

EHS Today[®]

Addressing **Burnout**

in the Workplace

*These are challenging times.
It's time to show workers you
care about their mental
and physical well-being. p. 10*

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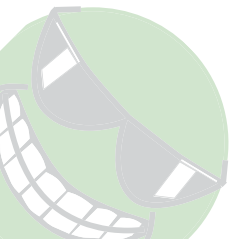
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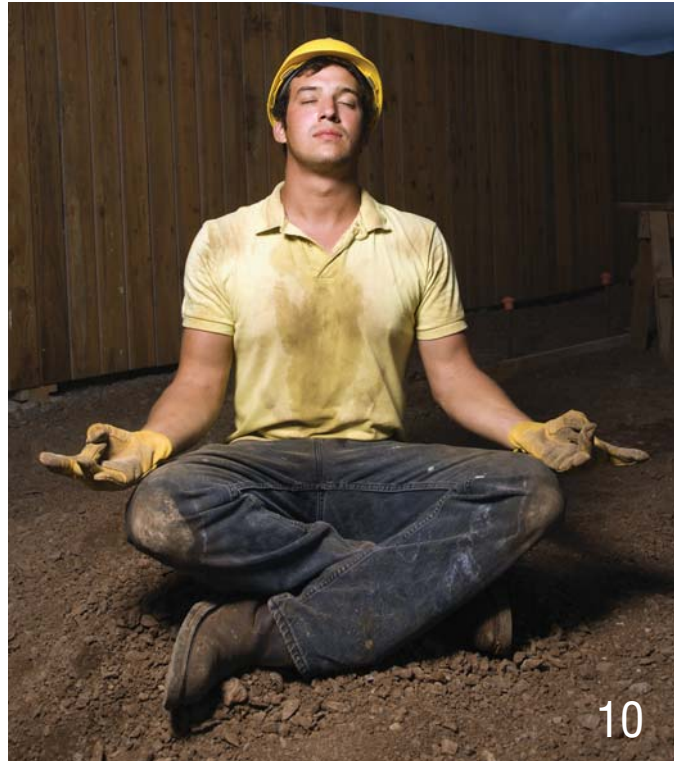
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The Latest & Greatest in the World of Workplace Safety

ITEM: Do you work at one of America's Safest Companies? It's that time of year again, when *EHS Today* hosts its annual competition to determine which organizations do the best job at keeping their employees and workplace safe. If you think your company has a culture that elevates safety to a world-class level, then consider applying to be named one of America's Safest Companies.

Winners will be honored in a special ceremony at this year's Safety Leadership Conference. You have until May 19 to submit your application. Did we mention it's free to enter? Apply now at safetyleadershipconference.com/2023/ASC.

ITEM: EHS Education, *EHS Today's* continuing education portal for safety training, has partnered with SafetyNow to deliver engaging and compliant online safety training on an award-winning learning management system (LMS). You can access a library of thousands

of hazard and industry-specific training, videos and microtraining, expert compiled programs, or build custom training with a user-friendly and intuitive course builder. Go to ehseducation.com for more details.

ITEM: The excitement continues to build around this year's **Safety Leadership Conference (SLC)**, to be held September 18-20 at the Orlando World Center Marriott in Orlando, Florida! In addition to keynotes, workshops, exhibits and facility tours, SLC 2023 features presentations from safety professionals focused on five tracks: Risk Management, Regulatory Compliance, The ROI of Safety, Safety Technology, and Training & Engagement. And, if you haven't already heard, this year SLC is co-locating with the VPPPPA's Safety+ Symposium. Learn more about the show and register at safetyleadershipconference.com.

For more details, go to: ehstoday.com.

EHS TODAY (USPS Permit 905-040), ISSN 1945-9599 print, ISSN 2771-7267 online is published 6 times per year (January/February, March/April, May/June, July/August, September/October, November/December) by Endeavor Business Media, LLC, 1233 Janesville Ave., Fort Atkinson, WI 53538. Periodical postage paid at Fort Atkinson, WI, and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to EHS TODAY, PO Box 3257, Northbrook, IL 60065-3257. **SUBSCRIPTIONS:** Publisher reserves the right to reject non-qualified subscriptions. Subscription prices: U.S. \$86.25 per year; Canada/Mexico \$111.25 per year; All other countries \$136.25 per year. All subscriptions are payable in U.S. funds. Send subscription inquiries to EHS Today, PO Box 3257, Northbrook, IL 60065-3257. Customer service can be reached toll-free at 877-382-9187 or at ehstoday@omeda.com for magazine subscription assistance or questions.

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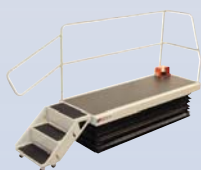
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Editor-in-Chief



Off the Rails

The rail industry's latest misadventures have all the makings of an epic disaster film.

People love disasters (as long as they're not personally involved). Hollywood has known that for years, with a century's worth of disaster movies chronicling every kind of natural and supernatural catastrophe you can think of. It doesn't really matter when or where the disaster happened—moviegoers will flock in droves to see lots and lots of mayhem and destruction, whether it be from volcanoes (“The Last Days of Pompeii,” 1935), earthquakes (“Earthquake,” 1974), tornadoes (“Twister,” 1996), hurricanes (“The Perfect Storm,” 2000), or floods (“The Day After Tomorrow,” 2004). And if the disaster happens to involve negligence or poor planning by corporate types, then just watch the box office soar: “The Towering Inferno” (1974), “Erin Brockovich” (2000), “Contagion” (2011), or the granddaddy of all disaster flicks, “Titanic” (1997).

As you would expect, safety professionals are particularly interested in real-life disasters, especially if the catastrophe seems almost cinematic in its impact. Some of the most popular articles we've ever run at *EHS Today*, which continue to be among our most-read features even many years later, include these headlines-based items:

- » “The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire,”
- » “Photos from the Deadly Yarnell Hill Fire,”
- » “Five Years Later: Remembering the Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill,”
- » “Hard Rock New Orleans: Multiple Failures Led to Deadly Collapse,” and
- » “Five Safety Lessons Learned from the Sinking of the Titanic.”

And that's not even including our coverage of the COVID-19 pandemic, which set new records for visits to our website.

It's far too early to know if the latest news-dominating disaster—the East Palestine, Ohio, train derailment and aftermath—will achieve the same level of notoriety as the aforementioned calamities. After all, the public's attention span has never been shorter, and the national media has already moved on to coverage of the banking crisis, March Madness and the latest AI chatbots.

