow-up inspections must be conducted after a year.

"These changes to SVEP will hold a microscope to those employers who continue to expose workers to very serious dangers and help ensure America's workers come home safe at the end of every shift," Parker said in a statement. While that might be a first step, I

would argue that more pressure must be placed on both OSHA and the companies.

I do find solace in the way that the issue of PFAS, or forever chemicals, is being addressed. With recent reports that these chemicals are now in half of the country's water supply, a concerted effort on all fronts to do something about this is happening. Industry has responded: 3M, for instance, has said it will stop production of these chemicals by 2025. 3M and DuPont are both facing legal actions due to their prior knowledge of the harmful nature of the PFAS. State governments are also acting by suing manufacturers over these forever companies, saying that harm is coming to residents and natural resources.

And most effective is the fact that everyone now knows about these chemicals, how harmful they are and there is a strong public outcry for something to be done to address this. That same outcry is exactly what needs to happen with the many other dangerous substances workers face every day. **EHS**

Adrienne Selko

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





America's Safest Companies 2023

EHS Today honors 10 companies that are standard-bearers of safety excellence.

By Dave Blanchard, Adrienne Selko and Nicole Stempak

SAFETY FIRST is a slogan found on many company bulletin boards and in many weekly employee meetings, but what exactly differentiates those companies that meet the industry average for occupational safety from those that excel at all aspects of environment, health and safety in their workplaces? That's the premise behind *EHS Today's* annual **America's Safest Companies** competition: To identify and celebrate those organizations that go above and beyond in the pursuit of safety excellence, and to tell their stories to the entire safety community.

When applying for consideration as one of America's Safest Companies, organizations must demonstrate excellence in several areas: support from leadership and management for EHS efforts; employee involvement in the EHS process; innovative solutions to safety challenges; injury and illness rates lower than the average for their industries; comprehensive training programs; evidence that prevention of incidents is the cornerstone of the safety process; good communication about the value of safety; and a way to substantiate the benefits of the safety process.

In the profiles that follow, you'll hear how 10 companies in several different industries throughout the country—some with thousands of employees over multiple sites, and some smaller firms with just a single site—all are dedicated to safety to such an impressive extent that we've named them to the 2023 Class of America's Safest Companies.

The awards will be presented during a special ceremony at EHS Today's Safety Leadership Conference 2023, in Orlando, Florida, September 18-20. Go to www.safetyleadershipconference.com for all the details and to register.

The winning companies for 2023 are: ACCO Brands; Cajun Industries; Jordan Foster Construction; Loven Contracting; MasterBrand Cabinets; Performance Contractors; Plastipak Packaging; Price Electric; S&B Engineers & Constructors; and Yaskawa Electric America.

The America's Safest Companies awards program was founded by EHS Today in 2002. To date, more than 250 companies have been recognized, and some companies have won the award more than once. We hope that the safety profiles that follow will inspire you to consider applying for the award in 2024. **EHS**

ACCO Brands Corporation

Stationery Manufacturing

Lake Zurich, IL

1,806 U.S. employees | 9 U.S. sites | 5 EHS professionals

ACCO knows the discomfort of aches and pains. That's why the company offers weekly on-site massages to all U.S. manufacturing and distribution center employees—regardless of whether those aches and pains are job-related or not.

"While there is a significant cost to providing [this] benefit to our employees, we believe we have prevented many minor employee issues from becoming more serious medical issues and have a healthier workforce as a result of this program," says James Edwards, senior director of environmental, health and safety at ACCO.

The company also has a detailed ergonomics program at all locations that entails training, yearly assessments from an outside expert and reviews for any jobs that experience a musculoskeletal injury. These reviews allow ACCO to proactively identify ergonomic risks and make adjustments.

ACCO understands the value safety brings to an organization. The stationary manufacturer has thrice been named one of America's Safest Companies, a feat only six other companies have achieved. Since their last win in 2017, it's clear



the company hasn't been resting on its laurels—a noteworthy accomplishment since the company has grown through acquisitions and developed new products during that time.

The cornerstone of ACCO's safety program is its Comprehensive Environmental and Safety Management Plan (CESMP), which has 82 items and has been implemented globally.

One aspect of the plan is that each manufacturing and distribution center is audited annually for compliance. The multi-person audit team interviews employees at all levels and shifts. As part of the multiday audit process, the team reviews written programs and training records and conducts an extensive walkthrough to analyze physical and behavioral safety on the floor. The location's audit score is combined with its injury rate to calculate a company-wide ranking of all locations that is shared with employees.

"This has created some good-natured competition among our audited facilities to try and perform best on the annual audit, which has resulted in us making great strides in all areas of safety performance," Edwards says. "As employees take pride in their performance ranking and the recognition that goes along with it, we have obtained broad buy-in on our CESMP." —NS

Cajun Industries

Construction

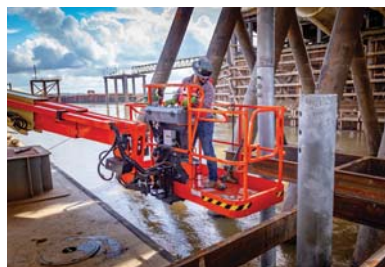
Baton Rouge, LA

1,842 employees | 3 sites | 49 EHS professionals

At Cajun Industries, every employee must embrace the value that "all accidents are preventable and injury is not an acceptable by-product of our work," explains Colton Possoit, professional development specialist at Cajun. "As managers, we recognize that profits are enhanced by our Zero Accident Goal." That number "zero" is significant for Cajun, as the company has maintained a zero-fatality rate since its founding in 1973—50 years ago. The company is also pursuing a goal of zero OSHA recordable injuries and zero motor vehicle accidents.

Cajun devotes a lot of time, effort and attention to safety and health training, which includes an accredited training facility and a corporate training department. The company provides nationally recognized training in areas such as rigging, carpentry, heavy equipment, cranes and welding.

"Our training efforts are ongoing, with weekly Hazard Awareness Trainings (HATbox) and regular periodic reviews of training records," Possoit says. "We also use Credential Verification Services to track and verify employee training. At Cajun, we believe in a family-oriented safety culture and take



pride in our dedication to providing comprehensive safety and health training for all employees, new and experienced."

One of the hallmarks of an America's Safest Companies winner is they go above and beyond what a typical company

would do. As Possoit explains, in the years 2020-21, there were numerous recalls of fall protection equipment. Cajun's management team undertook an extensive survey to learn and understand what brands of equipment were being utilized by Cajun and job sites across the Gulf Coast. That led to an evaluation of three U.S.-based fall protection equipment manufacturers with no safety recalls, with the goal of only using the best and safest fall protection gear.

Achieving that goal, Possoit points out, meant collecting and destroying \$260,000 worth of fall protection equipment that hadn't been produced by their preferred brands.

The company also has a very structured mentor program. "All Cajun employees are assigned a mentor during their first 90 days of employment," he explains. Mentor stays in close proximity to mentees and communicate company policies, standard operating procedures and best practices.

Also, employees with less than one year of working in industrial construction are paired with a mentor for one year. "The experienced Cajun employee serves as an additional set of eyes to assist that employee with industrial construction hazards." —DB

Jordan Foster Construction

Construction

El Paso, TX

700 employees | 4 sites | 10 EHS professionals

Addressing challenging workforce situations is difficult even in the best of times, particularly for construction companies, so Jordan Foster Construction (JFC) has developed specific programs to anticipate the psychological needs of their employees.

“With the construction industry being so affected with suicide rates, we have answered the call to make mental health awareness a priority,” notes Asma Bayunus, the company’s EHS operations manager. Their efforts include pooling the resources of a lead mental health advocate, field safety leaders and the entire safety department to promote the importance of mental health awareness. “We implement standards via toolbox talks, safety bytes (mini videos) and in company trainings. We have an Employee Assistance Program as well as an on-staff pastor. Also, we have a hard hat sticker which identifies our Mental First Aid-trained employees, whom others can go to for assistance in finding help for their concerns.”

Another labor-related focus of the company is inclusivity. “Our women’s leadership committee is a diverse group who work in all areas of the company, and this committee serves as



a safe place to help women who want to continue to navigate the road less traveled in our industry,” says Bayunus.

Being proactive is part of the culture at JFC. When taking on a new project, the safety team collaborates with the project team to analyze tasks, drawings and construction specifications in order to determine where they might encounter safety issues.