But it's still quite astonishing how the entire rail industry—and not just one train operated by Norfolk Southern—has gone offtrack lately, with even its strongest advocates finding it hard to explain exactly why any community should feel at ease when a chemical-carrying train rumbles through its environs.



As contributing editor (and rail industry expert) David Sparkman has observed, “Even before the Ohio incident, freight railroads were in trouble with the federal government in the form of investigations, service orders and threatened fines being pursued by the Surface Transportation Board (STB), which supervises the freight railroads' economic practices involving their customers, including service quality, and how they apply freight rates along with demurrage and other fees.” And since the derailment, various government bodies and regulatory agencies have started looking into all the myriad ways things have gone wrong lately:

- » The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is testing the air, water, soil and sediment in East Palestine for potential contamination from hazardous materials released and burned after the derailment, ostensibly to avoid the railcars from causing even worse damage to the area and its residents.
- » The National Transportation Safety Board is studying the aluminum protective housing covers used on three of the derailed vinyl chloride tank cars.
- » The State of Ohio is suing Norfolk Southern, alleging numerous violations of Ohio's hazardous waste, water pollution, solid waste and air pollution control laws. According to Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost, the derailment “was entirely avoidable.”
- » There's also some lingering doubt as to why it took so long for the federal government, in particular the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), to arrive on the scene.

If you're a fan of disaster movies, you know that inevitably there's a big debate over who knew what and when, culminating in a big courtroom scene dominated by well-dressed lawyers, and a resolution by everybody involved that “nothing like this will ever happen again.” But in typical Hollywood fashion, the final scene of the movie cynically suggests that things will probably go on like they did before.

Let's hope the rail industry gets its safety act together quickly and that the regulatory agencies avoid political posturing as they clean up the situation. We need a better ending to this latest disaster story. **EHS**

Dave Blanchard

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



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How to Create a Happy Company

A study from Robert Half offers six practices that will make employees happy and productive.

By Adrienne Selko

As a proud owner of an oversized pair of rose-covered glasses, I feel the need to point out that many workplaces are great places full of happy employees.

What makes these employees happy?

A study from Robert Half International highlights, and explains, six factors that affect employee happiness. (The report is quite robust. I would recommend reading it, as this is just an excerpt. Read the report at: <https://bit.ly/2zQq3Vz>.)

Right Fit for the Job and Company

A good fit entails both skills and temperament. Painting an accurate picture of the role and the organizational culture when hiring is a safeguard that can help you avoid skill alignment issues. When you set expectations by clearly communicating to

prospective candidates what an open position entails, you greatly reduce the risk that they end up feeling surprised, unchallenged or disappointed once on the job.

“Practicing diligence in each step of the hiring process—from crafting detailed job postings to conducting in-depth interviews, skills testing candidates, thoroughly checking references, and giving them an opportunity to meet different people within the company. This process sets the stage for both employee and employer happiness,” says David Jones, senior managing director at Robert Half Asia Pacific.

A Sense of Empowerment

Empowering your staff to make decisions on their own, or with minimal direction from you, improves employee happiness in multiple ways:

- » Empowerment helps staff develop critical skills they can use to advance their careers and make greater, more meaningful contributions to the company.
- » Empowerment makes workers feel more invested in the jobs they do because they are the ones making decisions.

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- » Letting go of the reins also helps team members build confidence as they realize they are able to make the right decisions.
- » Empowered employees feel more comfortable questioning the status quo and suggesting new ideas. Large organizational changes or disruptions, such as a staff restructuring, are less likely to knock these workers down.

Feeling Appreciated

It doesn't have to break the bank to instill loyalty. Establishing a positive working environment can generally make your employees happier. Simply show your staff that you appreciate their hard work and dedication. Offering a sincere thank you for a job well done has a much greater motivational impact than many people realize.

"Fostering positive emotions through gratitude is easy and powerful," explains Dr. Christine Carter, author of *The Sweet Spot: How to Find Your groove at Home and Work*. "The science on this is blazingly clear. There are loads of research studies that show how much higher functioning people are when they feel appreciated by their teams and their manager."

Interesting and Meaningful Work

"Happy workers understand why their tasks matter and how they connect to the overall objective," says author Todd Henry, who speaks about productivity, creativity and passion for work and leadership. "When there is a gap in that connection, people tend to drift and have difficulty investing emotionally. Employees who have a strong through line that ties their work together tend to be happy, fulfilled and engaged even when times get tough."

Gaining a sense of meaningful progress and achievement is particularly important for younger workers. According to the survey Robert Half conducted with Nic Marks, a sense of pride and a sense of accomplishment are among the strongest drivers of happiness for employees under 35.

A Sense of Fairness

Fairness matters deeply to employees. So deeply, in fact, that a single instance of unfair treatment—whether actual or perceived—is often enough to turn a happy, satisfied employee into one who is cynical and skeptical of the company.

What can managers do to improve fairness in the workplace?

- » First, strive to be transparent in your decision-making. Be sure policies around pay, promotions and projects are clear. Every member of your team should know what they must do to earn a new title or a higher salary.
- » Give employees a chance to alert you when they feel a sense of inequality. Often, employees just want to be heard and know that their concerns are being taken into account.

Positive Workplace Relationships

A sense of camaraderie at work improves employee communication, cooperation and collaboration. Staff cohesion also leads to greater innovation. Employees across the board say they have good team relationships at work. None of the recipients reported significant dissatisfaction in this area. This is good news for employers, as those who say they have good relationships with others on their team are 2.7 times more likely to be happy on the job than those who do not get along well with colleagues. **EHS**

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Half of the World Will be Obese by 2035. What Does That Mean for Employers?

In addition to costs associated with chronic diseases due to obesity, productivity rates are lower and absenteeism is higher.

A recent report from the World Obesity Federation predicts that 51% of the global population (over 4 billion people) will be either overweight or obese by 2035 if current trends prevail. Here's what this will mean for employers.

1 in 4 people (nearly 2 billion) will have obesity.

Childhood obesity could more than double by 2035 (from 2020 levels). Rates are predicted to double among boys to 208 million (100% increase) and more than double among girls to 175 million (125% increase). In fact, obesity rates are rising more rapidly among children than adults.

The global impact will reach \$4.32 trillion annually by 2035 if prevention and treatment measures do not improve. To provide a comparison, the World Obesity Foundation noted that this figure is almost 3% of the global gross domestic product (GDP), which would make it similar to the impact of COVID-19 in 2020.

This will have a huge impact on employers as obesity has been associated with a number of health concerns including: prediabetes, diabetes, coronary heart disease, depression, hypertension, high cholesterol, sleep apnea, respiratory problems, stroke, gallbladder disease, arthritis,



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gastroesophageal reflux disease, nonalcoholic fatty liver disease and some types of cancer.

U.S. Economic Cost

The burden of American obesity, and the chronic diseases to which it is a contributing factor, has reached record economic heights, according to a study by the Milken Institute.

In 2016, chronic diseases driven by the risk factor of being obese or overweight accounted for \$480.7 billion in direct health care costs in the U.S., with an additional \$1.24 trillion in indirect costs due to lost economic productivity.

The total cost of chronic diseases due to Americans being obese or overweight was \$1.72 trillion—equivalent to 9.3% of the nation's GDP.

Obesity as a risk factor is by far the greatest contributor to the burden of chronic diseases in the U.S., accounting for 47.1% of the total cost of chronic diseases nationwide.

Absenteeism, Productivity Loss

In a 2021 article from the *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Science*, obesity, relative to normal weight, raises job absenteeism due to injury or illness by 3 days per year (128%).

The study found that annual productivity loss due to obesity ranges from \$271 to \$542 (lower/upper bound) per employee who is obese, with national productivity losses ranging from \$13.4 to \$26.8 billion in 2016.

—EHS Today staff

New AIHA Website Helps Employers Create Healthier Workplace

The new website provides industry-specific content for employers in chemical manufacturing, construction and transportation industries.



Employers can always use more resources to keep employees healthy. And in that vein, the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) has launched a new website, Healthier Workplaces (www.healthierworkplaces.org).

“The COVID-19 pandemic has underscored the importance of protecting workers—across a spectrum of industries—to not only keep them healthy on the job, but also to help keep the country up and running during a time of tremendous uncertainty,” explained Lawrence D. Sloan, CEO of AIHA.

The website provides free resources for employers and employees to safeguard worker health and well-being, including keeping workplaces safe from infectious disease outbreaks and pandemics.

The Healthier Workplaces website includes three sections of resources:

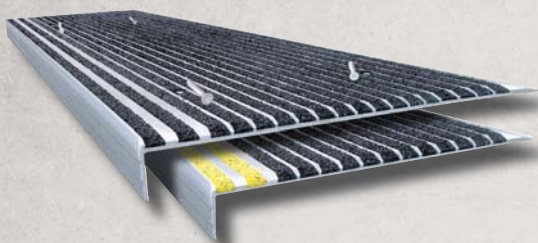
- » Consumer Health and Safety Resources – content-specific resources on topics including indoor air quality, disaster preparedness and response, and young worker safety training;
- » Workplace Resources – two distinct resource hubs for employers and employees offering guidance documents and/or expert resources by industry and job role;
- » Video Podcast Series – timely, informative topics on practical consumer and environmental, health and safety issues with new episodes dropping the first and third Wednesday of each month.

The new website also encompasses a Worker Health and Safety section, featuring industry-specific content for employers in chemical manufacturing, construction, first responders and transportation (freight railway and trucking) industries. Resources include checklists, infographics and guidance documents to assist employers in protecting their employees' health.

In addition to the employer- and consumer-based resources, the Healthier Workplaces website includes Consultants Listing, a place to help employers and consumers find trained professionals in their area. —EHS Today staff

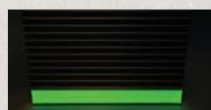
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Adrienne
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Senior Editor



There's Safety in Young Numbers

Young workers want to stay. Employers need to give them reasons to do so.

Each generation brings something different to the workplace. Gen Z is no exception. This group, born between 1997-2012, are 68.6 million strong and comprise 20% of the U.S. population. Two of their strongest characteristics are thoughtfulness and determination. And this is true even in the early stages of their career. That's good news for safety managers (a group predominantly made up of baby boomers and Gen Xers) tasked with training and engaging a workforce from succeeding generations (millennials and Gen Zers).

When Gen Z workers were asked by Tallo (a recruiting platform for young workers) how long they would like to stay in their first job, the answer was three years. While that might not seem long to older generations who stayed in jobs many years, this is a considerable period.

Tallo's Early Talent Playbook specifically asked these workers what would keep them at their jobs. At the top of the list (70%) was **personal development**. They want a work environment that prioritizes learning, which would include company assistance for additional education. They want mentors and internal promotions.

Besides personal development, young employees desire a **connection** (67%), which was defined as being "on a team with people I really like."

The next five preferences are as follows:

- » **Impact**—working in a career that has a significant impact on society, culture and others (62%).
- » **Money**—primarily compensation (60%).
- » **Flexibility**—allowing for a work-life balance, flexible schedules and work options, e.g., remote, hybrid (57%).
- » **Company culture**—a strong internal culture, in particular a safety culture, as well as perks (45%).
- » **Employment brand**—a company that has great public perception or brand (16%).

Another requirement for young workers is **finding purpose in their work**. In fact, work and purpose are so closely tied together that, according to a 2020 McKinsey study, 70% of employees say their personal sense of purpose is defined by their work. And the good news for employers is that when these two align, employees perform better and are committed. They are also about half as likely to go looking for a new job.

In a recent article on the BBC, Aaron De Smet, a senior partner at McKinsey, explained the evolution of purpose from a historical perspective. "The search for meaning at work is a relatively new idea," he noted. "The Industrial Revolution



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made work very 'transactional': people worked and got paid money to live, with no greater purpose required or expected. But over time, as decent working conditions and a paycheck became simple fundamentals, workers began to want more."

Wanting more than money is demonstrated by a survey of Gen Z workers done by jobsite Monster, which found that 70% of those surveyed said purpose was more important than pay.

Another essential trait found in Gen Z is the desire to be their own boss. Almost two-thirds (62%) of this generation said they have either started or intend to start their own business, according to data from WP Engine and the Center for Generational Kinetics.

And these entrepreneurs are willing to put in the hours to see their dreams become reality. A survey from Microsoft showed that 91% of Gen Z entrepreneurs work unconventional hours; 81% say they work on vacation, compared to 62% of business owners overall.

By understanding this entrepreneurial focus, companies can design work differently, including levels of ownership of a particular job or providing side projects that employees can own.

All these characteristics and desires of Gen Z provide conscientious employers road maps as to how to hold onto this talent and how to ensure their physical as well as emotional needs are protected in the workplace. **EHS**

Adrienne Selko

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

Addressing **Burnout** in the Workplace

These are challenging times. It's time to show workers you care about their mental and physical well-being.

By Michael Levitt



Individuals are burning out at alarming rates.

People feel a constant demand to deliver, so they're burning out or they're leaving their jobs. COVID-19, the Great Resignation and economic uncertainty have amplified the burnout rate given the number of changes in the workplace and at home, especially among working parents.