“We plan for safety during the preconstruction process, allowing us to stay ahead of the safety issues,” explains Bayunus. “In the rush of the bidding process to complete pricing and other information to meet a bid deadline, some contractors can put digging into the safety aspects of a project on the back burner during preconstruction, but JFC looks at all the safety variables from the beginning. We use technology during preconstruction, looking at how something will be built with an eye toward what could go wrong, incorporating a better way into the plan, and mitigating the risk.”

Their organizational structure reflects the close tie between risk and safety. In fact, they merged the two teams into one department. “This allows us to promote insurance and safety initiatives with clarity from the beginning to end,” she notes.

“Our EHS department is the mover and shaker of change,” says Bayunus. “We lead the way in implementation, education and promotion of much needed support opportunities to create a safer and more inclusive environment.” —AS

Loven Contracting Construction

Construction

Flagstaff, AZ

51 employees | 1 site | 3 EHS professionals

Loven Contracting is a small shop, but they don’t use that as an excuse to skimp on safety. The construction company has three safety employees, one of whom is a doctor.

“That’s a significant investment for a small business,” says Loven President Jon Hansen. “Having an MD on staff enabled us to quickly adapt and maintain high levels of safety for our employees during the COVID-19 pandemic in an industry where most employees do not have the ability to telecommute.”

In addition to investing in EHS staffing, the company is also serious about training. Six employees are currently taking OSHA’s Construction Safety courses. When they finish, 47 employees (92%) will have completed the 10- or 30-hour training.

It’s part of Loven Contracting’s commitment to go above and beyond for safety, as evidenced by their Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) Star rating. Loven is one of six general contractors in Arizona to have attained VPP status, and the company has been recertified three times.



Beyond a company-wide safety program, Loven has developed a job- and site-specific hazard analysis program that considers the unique nature of each project. The company uses every opportunity to educate on safe practices, including during weekly safety meetings where they show photos of each near miss recorded and then discuss proactive risk prevention techniques.

“Safety is a priority not only of our company’s leadership but of every department and member of our team,” Hansen says. “We empower and encourage every employee and subcontractor working on a Loven Contracting project to be an integral part of our safety culture and a safety leader.”

“Part of that effort involves an open-door policy. Any employee may bring any safety concerns or suggestions to the safety team or the company president directly.”

Hansen says another critical partnership that helps the company maintain the highest levels of safety is its affiliation with the Southwestern Mountain States Regional Council of Carpenters.

“We leverage all of the council’s training and safety resources, including apprenticeship and journeyman training, to elevate our job site safety,” Hansen says. “We owe each and every one of our employees and trade partners a safe working environment. At Loven Contracting, safety isn’t just the right thing, it’s everything.” —NS

MasterBrand Cabinets

Kitchen and Bath Cabinet and Countertop Manufacturer
Jasper, IN

13,732 U.S. employees | 30 U.S. sites | 50 EHS professionals

One way MasterBrand Cabinets makes its workplaces safer is through transparent data collection and benchmarking.

As an example, MasterBrand Cabinets uses what it calls daily management to track and verify the efficacy of processes, including safety, at all levels of the organization. Each day, a green or red visual indicates whether an objective was met or not met, respectively. Those visuals are placed where everyone can see them—on the plant floor, in meeting areas and conference rooms.

“Safety is woven into everything we do at MasterBrand,” says Jon Hilgeman, MasterBrand Cabinets EHS director. The company has created the Critical 15, a program comprised of areas it feels are most important to protecting employees from serious injuries and fatalities. These areas include fire prevention and hot work, machine safeguarding and powered industrial truck safety.

All locations are required to track and manage key actions to measure sustained improvements in their EHS software, Hilgeman says. Progress against these key metrics are



published weekly at the local level and at least quarterly at the executive level. Each year, safety leaders conduct audits to ensure alignment across the entire organization.

The Critical 15 has helped the company eliminate many serious risks over the years. With those under control, the company went back to the data to see what else they could improve. They found the most common causes of employee

injuries are strains and sprains, so they have developed early intervention and ergonomics programs.

“Utilizing the data captured from early intervention cases, job demand analyses and ergonomics assessments, the company was able to prioritize ergonomics risks and strategically modify or enhance workstations, equipment, processes, etc. via Kaizen events and up to large capital expense projects,” he says. “This has made all the difference.”

In the past 10 years, Hilgeman says the company has invested time and time again in safety. The company has made a number of safety capital investments, including combustible dust system upgrades, dock safety systems and pallet stops for racking systems.

“We understand that in addition to it being the right thing to do, we cannot achieve [our goals] without a safe and clean workplace,” Hilgeman says. “That is why safety is not just a priority, but a core value at MasterBrand.” —NS

Performance Contractors

Industrial contractors

Baton Rouge, LA

5,760 employees | 90 sites | 140 EHS professionals

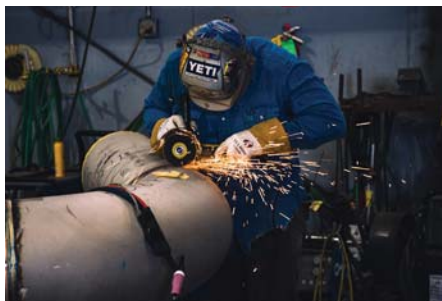
It's not often you hear of a construction company that takes a page from NASA in its safety training, but that's exactly what Performance Contractors has done. The concept, a mental checklist that each worker is prompted to perform prior to a task, is called “Go/No-Go Decision.”

“Far too often, workers fail to evaluate the hazard, downplay the risk, or simply make a poor choice to proceed without the safeguards to protect them,” explains Kelvin Gray, the company's corporate EHS director of compliance.

Workers are trained that before starting any task, they must ask themselves several simple questions, including:

- » Am I properly trained to perform the task?
- » Is this the SAFEST method of performing the task?
- » Is there ample time to complete the task?
- » Does this task match what's on the job safety analysis?
- » Have I identified all of the risks?
- » Can anything go wrong? If so, do I have a plan?

If the answer is “no” to any of these questions, then it's



considered a no-go situation. Employees are instructed to contact their supervisor to correct the no answers and are encouraged to use their Stop Work Authority. “Pushing through a no-go will most likely result in an incident,” Gray says.

Planning for safety is also a key company value. It uses “Flawless Execution Plan,” a document to drive safety by assigning accountability to field construction leaders and safety professionals. Its goal is zero injuries while also increasing quality and being on-time.

“The objective of this plan is for the field leader and safety representative to pre-plan the work task, ensuring that all necessary policies and procedures required are in place before the work begins,” explains Gray. “This is only realistically accomplished if both the safety representative and field leader work together to use the resources

required for each task at hand.”

Recognizing employees is part of the company's culture as well. “Our Safety Coin Recognition Program rewards employees for going above and beyond,” says Gray.

Some recognition examples include:

- » Saved a co-worker's life by administering the Heimlich maneuver on an employee who was choking during lunch.
- » Took actions to prevent a fire after discovering wiring arcing that was smoldering.

—AS

Plastipak Packaging

Manufacturer of plastic containers and packaging products
Plymouth, MI
4,000 employees | 20 sites | 3 EHS professionals

At Plastipak Packaging, 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.

Moving into everyday operations can create a new process. “Our overall philosophy is to learn and improve to prevent recurrence or add capacity to our system, not the traditional approach of ‘blame and punish’ to achieve zero accidents,” Smigiel explains. “We have adopted and incorporated the Human and Organization Performance (HOP) principles into our program and want to learn how work is actually accomplished, versus how the standard says it should be done.”

Part of the human approach is to view an employee holistically. “We openly discuss psychological safety with the leadership teams at our sites,” says Smigiel. “We think the best report card we have is nearly 29,000 annually documented safety engagements, which are split roughly 50/50 between reported near misses and safety conversations.



Our safety conversations include affirmation of safe work practices as well as corrective discussions amongst peers for minor issues. This process is clearly the ‘voice of the employees’ telling us what is happening, or not happening, on the production floor.”

Understanding the needs of employees is further demonstrated by an unusual practice at Plastipak. New associates are provided a different color helmet than the company’s standard blue one, which readily identifies them to others who can pay special attention to help them as they become more familiar with processes and the associated hazards.

Of course, communication is the cornerstone of safety. Every two weeks, the site has an all-employee meeting for each of its four shifts. Safety is the first thing on the agenda.

And safety is personal. Each year, the site manager meets with each employee individually to discuss safety. There is a specific discussion on empowering employees to stop any unsafe job/operation and to approach others if they see something that is unsafe. The site manager also reviews the company’s “Safety Top 10” during this discussion and they sign a “Safety Commitment Letter.”

“These are analogous to the Ten Commandments and focus on key risks that must be addressed in our plants,” says Smigiel. —AS

Price Electric

Electrical construction
Robins, IA
191 employees | 50 sites | 2 EHS professionals

Start with an electrical construction company with a solid reputation for safety (among numerous other awards, Price Electric won the America’s Safest Companies award in 2014). Add the latest in safety technology, including the use of artificial intelligence. And then tap into the resources of some very intelligent interns. The result, according to Dan Weekly, the company’s safety officer, is a custom smartphone app that provides employees with information regarding emergency action plans, high-risk work permits, and the ability to perform Job Hazard Analyses. The safety app also can link to all other company apps.

“This app has made it easier for employees to document information and respond to incidents on their sites, as well as provide a practical guide for these processes, as no one knows how they’re going to react in an emergency until they are actually experiencing it,” Weekly explains.

Both Weekly and the other member of Price Electric’s safety department are Class A journeyman electricians. “This ensures that we are approaching safety issues knowing full well the challenges our field employees are facing, as we have



both faced the same challenges ourselves as electricians. This perspective ensures that realistic expectations are maintained for all involved parties when relaying safety plans to employees, general contractors and customers on projects.”

As Weekly explains, safety is a factor in every bid the company submits. “For each project we are awarded, the project team utilizes the ‘3 meetings’ process to ensure safety measures built into the project bid are fleshed out and responsible, competent persons are identified for each project.” During that process, safety elements of the project, as well as the local area, possible weather and site conditions, and high risk work are identified. “Once this process has been completed, Price employees are armed with information necessary to not only run day-to-day safety on their projects, but to ensure employees are not put into a situation where they have to improvise to ensure the safety and health of our employees on site.”

Once a project is in progress, Weekly will walk the job with the foremen and site employees to find areas to create a safer work environment for all site employees.

“The real key to these elements being integral to our installation processes is confidence on all sides. Our employees are confident that they are armed with the necessary information to do the job safely and efficiently.” —DB

S&B Engineers & Constructors

Engineering and construction

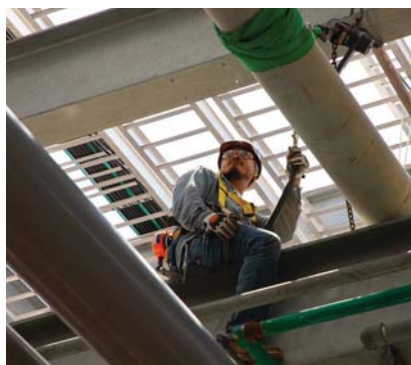
Houston, TX

4,800 employees | 22 sites | 123 EHS professionals

Compromise is unacceptable at S&B Engineers and Constructors with respect to safety.

To ensure that everyone lives up to their potential when it comes to safety, the company embraces the concept of personal ownership. Their motto is: “See It, Own It, Solve It (SOS).” If an employee sees something that they consider unsafe, they need to take personal accountability in that situation and act, either by personal intervention or by getting someone else involved to address the issue.

And to further emphasize the importance of this concept, the company has a program called Life Saving Commitment. “This is a tool that reinforces personal ownership and accountability when S&B team members are performing work that has a known risk of serious injury or fatality if hazards are not properly controlled,” says Brad Gibson, vice president of HSE. “They have been developed with the understanding that human error is normal, and that even the best people make mistakes. When errors do occur,



these Life Saving Commitments and their critical elements will prevent an unrecoverable and potentially fatal outcome. As such, a Life Saving Commitment is something that an individual makes for themselves, their coworkers and their family.” The goal, Gibson says, is for all employees to actively care for each other and to treat each other like a family member.

In tandem with the SOS, S&B has a program called People Observing People (POP), which is a behavior-based safety program. For this program the company focuses on the following areas:

- » Fall protection,
- » Tools and equipment,
- » Mobile equipment,
- » Body positioning.

If unsafe behavior is observed and corrected, employees are asked to document this progress through a POP database. Comments and suggestions are also encouraged, and the company is currently averaging 2,000 observations per week.

This level of participation reflects the level of emphasis placed on safety. As Gibson explains, “The safety of personnel shall have priority over the protection of property and operational considerations.” —AS

Yaskawa Electric America Inc.

Manufacturer of variable frequency drives, servo motors and industrial robots

Waukegan, IL

859 employees | 8 sites | 1 EHS professional

Safety can be a very complex process, and just the thought of the regulatory compliance reports and forms required to be filled out can make any safety professional bleary-eyed. Yaskawa Electric America, a manufacturer of automation solutions, is very much an adherent to the “simplify” school of safety and focuses on the Safety Triad—an adaptation of a model developed by consulting firm ProAct Safety’s Terry Mathis and Shawn Galloway.

The Safety Triad, as the name implies, has only three steps. “Associates start by identifying all of the potential hazards in their work area,” explains David Thurwanger, Yaskawa’s EHS risk mitigation manager. “The second step is to control the hazard. Most often, this is done in the product and/or process design using the hierarchy of controls. The third step is that they do these things all of the time.”

As Thurwanger points out, the Safety Triad compresses all of the elements, policies and controls down to a localized level, which allow each worker to be a safety expert in their own work area.



Yaskawa, which previously won the America’s Safest Companies award in 2017, believes in Safe Production, Thurwanger states. “It is never safety or productivity, the same as it is never quality or productivity. Our goal is to safely manufacture defect-free products to the customer at the time the customer wants them.”

Thurwanger has a background in human resources and in training and development, so EHS is included in the development of the company’s diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs and initiatives. The focus of Yaskawa’s DEI training is being respectful of how other people want to be treated, i.e., the Platinum Rule.

“We use web-based systems to put safety information into the hands of associates at any time they want it.” For example, Yaskawa offers microlearning-style safety briefs, two- to three-minute safety videos. The company also has developed a Safety

Heat Map that displays incidents onto a digital overlay of a facility drawing. “Each incident is an icon that shows the incident type,” he says. “The icon can be clicked to learn more, such as what led to the incident, any potential unsafe conditions or unsafe behaviors, and any lapses in the Safety Triad.”

When all is said and done, Thurwanger stresses safety is not a department nor an additional work requirement at Yaskawa. “Safety must be engrained in everything we do.” —DB

Safety Starts at the Top— and with Better Head Protection

It's time to reconsider what head protection you provide construction workers because safety has lasting repercussions for employers and employees alike.

By Ryan Barnes

Construction sites are dangerous places, and they will continue to be dangerous places until we do something to make them safer.

In 2020, the incidence rate for nonfatal falls, slips or trips was higher for construction laborers (52.5 cases per 10,000 full-time workers) compared to all workers (22.9 cases), according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). It's no surprise; there are construction jobsite risks everywhere, from falling objects to infectious diseases to chemical hazards.

To protect themselves, industrial tradespeople have worn traditional hard hats, the safety norm for more than a century. Conventional hard hats are designed primarily to protect the head from falling objects. However, there are many other ways that workers can seriously injure their heads on a construction site, including falls, slips and trips. Construction workers, therefore, need more protection than a traditional hard hat can provide.

A CHANGE OF HATS

Falls represent the third deadliest risk to construction personnel. In 2020, There were 1,008 documented fatal falls throughout the construction industry in the United States, about 35% of all construction accidents, according to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

These data points are not surprising, considering that more than half of the construction industry works on scaffolds, dramatically increasing the risk of falls from heights and related traumatic brain injuries (TBIs).

In response, the industry is beginning to rethink head protection. In lieu of the antiquated (Type I) hard hat, more plant operators, construction safety officers and



COURTESY OF STUDSON

others are considering the new Type II safety helmet for its superior safety as part of the broader personal protective equipment (PPE) product mix.

These ANSI-certified Type II safety helmets provide 360-degree head protection. Type II safety helmets integrate better shock-absorbing technology and feature front, side and rear impact protection. They also have chin straps and other technologies to keep the helmet on the head while offering better protection in the event of an accident. Some models even feature a rotational technology that reduces force to the brain from oblique or angled strikes.