For EHS professionals, there typically isn't an option to work remotely, as the pandemic increased demand for on-site health and safety products and protocols. EHS all-stars were part of the front line, risking their lives every day to keep manufacturing plants and warehouses open—and keeping the country going. These demands have led to increased stress and burnout among EHS personnel.

WHY BURNOUT IS A THREAT TO WORKPLACE SAFETY

Burnout is a state of physical, mental and emotional exhaustion. It is characterized by feelings of energy depletion, detachment from work and decreased effectiveness in one's professional life. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), burnout is an occupational phenomenon that occurs when someone experiences long-term stress or tension related to their job.

The WHO defines burnout as an "occupational syndrome resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed." The organization's definition further states that it can manifest with symptoms such as exhaustion, cynicism and a sense of reduced accomplishment. In addition to these mental symptoms, physical signs such as headaches and insomnia may also occur due to prolonged periods of workplace stress. Furthermore, those suffering from burnout may find themselves struggling with decreased performance at work or in other areas of their lives.

Employee burnout is a serious problem that can have disastrous effects on employees, their families and the businesses they work for. As such, it's essential for EHS managers to understand the signs of burnout. They also need to know how to prevent and manage burnout in order to ensure employee well-being.

As an EHS manager, there are several steps you can take to help your employees avoid burnout:

- » First, ensure that your staff has access to resources needed for job performance. This includes adequate training and support from colleagues or management.
- » Additionally, regularly evaluate working conditions within the company—both physical environment and workloads—as these are often major factors associated with burnout.
- » It's also important to provide opportunities for feedback so you can identify any areas where employees may be struggling or feeling unsupported by the company culture.

THE LINK BETWEEN BURNOUT AND STRESS

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant effect on the mental health and well-being of workers around the globe. The past three years have created an atmosphere that has caused stress and anxiety for many employees. Given the disruption so many of us have felt—some with no end in sight—it's important to understand how these events are impacting our mental health. We also need to learn what we can do to protect ourselves from harm.

Experts have previously observed that workers experience higher levels of stress during times of economic insecurity. This could be due to financial worries, job loss or simply because people feel an overall sense of instability in their lives. For those already struggling with existing mental health issues, this insecurity can make them even more vulnerable to anxiety and depression.

Whether it's compassion fatigue or burnout, stress is a common element in both. Stress is taking a toll on your life, and you need to figure out ways to address it. There are different strategies experts recommend, including a focus on:

- » Sleep,
- » Nutrition,
- » Time management,
- » Cleanliness and
- » Keeping organized/reducing clutter.

You may view stress as a personal issue, but it's also a workplace concern. Team morale impacts communication. If your organization has a constant turnover of staff, you're always onboarding new talent, which hinders productivity and poses challenges to safety.

Creating strong communication protocols within your organization, no matter how big or small, will help you retain top talent and grow your organization. Continual review with your team on how to become more efficient and improve internal communication will go a long way toward reducing burnout in your organization.

EHS personnel who are burning out often feel a lack of trust from their organization. As Lea Brovedani wrote in an article for *EHS Today*, there are five tenets of trust that are critical to the health of an organization:

"Caring - Demonstrate genuine care of others. Employees can tell if compliance is about CYA (Cover Your Assets) rather than caring for them as individuals.

"Commitment - Keeping your word or not stopping until your work or task is completed. When you are committed to a safe workplace, it becomes a value that is nonnegotiable, and everyone lives and breathes it.

"Consistency - Words and actions are aligned. The rules apply to everyone.

"Competence - A skill or knowledge that aligns with the task. Everyone should be trained so they have the skills and abilities to do their job safely.

"Communication - Being able to listen and verbalize for complete understanding," Brovedani wrote.

HOW BURNOUT CONTRIBUTES TO LABOR CHALLENGES

Since early 2021, millions of people have voluntarily quit their jobs, known as the Great Resignation. Causes for the mass exodus include low wage increases, micromanagement, concern about going back to the workplace after COVID-19 pandemic and management's lack of flexibility.

Labor shortages, combined with mass layoffs, have only exacerbated the labor challenges companies and workers face. Employment issues will likely continue for the foreseeable future, especially as the Federal Reserve and other economic forces manipulate the landscape.

Here are three ways to prevent your team from burning out because of the changing labor dynamics:

1 Listen to your employees.

Even the most brilliant of minds are not mind readers, so you cannot expect that you will fully know what's on the minds of your employees or what they want out of their work role. You can find out, though, by simply asking.

To do so, create a safe environment where employees can speak freely and without retribution. Ask employees how they are doing and what they need from the company at the present moment. Is there anything that the company can do to help them navigate through these changing times? How can management better support them?

Then, take action or make decisions based on what they tell you. Prove to employees that what they say matters—and you're listening. This is an ongoing exercise, not a one-and-done practice. Repeat the process on a regular basis and see how those conversations shift or progress. You may be surprised with what you find—and the impact small changes can have on the safety culture at your organization.

2 Ask about what flexible work means to your team.

Flexibility is different for everyone, so if your team would like to work remotely (if possible) for a certain amount of time, then get creative on how to make that happen. Some people thrive in an office environment, while others thrive working remotely.

The most important thing is to be flexible with the policies and frequently communicate with your team to see how it's working (or not) for them. Then, continue to readjust or reassess based on changing conditions and employees' needs; just because something works today doesn't mean it will work six months from now.

3 Focus on your team's professional and personal physical and mental health needs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been traumatic for everyone. As a result, having a psychologically safe workplace is more important than ever.

Psychological safety is the belief that one can take risks without fear of negative consequences or humiliation. When employees have this sense of security, they are able to bring their best self to work and be more creative, innovative and collaborative. Psychological safety is essential to creating a productive workplace environment.

A psychologically safe workplace encourages open communication and allows teams to engage in constructive dialogue without fear of judgment, criticism or reprisal. Employees should feel comfortable expressing opinions, sharing ideas and asking questions.

Creating a psychologically safe workplace requires commitment from leadership at all levels within the organization. Leaders must create an environment where team members feel accepted for who they are and respected for their contributions.

Burnout has been increasing in every sector. Maintaining open communication with your team, creating a safe space where they feel comfortable asking questions, and getting them the help they need goes a long way toward retaining workers and keeping them healthy.

HOW TO ADDRESS BURNOUT

One way to help combat burnout is for leadership to take downtime seriously. Executives need to use their vacation time and encourage their teams to do the same.