These helmets typically require a greater up-front investment compared to a traditional hard hat but, in return, workers enjoy a significantly safer and usually more comfortable experience. That's because type II safety helmets are designed to improve wearability. Most importantly, they are considerably more effective at protecting tradespeople from severe injury or even death.

Here are some additional safety features that Type II helmets can offer:

Impact Protection — Impact protection technology, such as

welded-tube polymers developed by Koroyd, mean that helmets crumple instantly on impact. This allows the helmet to absorb maximum force, thereby protecting the skull and brain from both direct and angled impacts in the process.

Angled impacts are more likely to cause rotational shifts of the brain in the skull, which can lead to more severe injury. Therefore, reducing the impact of angled and oblique



STUDSON



impacts, in particular, can help reduce the risk of a life-changing or life-threatening injury.

Identification Technology — If a workplace incident does occur, some helmets include an integrated chip based on near-field communication (NFC) technology that stores emergency contacts and critical medical information for first responders to access. For example, twICEme is a technology that utilizes NFC to enable first responders to scan the data from the top of the helmet to an app on their mobile device.

With traditional hard hats, workers often will include vital health information on a piece of paper affixed inside the hard hat. For certain head and neck injuries, this method can be problematic, as medical personnel may not want to remove the helmet initially to avoid further injury. This identification technology ensures critical data can be communicated quickly, even when the helmet cannot safely be removed.

Modular Rear Brims — Helmets may feature a slight rear brim designed for rain deflection or the traditional brim form factor to help protect against outdoor conditions. Depending on the jobsite and conditions, some Type II helmets enable the wearer to remove and replace brim components to further improve comfort and utility.

Four-Point Chin Strap Systems — Buckle enclosures with an adjustable nylon four-point chin strap are commonly found in action sports helmets, such as biking and rock climbing. When added to an industrial safety helmet, they offer construction workers maximum adjustability and easy one-handed use with gloves. The chin straps also keep the helmet in place versus the traditional strapless hard hat.

A SAFER WORKPLACE

Falls, trips and slips represent some of the leading causes of serious injury and death for construction workers, but they are preventable.

Organizations can better protect their workers by following OSHA's recommendations, including its recent "Fall Protection Campaign." Furthermore, employers can better protect the workforce through investments in safer PPE, including Type II safety helmets.

According to the BLS, most of these head injuries resulting from a slip, trip or fall happen from heights of 6 feet or less. This is one of the main reasons why many commercial general contractors are mandating Type II safety helmets with chin straps, along with other certifications and requirements, to help ensure compliance with many high-profile jobsites.

Here are some of the other ways Type II helmets can keep workers safe on the job:

- » Type II safety helmets offer physical and material advantages compared to traditional hard hats. They offer other safety benefits, including lower PPE turnover. Type II safety helmet lifetimes also typically last longer thanks to more thoughtful, ruggedized designs.
- » Type II helmets can result in an overall lower risk of workplace injury thanks to front, side and rear impact safety and chin straps that help protect the head during falls; traditional Type I hard hats are only designed to protect the top of the head from falling objects.
- » Fewer injuries equate to fewer workers' compensation claims.
- » A reduction in injuries can also help lower liability insurance costs.
- » Overall risk reduction for the workplace.
- » Stronger safety culture and an environment of caring.
- » Increased productivity and potentially more earnings for workers, who can spend more time on the jobsite and less time recovering from injuries.

CONCLUSION

At the end of the day, the construction industry is built by individuals who apply their skills, strengths and talents to complete the project.

Although construction is physical work, the most essential asset for anyone working on a jobsite remains their brain—the most complex and important tool of all. Organizations, and workers themselves, are realizing the need to protect this most precious asset as much as possible for the sake of the build and everyone's livelihood and well-being.

Type II safety helmets are becoming the new safety standard. As forward-looking organizations voluntarily transition, they can remain confident that the investment is worth the cost from a strict dollars-and-cents view beyond the twin goal of creating a safety-first culture. **EHS**

Ryan Barnes is founder and CEO of Studson, a U.S.-based industrial Type II safety helmet maker. Since its founding in 2020, Studson aims to consistently deliver the most innovative industrial head protection equipment to save lives—and livelihoods. Barnes brings more than 20 years of experience from the sports, outdoor and consumer product goods markets across sales, marketing, product management and business development roles to revolutionize the industrial helmet safety market.

The Impact of New Innovation and Materials

Today's workers don't want to compromise on comfort or safety when choosing work footwear.

By Kristin Hamilton

In the pursuit of establishing a safe, secure environment for your company's workforce, there are two critical elements: high-quality personal protective equipment (PPE) and strong safety partners. As the market introduces new and innovative PPE options, safety professionals face a plethora of choices and questions. To guarantee the utmost comfort and safety for employees, staying informed about the latest materials in the industry is paramount.

The future of PPE is unfolding before our eyes, and program managers have the opportunity to be at the forefront of this revolution. By embracing the industry's cutting edge materials, they can ensure the present and future well-being of their employees.

LIGHTWEIGHT IS THE FUTURE

Today's workers don't want to compromise on comfort or safety when choosing work footwear. Lightweight materials are a key factor in making both realities possible in tandem.

For example, the use of innovative textile materials in footwear can offer workers necessary protection without the weight of a typical heavy leather work boot. Many work brands are offering consumers a lighter, more comfortable

option by incorporating durable, high-strength and abrasion-resistant textiles. Further, lightweight outsole materials can provide exceptional traction and protection against environmental hazards without compromising performance. These materials deliver slip and abrasion resistance, ensuring safety in various work environments.

Integrating lightweight materials into current safety footwear is helping to improve employee comfort and reduce fatigue for those who spend long hours on their feet in both indoor and outdoor environments. New styles, such as low-profile products resembling sneakers, not only enhance comfort but also seamlessly adapt to workers' lifestyles, allowing for uninterrupted transitions from work to leisure activities with family and friends.

FOCUS ON SUSTAINABILITY

As industries across the board are working to prioritize sustainability, the safety industry is stepping up to do the right



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in Foot Protection



thing for both our planet and our workforce. Footwear, in particular, presents an opportunity to incorporate recycled, sustainably sourced and natural materials, all while maintaining the shoe's construction and functionality.

By utilizing materials such as recycled plastic bottles and recycled rubber, it becomes possible to create safety footwear that is not only environmentally-friendly but is also lightweight, versatile and durable. In addition to recycled materials, the use of natural, renewable resources such as sugarcane provide a lower-impact alternative to traditional footwear materials. There have been many advancements in eco-friendly materials that offer high performance with slip and heat resistance while also protecting workers.

PPE that is made with sustainable and responsibly sourced materials offers a way to align your company with environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals while prioritizing employee safety. You can effectively meet your company's sustainability objectives without compromising on the protection and well-being of your workforce.

INCREASING SAFETY WITH NEW FEATURES

New features are being added every day to safety footwear to improve the employee experience, addressing aspects of safety, including temperature regulation, work boot fit and overall worker comfort.

Temperature regulation is a challenge on any jobsite, especially those that are open to the elements or operate under fluctuating weather conditions, which is common for industries like construction. These changing conditions create employee needs that evolve constantly throughout the year.

Safety footwear manufacturers are incorporating breathable materials into their products to enhance workers' comfort in warmer climates or hot work environments. One example within footwear for warm-weather environments is cooling textiles that utilize conductive fibers to effectively dissipate heat. These linings not only improve day-to-day comfort but also contribute to overall safety by regulating temperature and preventing discomfort.

In freezing temperatures, insulation becomes crucial. To address this, modern safety footwear styles are incorporating paper-thin aluminum technology, which effectively reflects and retains body heat. This approach provides warmth and comfort without the added bulk and weight of traditional insulation materials.

Other features such as quick-lacing fit systems, which use a dial to lock in a secure fit, ensure consistent comfort and make on-the-job adjustments easier than traditional laces. From a safety perspective, the quick-lacing system also allows for a precision fit throughout the day.

BEHIND-THE-SCENES INNOVATIONS

As our digital world changes rapidly, technology and platforms have evolved in every industry. Safety is no exception.

There are increasing advantages for safety professionals adopting these advancements. By working with companies that offer head-to-toe PPE solutions and omnichannel fulfillment options, safety professionals can reduce administration time, mitigate risks by assuring the right products are selected for the job, and eliminate costly waste and inaccuracies.