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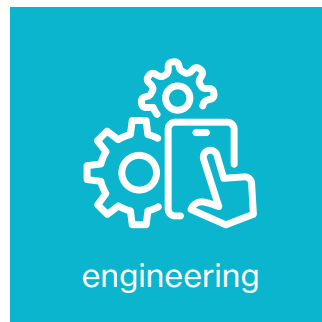
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We have seen vacation habits change since the onset of the pandemic. People may be concerned about or wondering how to spend that vacation time, but simply taking it is the most important part. Do what you feel comfortable doing, even if it's just for an afternoon. Staycations can be relaxing if you can resist the urge to work or check email.

Another way to address burnout is to establish boundaries around working hours. Encouraging employees and yourself to spend some time each day relaxing is crucial to maintaining well-being for yourself and your team. Some tips to create work-life balance include:

Have a standard start and end to your workday.

The pandemic might have changed the way people work, but not necessarily for the better. With so many companies opting to switch their in-person working hours to remote ones, flexibility has been introduced that some might see as a benefit. However, this newfound flexibility can easily lead to employees working more hours than they would if they were in an office setting.

Employees may think that having flexible working hours means that they can take extended breaks throughout the day or even fewer days off per week, but this isn't always the case. For many people, these flexible schedules can lead to longer workdays and less of a distinction between work life and home life.

Manage distractions/interruptions.

Every time you are interrupted, it can take up to 30 minutes to get back your focus. If there's any way for you to isolate yourself in time blocks, you'll accomplish more work in less time. Turn off whatever sounds, apps and notifications you feel comfortable with on your personal and work devices.

Schedule breaks frequently.

If you can work in 50-minute increments without interruptions, then give yourself a 10-minute stretch break. Go for a walk around the office, shop floor or outside for some fresh air if you can.

Get proper nutrition and exercise. Vitamin D deficiency is an issue for many of us, and if we are indoors all the time, we're not getting enough sunshine, a natural source of vitamin D.

Work with a nutritionist to find out the appropriate food and vitamin supplements you need for proper health. Also, be sure to develop an exercise routine. Work with your health care provider to create an exercise plan that's safe and effective.

CONCLUSION

The workplace can be a stressful environment, and the consequences of burnout in the workplace can be significant. Providing mental health resources, offering flexible working arrangements and paid time off, establishing clear expectations around workloads, and providing support systems will go a long way toward keeping your organization healthy. By implementing effective strategies for reducing stress and addressing symptoms of burnout before they occur, employers can create a more positive atmosphere for their employees. **EHS**

Michael Levitt is the founder and chief burnout officer of the Breakfast Leadership Network, a San Diego and Toronto-based burnout consulting firm. He is an author, keynote speaker, host of the Breakfast Leadership show, a certified NLP and CBT therapist and a Fortune 500 consultant.



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Why are Injury Rates for Some Employees so Much Higher than for Others?



Better training and engagement can help address this workplace issue.

By Adrienne Selko

As with any safety goal, understanding your current state—and how it evolved—is the first step in charting a course to get to your future state.

“What I have noticed in my 20 years in the field is that at the beginning of my career, the emphasis was about the number of injuries in total,” says Monique Parker, senior vice president of safety, environment & health at Piedmont Lithium, a developer of lithium hydroxide for the electric vehicle industry. “At that time, we didn’t look specifically at who was being injured. The goal was to make sure those numbers were low.”

But there is a reason for that, says Parker. At that time, companies did not have the time, knowledge, skills and tools that are available today to analyze data to that level of detail. The goal was to hit world-class status, and that meant reducing injuries across the board.

Jumping ahead a couple decades, statistics are now available on who specifically is getting injured. And the most recent figures (for 2021) show a deep disparity between different people.

The share of Black workers fatally injured on the job reached an all-time high in 2021, increasing from 11.4% of total fatalities in 2020 to 12.6% of total fatalities in 2021. This statistic comes from the 2021 Consensus of Fatal Occupational Injuries from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The number of fatalities for this group climbed to 653 in 2021 from 541 in 2020, a 20.7% increase. This translates into a

fatality rate of 4.0 per 100,000 FTE in 2021, an increase from 3.5 in 2020. And Hispanic or Latino workers saw a fatality rate of 4.5 per 100,000 workers. (The overall fatal occupational injury rate is 3.6.)



Monique Parker

What is causing such a disparity, with the fatality rate for Blacks nearly three times the national average? When Parker took a closer look into worker injuries across her career, which includes stints at Unilever, Owens Corning, Albemarle Corp. and Hexcel Corp., she discovered a root cause: training. “There was a difference in how people were trained,” she says. And that difference arose based on how the material was taught and how it was absorbed.

The most traditional way of training employees is to put people in a single room, present a video or have them listen to a presentation. But not everyone learns best that way, says Parker, and valuable training material is being lost. That’s especially true when comparing different sets of employees.

A SAFETY MINDSET

Addressing this disparity can take a number of forms. Of course, the first is understanding how to account for an employee’s perceptions of safety. For example, Parker suggests using a type of program, much like a personality test, that can provide insight into someone’s safety mindset. For example, if someone has a high tolerance for risk, they won’t always see a risky situation. So, training must teach



PRIVILEGE WALK

Looking at the entire organization and how they view safety is more complicated than it sounds. From a corporate perspective the organization might be implementing diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) programs and therefore they conclude that the company is becoming more diverse. However, often leadership at the very top of the company has not changed.

Parker has a unique way to help people uncover their own perceptions. The goal is to offer a survey, which she calls a privilege walk, to help people understand the concerns of a diverse population. The 30 questions focus on specific situations that people might find themselves in. For example, one of the questions is: Have you ever had your electricity turned off?

While many companies call this unconscious bias training, Parker prefers this method of using actual examples to better understand what other people face, as opposed to merely looking inward to uncover a person's bias. Once companies understand where employees are coming from, per se, they are better able to create a more effective safety program.

them how to uncover risks. Or if someone is more of a rule follower, they need to have a wider view of a situation to understand risks. "So, my job is to provide training that can meet people where they are," she notes.

Digging deeper into the concept of meeting people where they are, distinct groups, such as Black and Latino employees, bring different perspectives to situations. These can be regional or generational. Companies need to take these varying perceptions into consideration when creating safety programs. "When everyone can get to the personal level, past the data, we have a clear view of the safety issues," explains Parker.

THE PLANT LEVEL IS WHERE INJURIES ARE HAPPENING

Looking at the source of the injury is how companies will be able to fix the disparity. "Sometimes companies view what's happening at the plant level as a local problem, as opposed to a company problem," says Parker. "I see my job as communicating to the highest levels of the company, based on data, where the problems are and how we should address them. These are not the usual things that companies are looking at so those at the senior management, C-suite and board levels need to understand the issues."