When searching for a PPE partner, program managers should focus on the following considerations:

Customization: Online customization features allow you to narrow down the types of footwear that employees can choose from based on what is suitable for their unique work environment. You can even customize this for each worker individually. This can also help to improve safety outcomes by ensuring compliant products are used.

Time Savings: Regardless of the products offered, an efficient program should save time for administrators without overcomplicating the process. For instance, if safety professionals can streamline the process of outfitting employees through a digital portal, they can eliminate manual verification and minimize inventory carrying costs.

Convenience: An effective provider should be able to fulfill orders for employees regardless of their location. As more companies seek digital solutions, some are implementing digital vouchers to ensure employees can conveniently redeem them for gear however they like, either in store or online. It's important to select a partner with strategically located stores, manufacturing facilities and distribution hubs, guaranteeing that PPE is available to employees whenever and wherever they need it—and without any supply chain issues.

Real-Time Insights: Ideally, safety managers should be able to access real-time visibility and control over employee eligibility and safety compliance, including online tracking of employee purchases.

As the industry continues to evolve, the emergence of new innovations in safety footwear, ranging from lighter materials to advanced textiles, empowers safety professionals to take significant strides forward. These advances enable safety professionals and their teams to maintain unwavering focus on their vital work, day in and day out. **EHS**

Kristin Hamilton is senior director of global product creation at Red Wing Shoe Company.



Safety Goes Beyond Compliance

“You have to behave at your highest level and be the hero of your own life story,” says Tony Orlowski.

By Adrienne Selko

Safety is a wonderful calling. That’s how Tony Orlowski, a 25-year safety veteran, feels about his chosen profession. And because of that, he would like to see improvements in how organizations think about safety.

In his book, *Safety Beyond the Numbers: A Path to Principled Leadership*, co-authored with Ken Chapman, he tells the story of two incidents that demonstrate the choices safety professionals made based on each organization’s culture.

In the first example, Jay is a 26-year employee of a power company whose many industry awards include winning the Lineman’s Rodeo. He serves as a roving employee safety observer lead for his company and has created improvements in training methods. He has never been involved in a safety incident.

On one particular job, Jay was working with Chris, a second-year apprentice. Chris noticed that Jay failed to put a blanket out before reaching for a wrench. Chris reminded him to do so, and Jay replied that this task would only take a minute. Those were the last words Jay ever spoke.

Analyzing the incident, which resulted in Jay’s tragic death, the authors noted that Chris was asked why he didn’t insist further as he could have told Jay he was lowering the bucket and then just pushed the emergency lever to return it to the ground. Chris replied that he didn’t feel he was

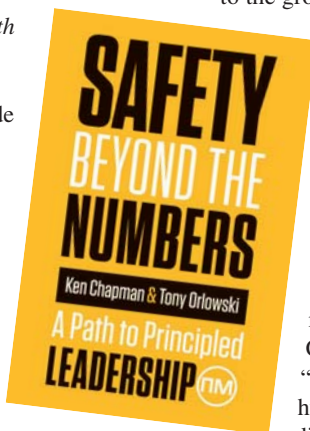
in a position to argue with Jay. After all, he was an apprentice of two years and Jay was a legend.

How could something like this happen?

The authors explain that this is an example of a company built around a compliance culture. Chris was uncomfortable challenging the more experienced and knowledgeable Jay because he wanted Jay’s approval.

Chris left it at compliance and rejected the moral obligation to act in Jay’s best interests. Chris did not take ownership of the situation. “Chris lives every day with this regret... he hurts for Jay’s family, and he feels ashamed he did live up to his highest opinion of himself,” the authors write.

In the second example, Benny, the go-to guy of his company, also doubled as a tower technician. He had been at his job for



11 years when a tragedy in his family occurred. At the funeral service for his family member, he heard about a problem at work and said he would be in the next day to look at it.

When Benny arrived at work the next day Jessie, a supervisor, felt that Benny was not in the correct emotional state to be able to do the job safely and alerted HR. At a meeting between the three of them, Jessie spoke up. "I just can't get comfortable with you climbing today. You are too valuable to this team. I will be happy to revisit this with you in a few days, but right now, I'd like you to go home."

Benny did. After returning from a mental health vacation, he told Jessie that he knew he wasn't in the right frame of mind and had decided to commit suicide from that tower. While Jessie knew that the rules of the company could have allowed Benny to climb the tower that day, Jessie felt that "you can't write rules for every situation. You just got to do the right thing and hope your decision is judged fairly."

"These particular stories reflect the safety choices everyone must make," says Orlowski. "You have to behave at your highest level and be the hero of your own life story."

Tying a safety person's moral responsibility to the culture is something that must be acknowledged, the authors explain. "Safety outcomes are within a leader's sphere of influence and reasonable people inherently understand the moral responsibility. They are unable to simply move on after dealing with only the financial and legal aspects of an injury. An organization that does not acknowledge and support leaders in meeting this moral responsibility creates even greater frustrations."

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

To understand the transformation to a culture where safety professionals understand how to make the best decisions possible, first, they need to understand the characteristics of their organization. The authors' experience has revealed four basic types of organizations, based on how they view employees:

- » **Incompetent** For this category, managers believe that most of their people are incompetent and therefore they need to stand over workers. The result of this is frequent, including significant, injuries. If a company compares their rate of injury to competitors, their incident rate is well above average. Managers want better records but feel that this won't happen until they find better people.
- » **Dependent** For this category, managers believe that the people are decent and well-meaning, but they don't have the knowledge, experience, or judgment that the managers have. Managers refining the safety rules taking personal decision-making out of the equation. These organizations have recordables that are reasonable and maybe a significant injury once or twice a year. Performance is measured by incident rate and these companies are near industry rates and are considered a compliance-based facility.

» **Economic Interest** Believing that people only respond to money, in this organizational structure compensation is tied to personal safety rates. Injury rates are low, but that seems to coincide with moving to a system tied to this compensation system. As injuries are hidden this places strain on employees as they are they are unable to live up to the highest opinions of themselves.

» **Ownership** In this structure, everyone on the team has earned their spot. They hire competent people, train, and support them, but they are responsible for their own themselves. The company continually builds upon its safety strategies and feels lucky to have the employees that they do. People in this system not only keep themselves safe but also their co-workers. Not motivated by fear or economic reasons they are the heroes of their own life story.

"Most people are in the compliance phase," says Orlowski. "Do what we tell you to do, and you'll be OK. If people would just follow the rules, that would be the solution. While compliance is necessary, it's not the end goal. They must move to the

belief that the goal is to protect our workers and to do that safety professionals need to understand what exactly they are responsible for and how they can take ownership."

And how do you create an ownership model? "Culture starts at the top. If the leadership doesn't buy into it, it will never take off. As [my co-author] Chapman always says, 'An organization will never rise above the level of its leaders.' If you want the highest performing safety program, the leader has to embrace it and be out front about it."

An example of this type of leadership is that of Alcoa. When Paul O'Neil was a leader at Alcoa Inc., he instituted zero lost workdays due to injuries and fatalities much to the surprise of company leaders as the company already had one of the lowest workday lost rates in the industry. When a fatality occurred early in his tenure, he flew to the facility, gathered his senior team, and said the following: "We killed him. I killed him."

Analyzing the situation he said, "People in the organization were stunned by the idea that they should accept personal responsibility for his death...There was never a more caring organization in the traditional sense. Every person injured or killed, they genuinely mourned. But they didn't understand that they were responsible for it." By the time O'Neil retired they had achieved the rate of 0.07 lost workdays lost.

This culture of ownership is exactly the role that Orlowski advocates is ideal. "I believe that companies are moral institutions that do good for the world. If you view companies in this manner, rather than an adversarial role that produces profits at the expense of employees or customers, then performance increases. And at the foundation of the company is safety, with safety leaders understanding the influence they have on the quality of life of their workforce." **EHS**



Authors Ken Chapman and Tony Orlowski

How Wearable Technology is Transforming Workplace Safety

Wearables can help encourage safe body movements that reduce the risk of overexertion or strains and pulls.

By Beemal Vasani

There have been distinct revolutions that have changed the way we look at manufacturing and industry.

From the first introduction of steam power to electricity to computers and automation, these tide shifts have transformed our conceptions of efficiency and manufacturing complexity.

Now, as we enter the fourth revolution in industry, we're only beginning to scratch the surface of what artificial intelligence, data analytics, and the interconnectedness of humans and technology can truly accomplish when expressed to their full potential. From what we've seen, however, it's safe to say that the introduction of wearable technology can have a dramatic impact on the occupational health and safety of workers as well as uncover new avenues of efficiency.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY WIOT?

Broadly speaking, the wearable internet of things (WIoT) is a category that encompasses devices and other wearable technology worn by workers that are used to monitor a host of activities and environmental conditions for the purposes of safety and efficiency. WIoT provides data-driven insights in real time to deliver better outcomes.

Much like the internet of things itself, WIoT is constantly evolving, with new purpose-built devices introduced into the market every year that have an impact on a range of industries, including manufacturing and warehousing, medical and health care, and energy and mining.

The spectrum of WIoT devices is truly remarkable. From the simplest wrist-worn activity monitors used to track worker location and movement to complex robotics-enabled exoskeletons used in construction and warehouse applications, wearable devices represent a hybrid of human and tech that can transform and optimize worker safety and efficiency.

WEARABLES IN OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY

The fact that there are multiple classes and job-specific iterations of WIoT devices means that each one can impact occupational safety in different ways.

First and foremost, wearables can help encourage safe body movements that reduce the risk of overexertion or strains and pulls resulting from awkward reaching or lifting. Over time, these risky movements can lead to a host of health problems, including musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

While output and productivity are always an important directive for any industrial or manufacturing operation, it shouldn't come at the expense of worker safety or longevity. Training early on in a worker's tenure may present safe body movements, but without consistent reinforcement, a worker could fall into bad habits and risk long-term injury.

Wearable devices, such as smart clothing or exoskeletons, can be used to monitor body posture and identify movements in real time to provide feedback on ergonomics. These WIoT have a proven track record, with some industry studies showing a significant reduction in worker strain across manufacturing and warehouse applications. For example, WIoT gloves have been shown to reduce potentially harmful hand movements by up to 20% within three months.

WIoT devices have also been deployed to dramatically reduce intervention time in the event of an injury or incident, particularly for lone or isolated workers. Internet connected smart helmets or sensors can detect events, such as falls or the impact of falling objects, which can alert managers for faster safety dispatch. (*Editor's Note: See p. 14-15 for more.*)

In certain industries (e.g., chemical refining, oil and gas, and other industries with exposure to toxic substances), WIoT devices can be particularly useful in monitoring air quality for the presence of hazardous chemicals. These smart devices include wearable sensors that constantly track and report air quality. In the event of unsafe air quality, they can alert emergency response teams.

Lastly, with the development of augmented reality, workers can receive hands-free, real-time updates via goggles or glasses, which can further prevent distractions that can lead to accidents.

There is no single WIoT device that can ensure safety, but this emerging category—when deployed successfully—has the capacity to dramatically reduce workplace accidents. This can, in turn, reduce days of work lost to injury and worker comp claims.

THE COLLATERAL BENEFITS OF WIOT DEVICES

Safety should obviously be the Number 1 incentive for deploying WIoT devices, but they also represent a host of other benefits to an organization.

Industry 4.0 is defined by the ways in which we use data and the integration between manual labor and machines; wearable



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devices showcase these hallmarks in ways that uncover new operational efficiencies. The benefit of WIoT devices is they offer a real-time data stream of all activities on an industrial worksite, manufacturing floor or warehouse. By tracking this data, organizations are able to better understand where inefficiencies or bottlenecks occur and remedy them through better process control.

Additionally, these devices can be used to monitor the machines with which workers are interacting. By tracking

temperature, vibration and more, it makes it easier to predict maintenance, which can save the company critical downtime if a machine goes offline, while also adding a safety benefit of predicting a machine's malfunctioning while in use.

Through the use of augmented reality WIoT devices, workers can be given improved task management directives, integrated communication tools, and situational training and skills development—all of which can improve efficiency and overall performance.

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

We're only beginning to scratch the surface of the capabilities of wearables in the workplace. As artificial intelligence continues to evolve, these devices could be the key to unlocking the potential of Industry 4.0 by finding never-before-seen insights through data while helping to create safer and more productive workplaces.

At the end of the day, safety is the Number 1 priority. Industries that have deployed WIoT devices are already seeing the benefits with reduced worker injuries in both the short and long terms. Even beyond safety, the operational efficiencies that can be uncovered through the data insights offered by WIoT devices can be game-changing. **EHS**

Beemal Vasani is director of Ansell's Inteliforz, a connected workplace safety solutions brand.

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Distracted Driving Dangers and Tips to Stay Safe While Driving on the Job

Distracted driving has become an epidemic on American roads and highways.

By David Perecman

Workers across various industries—from mail carriers to emergency medical technicians to drivers of buses, trucks, taxis and ride-shares to construction workers—to name a few, spend part or all of their day on the roads. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS), transportation incidents were the leading cause of death in 2021.

Distracted driving is one of the most dangerous behind-the-wheel behaviors that contribute to serious motor vehicle accidents. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), in 2021, distracted driving killed 3,522 people and has become an epidemic on American roads. Employers and workers need to work together to promote responsible driving and reduce distractions behind the wheel to keep everyone safe on the roadways.

TYPES OF DISTRACTIONS

There are three types of distractions: visual, manual and cognitive. Visual distractions take the driver's eyes off the road and can include behaviors such as texting, looking at a GPS and rubbernecking at an accident on the road. Manual distractions involve the driver taking their hands off the wheel and can include behaviors such as eating or drinking, applying makeup, adjusting the radio or climate controls, or using a hand-held device. Cognitive distractions take the driver's mind off driving and include behaviors such as talking on a phone, watching a video, arguing with a passenger or other driver, or thinking about the next appointment in their schedule.

Any non-driving task performed can limit a driver's attention, decreasing their ability to react to potential hazards on the road and increasing their risk of an accident. According to a 2002 study, compared to other drivers, those who drive on the job were more likely to engage in risky behaviors such as hurrying to their destinations, thinking about work, driving drowsy or using a cell phone behind the wheel.

Cell phone use is one of the most commonly cited distractions for drivers. Texting is considered especially dangerous because it encompasses all three types of distractions. However, it's important to note that any cell phone use while driving increases the risk of an accident. According to the NHTSA, at any given time during the year 2020, an estimated 2.8% of all drivers on the road were visibly using a hand-held device.



WORK ZONE SAFETY

Distracted driving puts not only drivers at risk but also those working within these zones. In 2020, there were 857 work zone fatalities and 44,000 estimated work zone injuries, according to the American Road & Transportation Builders Association (ARTBA). Highway workers are at risk for injuries and fatalities both inside and outside a vehicle at these construction sites.

Between 2017 and 2019, 45.3% of fatalities at road construction sites involved workers on foot being struck by a motor vehicle and 29.4% of workers driving or riding in a motor vehicle. In 2020, the percentage of highway worker fatalities involving workers on foot being struck by a vehicle rose to 53%.

For this reason, commercial vehicle drivers and passenger vehicle drivers must take precautions when driving through work zones and avoid distractions behind the wheel. This is especially true for drivers of trucks and buses, which have limited maneuverability and large blind spots. According to the Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration, large trucks are involved in one-third of fatal work zone accidents.

TIPS TO AVOID DISTRACTED DRIVING FOR EMPLOYERS & DRIVERS

On average, a non-fatal injury motor vehicle accident at work that involves distraction costs an employer \$100,310, according to the Network of Employers for Traffic Safety.

In 2020, the median number of days an individual must spend away from work due to a roadway incident was 14, according to the National Safety Council (NSC). Both employers and workers can take steps to promote safety behind the wheel and reduce accidents on the job.

For employers, it is recommended to ban all phone use, including texting, hand-held, and hands-free, while driving a company vehicle. In addition, an employer may want to restrict the use of a company-issued phone while driving personal vehicles. A recent NSC membership survey showed that employers of all sizes, sectors and industries are implementing employee policies to ban talking and texting while driving.

Employers should encourage workers to pull over to a safe area if they need to look up directions, text or take or make a phone call. Consider implementing technology to help curb dangerous driving behaviors, such as phone-blocking apps and devices.

Prior to implementing these policies, ensure that workers know that driving is their primary job when behind the wheel. Inform them of the dangers of distracted driving and the risks it poses to themselves and others. Employers may need to set guidelines on how workers can comply with the company's driving policies and outline the consequences if these policies are not followed.

For workers, it's important to limit distractions behind the wheel, including the use of cell phones, eating and drinking. Prior to hitting the road, workers should make all necessary adjustments, such as setting temperature controls, picking a radio station or looking up GPS directions.