Once the company is aware of the issues, the next step is to look directly at what the frontline leaders are doing, says Parker. Are they able to provide the right tools to distinct groups when it comes to safety training? Are they doing things the same way they have always been doing them and not looking to change based on their own personal perceptions? These are some issues that need to be explored, she notes.

ACTION STEPS COMPANIES CAN TAKE

Parker sees engagement as the next step in improvement. "After the training is completed, you need to have to have engagement at all levels. And it can take various forms. Companies can create social opportunities for employees, or they can offer a variety of committees within the organization that allow employees to delve into a variety of issues, if even those issues are not directly related to the primary job. The goal of this is for employees to explore things that are important to them but still be within the realm of the organization."

Viewing safety from this more personal level is the cornerstone of safe practices at work, says Parker. "When it comes to safety, it's personal. When a person feels that they're valued, that they're heard, that they're important, then they're going to be willing to do those extra steps to make sure they're safe and others around them are safe. But if they don't feel valued, if they just feel like another number or another employee, then they aren't going to be going the extra mile."

Understanding the structure of your organization and how it plays into improving safety is important, Parker adds. "You must ensure that you keep frontline leaders and supervisors in that sweet spot because they're really the bridge between the employees and the leadership."

FUTURE THINKING

Meeting people where they are is the future of how safety training will evolve, Parker believes. "And part of that is learning to analyze data in terms of race, education and experience. You look at a person's background and history—all of those things encompass how they retain and learn and hear things. And we need to push that type of thinking up to the boardroom." **EHS**



How Contractors can **Beat the Summer Heat**

Four ways to keep your workers safe and cool while working in extreme heat.

By Shayne Stevens

The construction industry requires great attention to safety. For that reason, leaders must prioritize implementing company-wide practices to protect their workers.

At Rosendin, we rely on thousands of craft workers to successfully build some of the country's largest industrial and commercial projects. We have made it an ongoing mission to help our workers recognize dangers and protect them from harm of any kind. When completing projects in drier regions where heat waves are common, such as Arizona and Texas, we also face the unique challenges that come with working in extreme heat.

Understanding the possible effects of working in hot weather and creating plans to avoid and handle any heat illness are essential elements of maintaining worker health. Rosendin has developed a comprehensive Heat Illness Prevention Plan to help workers across the nation follow safe practices.

In addition, we develop Site-Specific Safety Plans (SSSP) that include specific heat mitigation plans based on the conditions at each site. These can vary based on specific factors, such as regional temperatures, access to shade and indoor cooling, and time spent outside.

For example, in Arizona, Regional Safety Director Rick Brown and his team develop, implement and refine SSSPs to ensure workers have mandatory shade in working conditions exceeding 80 degrees Fahrenheit, pre-shift meetings to review the high heat procedures and adjusted workloads. When needed, Brown and his team reduce the severity of work by scheduling slower-paced or less physically demanding work during the hottest parts of the day and the heaviest work activities during the cooler parts of the day.

Rosendin's plans have been proven to significantly reduce job site heat hazards while increasing employee and subcontractor involvement in every aspect of safety. Any company can achieve similar results through ongoing training



on environmental and personal risk factors for heat illness. Here are four crucial heat illness prevention elements that you can incorporate to keep your construction workers safe while working in the heat.

1. TRAIN FOR HEAT

Commercial construction jobs can be challenging, as workers are performing tasks outside or in partial structures, such as high-rise buildings, arenas, health care centers and renewable energy facilities.

Companies should require employees to undergo training to recognize heat illness symptoms, including heavy sweating, cramps, weakness and dizziness. They should also learn to use prevention methods as well as their region's required Heat Illness Prevention Standards and OSHA regulations. This should entail having project teams conduct safety orientation training that includes how to respond to heat-related illnesses.

Rosendin also encourages all on-site contractors to work together as a team to actively watch workers for these heat illness symptoms and other heat-related issues. Once training is completed, we provide our teams with hard hat sombreros, neck shades, cooling towels and water-soaked gel bandanas.

2. ENCOURAGE PROPER HYDRATION

The most important tip for keeping employees safe is to make sure they stay hydrated by drinking water regularly. Mild dehydration can impair a person's ability to concentrate. Even as little as 1% loss in body weight due to fluid deficiency can impair short-term memory.

On outdoor job sites during the summer, we address the heat with a variety of responses, including water bottles, water stations and water coolers. They are available to everyone on the site, especially the field staff at our outdoor sites. To encourage workers to drink water more frequently, supervisors can implement simple practices, such as placing water coolers close to where staff is working and an hourly reminder to drink fluids.

In addition to water, consider stocking up on ice pops or other products that contain electrolytes, such as sports drinks, coconut water and hydration powders. You'll also want to remind workers to avoid liquids during the workweek that can be dehydrating, such as alcohol and caffeine.

3. PROVIDE ACCESS TO SHADE

In addition to adequate hydration stations, it is also important for workers to have access to shade that is open to the air or includes ventilation, such as fans or cooling mists.

On some Rosendin job sites, we are able to provide specially designed cooling trailers with a large portable air conditioning unit that is powered by a generator. These are particularly helpful in our renewable energy projects, as they are usually in remote areas with little natural shade.

These trailers, which are opened up to the air stream, have been instrumental in providing employees a place to go to cool down, recharge and hydrate before returning to work in the hot sun. At any time, employees can sit in the trailers to cool down if they get overheated. We also encourage our foremen to strategically set up mobile pop-up tents and shaded areas throughout job sites.

Once temperatures exceed 95 degrees Fahrenheit, consider increasing breaks to help workers cool down and hydrate. In the South and other warm climates, companies can also add air conditioned lunch tents and cooling trailers with fans and mist to mitigate overheating. In conditions of extreme heat, companies can train supervisors to observe employees for alertness and other signs or symptoms of heat illness. Companies can also mandate recovery rest periods.

4. FOLLOW ACCLIMATIZATION PROCEDURES

Working during a heat wave can be challenging, especially for people who are not used to it. It is important to let their body adjust to the heat by limiting exposure in the beginning, encouraging them to take more breaks and staying hydrated.

For these workers, it's good practice to let them start earlier in the day when temperatures are cooler and schedule the heaviest work activities during this time, leaving less physically demanding work for hotter parts of the day. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the best outcome for workers is to gradually increase work hours in hot conditions over a 7- to 14-day period, cool off and properly rehydrate between shifts.

Rosendin limits new employees to 8-hour shifts for the first four days and does not assign overtime until employees acclimate to the work environment. We also encourage employees and supervisors to use the buddy system and maintain regular communication via cell phone to monitor their health.

Heat is an unavoidable factor for building projects that take place during the summer or in hot locations. It is crucial for the employers to safeguard their workers by drafting and enforcing detailed procedures to adjust to changing weather conditions.