If an object falls while driving, a worker should avoid reaching for it immediately and instead wait until they have pulled off in a safe location to retrieve it. They should always drive defensively and be on alert for potential roadway hazards such as animal crossings, stalled vehicles and accidents.

WHAT TO DO IF AN ACCIDENT OCCURS

Motor vehicle accidents can result in serious, sometimes fatal, injuries. For those injured, it is important to remain calm and seek immediate medical attention. Even if the worker initially says they feel fine after an accident, it's important to keep in mind that they may be experiencing shock and are unaware of how serious their injuries actually are, and the pain may set in later. For this reason, it is usually advised that those involved in a motor vehicle accident call 911 to be checked out by emergency personnel and have a police officer write an accident report.

For workers who are injured on the job or while performing their work duties, a workers' compensation claim should be filed to cover payment for medical bills and reimbursement for a portion of lost wages. A worker may be able to recover workers' compensation benefits for injuries regardless of who was at fault for the accident. If an injury occurs as a result of a third party's negligence—outside of an employer or co-worker—the injured worker may be able to recover financial losses, disability coverage, medical expenses, and pain and suffering damages that stem from the accident by filing a personal injury lawsuit claim against the negligent party.

Workplace motor vehicle accidents are common, serious incidents that can occur on the job, so it's important for employers to set the standard of safety in the workplace by promoting safe driving practices through policies. For workers, it's important to avoid distractions behind the wheel and obey traffic laws and company driving standards. **EHS**

David Perecman is founder and lead trial attorney of The Perecman Firm, P.L.L.C.



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ESG Standards are Impacting EHS More Than Ever

Four ways EHS professionals can maximize their impact.

By Amanda Smith



A complex interplay of macroeconomic and geopolitical shifts has recently heightened the debate over the value of environmental, social and governance (ESG). But data affirms that managing ESG risk plays an important role in improving corporate performance, and a part of this has a positive impact on environment, health and safety (EHS) initiatives as well.

Indeed, a 2021 report from Morgan Stanley Capital International, which analyzed the ESG performance of over 6,000 companies, found that those with higher ESG ratings generally had lower environmental risks in some key EHS metrics, including carbon emissions, water usage and waste generation.

Given the direct correlation between ESG and EHS outcomes, safety professionals with a strong understanding of—and engagement with—ESG issues and standards can be more valuable to their organizations. As a result, these EHS professionals are better positioned to drive positive change.

This is easier said than done.

ESG standards and requirements are evolving. As sustainability becomes an increasingly important issue—and the debate over its importance continues to wage—ESG standards must adapt to reflect changing priorities, opportunities and risks.

There are four key actions organizations can take to stay on top of these shifts. By optimizing the application of ESG

standards and frameworks, these organizations will also add benefit and value to their EHS programs.

1 TIE EHS PROGRAMS TO SUSTAINABILITY INITIATIVES.

This will enable organizations to use valuable EHS program data to support sustainability decision-making and drive visibility and awareness of the role of EHS in ESG. This can help to shift EHS from a cost center to a potential center for value creation. It can also help position EHS as a key contributor to corporate reputation, brand value and financial performance.

By demonstrating a strong understanding of ESG issues and standards, EHS teams will be able to engage with stakeholders, such as investors or regulators, on ESG issues. This can involve providing transparent and accurate ESG disclosures, participating in industry initiatives and responding to stakeholder feedback. This can also highlight the relevance of health and safety to ESG in social aspects of corporate sustainability, areas that are generally less associated with ESG than their environmental counterpart.

The role that health and safety plays in managing and improving working conditions while reducing instances of worker injury and advancing worker health is directly correlated to worker well-being. The value of worker

well-being is a key tenet of ESG standards, and through its role in reducing attrition (and the heavy costs associated with that) it can directly impact long-term corporate stability and growth.

So, while the outcomes of EHS programs are sometimes a few steps removed from ESG goals, the frameworks they employ lay a critical foundation for ESG goals to be realized.

2 COLLABORATE AND SHARE INFORMATION WITH DIVERSE TEAMS.

Collaboration and information sharing have always been a fundamental part of the EHS professional's DNA. Historically, and for obvious reasons, EHS teams already have a continuing dialogue with operations, legal and supply chain teams.

But by extending this outreach to even more diverse groups within an organization, EHS professionals can more effectively manage risk, create more value by advancing innovation, increase employee engagement and foster a culture of sustainability across a wider breadth of stakeholders. Here are three additional groups that can help:

- » **Human resources:** These teams can help develop and implement training programs for employees that promote an overall culture of safety and sustainability.
- » **Engineering and technical teams:** By better understanding EHS issues, these teams can identify and implement new technology or processes that can reduce risk and support sustainability.
- » **Marketing and communications:** These teams can serve as sustainability evangelists for the EHS team, explaining to stakeholders the value of EHS and its role in advancing ESG initiatives and building a broader base of support.

3 LEARN ABOUT APPLICABLE FRAMEWORKS.

Learning about current ESG frameworks can help EHS professionals align their goals with broader organizational agendas, refine reporting, increase transparency, stay ahead of regulatory requirements and identify areas to optimize their own programs.

Take, for example, the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Sustainability Standards framework. If a company opts to comply with GRI standards, its EHS teams will have added the framework's "recovery time" metric for worker illnesses and injuries.

This single metric, which refers to the time needed for a worker to recover fully to pre-injury health status, goes beyond the standard time away from work measure and can help teams focus on health, overall worker well-being, and even retention. With this data, practitioners gain a more holistic view of the impact the business has on an employee as well as a greater understanding of the broad impact of the worker's health and well-being on the company's bottom line.

Indeed, a 2019 OSHA report found that injuries and illnesses requiring time off from work have a significant impact on the financial well-being of both employers and employees. The report estimated that U.S. workplace injuries and illnesses cost more than \$250 billion annually. Staying abreast of existing ESG frameworks and the data that each prioritizes can improve the sustainability performance of a company while reinforcing the value of EHS efforts.

4 EMBRACE SUSTAINABILITY CULTURE IN YOUR OWN EHS PROGRAM.

Thinking more broadly about the social and environmental impact of EHS programs can foster a culture of sustainability and personal responsibility as well. EHS professionals have traditionally been tasked with monitoring and reducing risks for environmental, health and safety purposes within their organizations, but as ESG frameworks proliferate, they can introduce a larger dialogue about broader issues related to the way we engage with the world—responsibly.

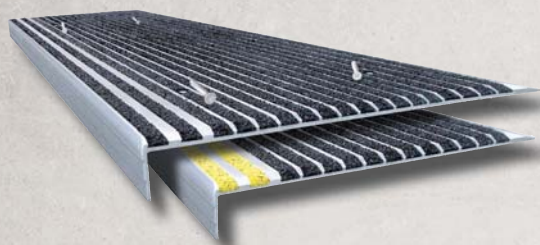
There is no doubt ESG is having a significant impact on EHS. Seen this way, EHS professionals can empower employees and

those active in the field to become part of something even bigger. Something that goes beyond the evaluation of personal protective equipment, the management of materials and the administration of rules. EHS can become part of the larger ESG movement to create a more sustainable and equitable world. **EHS**



Amanda Smith is vice president of Solutions Marketing & Enablement at Cority.

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KEYNOTE SESSIONS



Mission I'm Possible: Rethinking the Significance of Individual Impact for Greater Outcomes in EHS

Society is evolving at a rapid pace. From an organizational development perspective, there's increased focus on hybrid work, innovation and diversity, equity & inclusion (DEI). Such focus requires a revised approach to matters of worker safety and overall safety culture. In this keynote, Dr. Andrew will explore strategies for the advancement of today's safety leadership, drawing on his experience as vice president of health and safety at NFI, one of the largest privately-held logistics companies in the U.S.

Ben Andrew - NFI Industries



Aligning Transformational Safety Leadership with Corporate Culture

Recent events have impacted corporate values. A world-changing pandemic, competition for labor, technological investment have all entrenched health and safety as a value and extended its roots more deeply in corporate culture. EHS professionals have new leadership opportunities in these new value systems. They can connect with and leverage people, public trust and profits and embrace transformational EHS leadership and increase their influence. This session will introduce the concept of transformational safety leadership (TSL), explain how critical TSL is in engaging the workforce, establish the linkage between TSL and achieving EHS excellence, and present specific performance characteristics that drive TSL. It will then explore how to understand your corporate culture and values, how to introduce TSL into the organization, and how to align TSL with the corporate culture to achieve EHS excellence.

Richard Fulwiler - Transformational Leadership Associates and Harvard School of Public Health

Stephen Jenkins - Cintas Corporation



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Safety Technology

Work Smarter and Safer: 3 AI-Powered Metrics Your Organization Can Use Today

Barry Nelson - FactorLab

Lane Smith - Freedom Solar Power

How to Use Data and AI-Vision Processing for Engineering Changes and Injury Prevention: A Case Study

Virginia Mackay - United Farmers of Alberta

Heather Chapman - Paradigm Safety &

Soter Analytics

Rebuilding Safety Culture on the Fly: How Compass Group's Safety Team Leveraged Technology to Drive Post-Pandemic Recovery

Scott Echerd - Compass Group

Jeff Enzinger - Origami Risk

Training & Engagemnt

Tip of the Spear - A Tactical Approach to Safety Leadership

Rod Courtney - Ampirical

Communicating Sentinel Events: Extreme Focus on the Critical Few

Todd Hamman - Kimberly-Clark, Ogden Facility

Caleb Baker - Kimberly-Clark

A Renovation Project – It's Time to Add Mental Health as a Safety Training Topic

Holli Singleton - The Southeastern OSHA Training Institute

Education Center at North Carolina State University

Risk Management

The Intersection of Safety Culture Change and MSD Injury Prevention

Wendy Mayes - Hallmark Cards, Inc

Kris Smith - GSC Consulting Services

Predicting Occupational Fatalities: The Common Fatality Factors

Mike Dwyer - ArcelorMittal

Peter Susca - OpX Safety

The Workplace Fatality That Changed My Career

Greg Pass - YKK Corporation of America

Regulatory Compliance

Handling OSHA Inspections

Micah Dickie - Fisher Phillips

Settling OSHA Citations: It's Not Just About OSHA

John Ho - Cozen O'Connor

Safety Data Sheets: The Driver of Many EHS Programs

David Sousa - Pharmaron Manufacturing Services (US)

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The ROI of Safety

Beyond the Buzzword - What Being Proactive in Safety Really Means

Doug Pontsler - COVE: Center of Visual Expertise

Enhancing a Safety Culture through Business Transformation, Risk Management and a Focus on ESG

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Self-Testing Smoke Detectors

Honeywell has launched a fire alarm system with UL-approved self-testing smoke detectors. The NOTIFIER INSPIRE can be tested automatically, changing the way fire and life safety systems are installed, tested and maintained. The NOTIFIER INSPIRE is an all-in-one modular fire system that delivers reliable protection, scalability, efficient monitoring, and flexible and timely reporting. The smoke detectors are securely enabled through Honeywell's Connected Life Safety Services cloud-based platform, which provides real-time visibility into the fire system for installers, service technicians and facility managers. It allows technicians to diagnose and troubleshoot problems ahead of time, thereby improving first-time fix rates and reducing time spent on-site. A single technician can even test at the NOTIFIER INSPIRE panel for the entire building, minimizing disruptions to workers while also eliminating the need to access difficult-to-reach areas. The inspection report is digitized and delivered electronically from the cloud within minutes and creates a complete end-to-end electronic audit trail to support full compliance.

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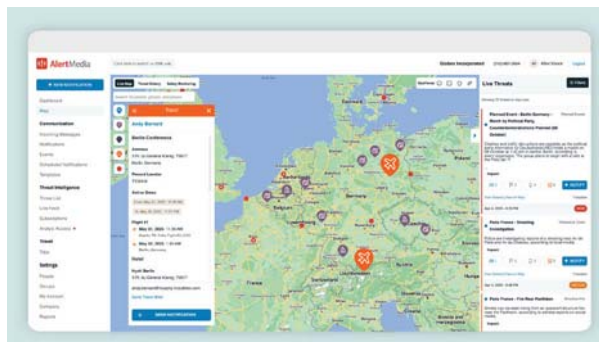


Heavy-Duty Glove Protection

Magid has created a glove that offers the maximum amount of impact protection while also providing maximum dexterity and breathability. The TRX883's unique honeycomb design offers heavy-duty glove protection with the utmost flexibility. The new TPR formulation and design received the rigorous level 3 ANSI/ISEA rating while also allowing nine times more airflow than a standard impact glove. The ANSI A8 Cut-Level AeroDex Shell delivers extreme cut resistance and is 50% lighter than a traditional HPPE. And the VersaTek Adaptive Coating delivers over 50% more abrasion resistance and enhances worker grip by adapting to wet, dry and oily environments.

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On-the-go Risk Management

Emergency communications provider AlertMedia has released a new tool that provides a holistic view of organizations' traveling workforce. Available now with worldwide coverage, AlertMedia Travel Risk Management offers fully integrated risk monitoring and communication features to help employees be safe while traveling for work. This new tool allows organizations to monitor threats for business travelers at scale and reach them within seconds to ensure their safety. In just a few clicks, security teams can remotely: view employees' proximity to emergency threats on a live map; review travel briefs with up-to-date information (e.g., weather, general safety concerns, cultural considerations); send localized threat notifications; and import and synchronize employees' travel and trip data.

AlertMedia

www.alertmedia.com

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Nicole
Stempak
Managing Editor



Finding the Time

Achieving excellence starts by asking difficult questions.

Years ago, I attended a journalism training that featured a panel of Pulitzer-prize winning reporters. As they recounted their experiences of uncovering those investigative features, I marveled at how they had time for such pursuits. Now, of course, I realize they didn't have the time; rather, they made the time.

In this issue, we feature the 2023 class of America's Safest Companies. After judging this competition for a few years, it's safe to say you don't win this award by accident. This year's crop of winners, as in years past, stand out because they made the time and a commitment to doing the hard work. They also ask the tough questions—of themselves and of their organizations.

Creating a world-class safety program takes effort, but you can begin today. Even if you only have 10 minutes, that's enough to get started. I recommend you ask yourself some questions. Then, ask those same questions to your colleagues. That can help you understand your common vision as well as the roadblocks you need to overcome. Plus, seeking others' perspectives will help you see more than you can by just yourself.

Here are five questions to help you get the ball rolling.

1 What do you want to achieve?

It's easy to get myopic by focusing on the daily tasks. But when you pause and reflect, you can realize the world of possibilities to improve safety.

As a child, you spent untold hours daydreaming and watching the clouds go by. Research shows that letting our minds wander is good for your health and our productivity. So, if you're looking to start somewhere, start by thinking big.

2 What are your work dreams about?

Dreams are a way for the unconscious mind to process the day's events. Of course, dreams don't always make sense. (Why is there a goat farm in my house?) But, if you're thinking about work while lying awake at night or even dreaming about work, don't brush those thoughts aside. Your brain is likely trying to think through something. It's important to listen to your psyche and to let that guide you. You may discover the root of what's troubling you or find a solution to a pesky problem.



3 What is your end goal?

Plans help us prepare for future action. You don't win a war without a plan, and you certainly can't build a world-class safety program without one, either. Thinking about your vision will help you connect today's groundwork with tomorrow's results. Plus, an end goal can anchor you when making decisions and help you endure any hardships.

4 What do you want to be known for?

Don't confuse this question with "What do you want to be your legacy?" A reputation is more current and malleable, whereas a legacy is final. I suspect you will want to be remembered for your commitment to safety, but in the meantime, you need to be known for something else. Maybe it's fun safety training. Maybe it's being a stickler for forklift protocols. Whatever it is, own it. You build a reputation by repeatedly delivering on something others can see and experience. And that helps reinforce your vision.

5 What are your co-workers saying?

The next time you're talking with a colleague, or even hear some office gossip, think about what they are saying. Often, that juicy tidbit can reveal a safety risk.

As a journalism professor often said, "Once you hear the same answers over and over again, you know what to focus on." Your colleagues' answers can suggest what to do. What's more, acting on what they're saying demonstrates that you're listening. When people believe they are heard, they are more likely to help.

Asking questions is a low-cost way to help you form a vision, gain buy-in and uncover solutions. You can ask questions at any time, either in a formal or informal manner, and you can squeeze them into whatever gaps you have in your calendar.

I hope you use these questions to start your own safety transformation, and that your organization is named one of America's Safest Companies in the coming years.

Nicole Stempak

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

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