As the world's temperatures rise due to climate change, these best practices will become increasingly relevant as heat waves and high temperatures become more prevalent, particularly in locations that have never had to deal with these working circumstances. Knowing how to avoid the dangers of extreme heat, as well as how to handle the symptoms of heat illness, is critical for a well-rounded safety strategy. **EHS**

Shayne Stevens, CSP, CHST, CMSP, is the senior corporate safety director at Rosendin, the nation's largest employee-owned electrical contracting firm and one of America's Safest Companies of 2021 by EHS Today. Shayne works out of the company's regional office in Tempe, Ariz.

Protecting Construction Workers Against **Extreme**

The right PPE can help workers maintain healthy and safe body temperatures while minimizing the risk of heat-related illness or injury.

By Matt King

Between 2011 and 2019, there were 344 worker-related deaths caused by environmental heat exposure, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. It's widely thought, however, that this number is an underrepresentation, not inclusive of worker deaths due to conditions like heart attack, which can be brought on or exacerbated by unsafe heat conditions.

In the years since this data was recorded, we've seen record-shattering temperatures around the globe. Over the past year, for instance, 67 all-time high-temperature records have been broken across the U.S.; globally, 230 records have been broken over that same time period. As temperatures continue to rise, it's reasonable to expect the number of heat-related worker deaths, injuries and illnesses will rise as well.

While these extreme temperatures continue to impact the health and safety of workers across geographies and industries, the global construction industry is particularly vulnerable to the effects of unprecedented heat. Construction workers are required to engage in hard, physical labor outdoors and often work longer hours during the year's hottest months due to the increased hours of daylight. The combination of record-breaking heat, physical labor and long hours puts construction workers in significant danger.

In addition to having a negative impact on worker health and safety, rising temperatures can harm construction businesses

in the form of lost or less efficient labor. Construction employees must work slower and take more breaks in high-heat environments, and they must take time away from the jobsite to recover in the event of a heat-related illness or injury. Though heat-related death, illness and injury are the most severe outcomes of working in a too hot environment, the negative effect of lost labor is a notable consideration for businesses in the construction industry.

Thankfully, there is much that can be done to help construction workers stay safe and healthy through the hottest days of the year—and to ensure the continuation of effective, efficient and safe labor on the jobsite.

One such measure is to provide workers with the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for the environment in which they'll be working. Many forms of PPE can actually increase a worker's temperature by minimizing airflow, thereby reducing the body's natural ability to cool itself by sweating, and through the added weight of the equipment that the wearer must carry while working. However, there are specific PPE features and products that can help do the opposite, allowing workers to maintain healthy and safe body temperatures while minimizing the risk of heat-related illness or injury.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT HARD HAT FOR THE JOB

One of the easiest places for construction site managers and employers to begin when looking for ways to protect

Temperatures

inside a worker's hat. Anti-glare decals can minimize the impact of the sun's glare, and sunshades and sunshields can be used to increase the shade offered around the hard hat wearer's head, neck and face.

OTHER HEAT-PROTECTIVE GEAR

In addition to choosing the best hard hat and accessories for high temperatures, workers can utilize other protective gear that has been specifically designed to minimize heat and maintain the wearer's body temperature at a safe and healthy level.

A number of PPE manufacturers offer a range of protective gear designed uniquely for high-heat work environments. Items like cooling vests utilize phase change material technology to maintain a set temperature for an extended period of time, thereby offering continuous cooling benefits to workers.

When possible, workers should opt to wear clothes made of breathable fabrics underneath their PPE. They should also consider accessories like UV-protective goggles or sunglasses for added protection from the sun.

What other steps can those in the construction industry take to protect workers in high-heat scenarios?

The right protective gear can make a significant difference in the health and safety of workers laboring in high-heat environments, but those in the construction

industry can—and should—take other precautionary steps to ensure the well-being of workers.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) offer a Heat Safety Tool, which gives users access to the heat index for their specific worksite. Based on that heat index, the OSHA-NIOSH Heat Safety Tool provides a risk level to outdoor workers. Workers and employers can use this information—and other, similar tools—to plan and prepare appropriately for their work conditions.

Construction employers must also provide workers with an adequate number of breaks to rest in the shade and drink water. Plan the most physically taxing labor for the coolest times of day—early in the morning or toward the evening hours. Educate workers on the causes and symptoms of heat-related illness, and have an emergency plan in place to help those on the jobsite handle a dangerous situation properly.

As temperatures continue to rise, the construction industry—and the companies that produce PPE for construction workers—will have to keep innovating and identifying new and improved ways to make sure all workers get home safely at the end of the day. **EHS**

their workers against high temperatures is with the hard hat, a mainstay of the construction site. It's essential that construction workers are equipped with the best hard hat for the conditions under which they'll be working—and some hard hats are simply better suited for high temperatures than others.

Certain hard hat features can help minimize heat retention and keep workers safe from heat-related illness or injury. For example, all hard hats will retain some of the heat put off by the sun's rays, but studies have shown that lighter colored hats retain less heat than darker hats, making lighter hats a better option for outdoor construction work.

Additionally, a wide brim can offer necessary shade when working under the direct sunlight and integrated vents—suitable for jobsites without electrical hazards—help improve air flow around the head.

ACCESSORIES OFFER INCREASED PROTECTION

Choosing a hard hat with heat-minimizing features is important for heat safety, but the benefits of these integrated features can be enhanced even further by the addition of heat reducing hard hat accessories.

Sweat-wicking helmet liners and brow pads can be affixed to the inside of a hard hat to help prevent added moisture, and the associated humidity, from building up

Matt King is global product portfolio manager for head and face protection at Bullard, a provider of personal protective equipment.



5 Ways Technology can Improve Manufacturing Safety

Here's why now is the perfect time to introduce some new ideas into the manufacturing industry—and how they can improve workplace safety.

By Eric Whitley

Even through uncertainties—and there has been no shortage of them in recent times—innovation in technology is maintaining its relentless pace.

Setbacks in past years have called for unprecedented ways to adapt and improve more conventional practices. As we begin to settle into the new normal, there has never been a better time to push through and explore new ideas within the manufacturing industry.

The old proverb reminds us that necessity is the mother of invention. The saying has never been more relevant than in the shift of global production and safety demands.

2022 saw a lot of promising trends that could define (or redefine) the future of the manufacturing industry. We hope these trends continue to gain traction in 2023. Now is the perfect opportunity to take a step back and assess these ideas,

which might not yet be fully embraced and implemented at your organization.

5G AND EDGE COMPUTING

Edge computing revolutionizes how we think about data, process information and make connections in a globalized world. As its name implies, edge computing takes the analytical power of a computer to the boundary where the physical meets the virtual.

In other words, edge computing brings the power of analytics to the handheld devices we use daily. With the wireless connectivity capabilities of 5G, edge computing enables seamless data transfer and remote control like never before.

The applications are limitless, especially with the capability to gather and analyze comprehensive real-time

data. Optimizing production and streamlining supply chain operations—all while promoting a robust safety culture—ensure a boost in an organization’s overall performance.

A facility that reaps the benefits of interconnected devices has the capacity for remote monitoring, control and advanced analysis. Some of the many possible applications for edge computing include: heating and ventilation systems that recommend optimal conditions, safety sensors that detect potential concerns, and data backup systems that gather historical information.

Real-time safety reporting allows companies to capture leading indicators while also maintaining the capability to track traditional lagging indicators. Additionally, processes relying on pen-and-paper or spreadsheet monitoring are now able to take a step forward.

The ability to take computing power closer to the front lines eliminates inefficiencies associated with latency. For applications that require immediate actions, such as surveillance and safety detection in hazardous environments, detection urgency is of the utmost priority. 5G technologies enable teams to receive data in a heartbeat, while edge computing lowers the dependency on transmission lags to get truly real-time responses.

DIGITIZATION AND AUTOMATION

Emerging technology relies on the premise that data and information come in a format that enables analysis. What is even more appealing is the ability to effortlessly gather data with incredible precision.

In some cases, modern tools have the capacity to accurately monitor conditions without any human intervention whatsoever. For example, imagine having the ability to improve safety procedures while also eliminating the exposure of workers to avoidable hazards.

A smart factory is a concept that describes the operational level a facility can reach through digitization and automation. With the proper infrastructure, physically distant objects can virtually interact through instantaneous data transfer.

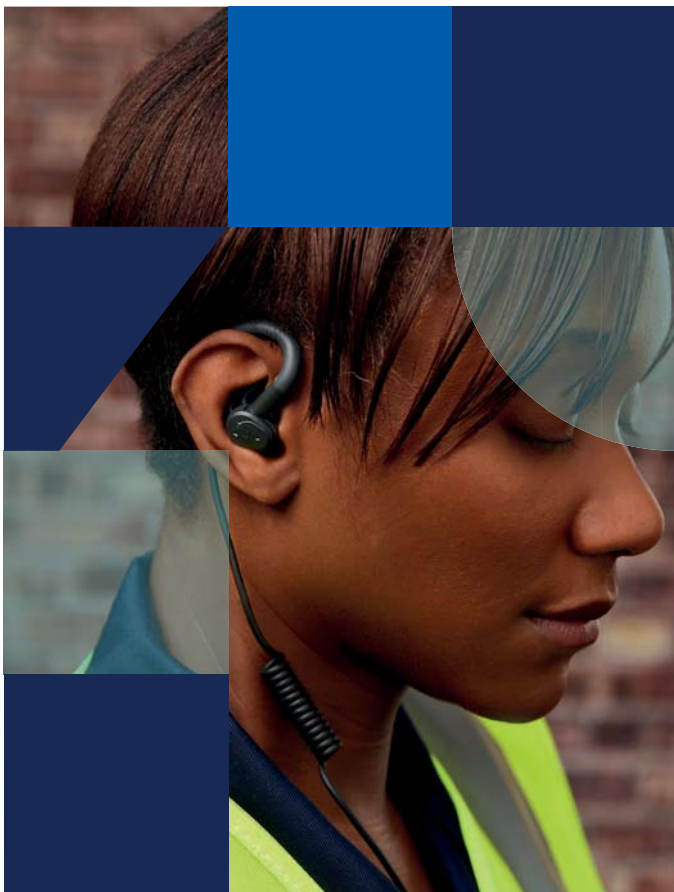
Sensing devices, linked through a cloud-based system, enable advanced analytical processes, such as machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI), that allow for further integration into other autonomous systems.

By having a firm grasp on a facility’s operations, companies can get a better idea of the various opportunities for automation. After all, efficiency and safety gains are the result of eliminating hazardous actions, manual work or redundant tasks.

Insights from advanced analytics can help improve maintenance schedules by automating tasks and servicing requirements. High-risk consequences that rely on urgent actions, such as safety shut-off procedures, also stand to benefit from automated responses.

Real-world examples can include varying degrees of digitization and automation, including:

- » manual activities that rely on human intervention,
- » semi-automated tasks that use tools and equipment to reduce manual intervention, and
- » fully-automated processes with more autonomy and self-sufficiency.



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The level of automation depends on the requirements and capabilities of a facility as well as its budget. The prioritization of automation is based on evaluating the impacts on production and workplace safety.

Ultimately, automation allows workers to focus their time and effort on more complex, value-adding tasks. Automation also allows workers to tackle situations they might not have been able to address previously.

ROBOTICS AND AI

Robotics and AI have been trending for several years and continue to dominate technological research and advancement.

Modern robotic systems are now more precise than ever and do not merely rely on hard-set instructions. Instead, more intelligent platforms incorporate continuous learning and improvement abilities, which optimize their actions and increase overall performance.

A practical use case for industrial robots is to introduce them into hazardous procedures and harsh environments. There are plenty of manufacturing processes that involve extreme temperatures, rough environments, toxic by-products, or even a combination of intense situations.

If a job includes physically getting into a high-risk condition, robotics and AI systems are a safer, more practical alternative. If a human were involved in such a scenario, additional precautions for PPE and specialized training would be required—a potential problem amid labor shortages and limited resources.

AI algorithms can also identify patterns that are too subtle or too complex for the naked eye by gathering enormous amounts of historical and real-time information. Moreover, AI capabilities can alert workers about any detection of workplace or environmental hazards. For example, installed cameras can monitor an area for passing equipment, falling debris, gas leaks and other potentially preventable hazards. Robotic systems can use the same information when assessing the need to cease operations or run an adaptive program that resolves a specific concern.

GREEN ENERGY

EHS departments are usually at the top of our minds when talking about occupational safety. Typical projects and discussions can easily leave out environmental aspects—unless a major incident is in question. Recently, however, there's been a stronger focus on environmental, social and governance (ESG) initiatives and corporate social responsibility (CSR).

And the concern for environmental sustainability is, in fact, a shared responsibility between customers and providers. According to the Future Consumer Index, 38% of global consumers agree that businesses should make their production more responsible. With a more pronounced awareness of green practices, consumer support has been a driver for green energy initiatives in the manufacturing industry.

Green energy is a loose term that describes the conscious effort to incorporate renewable practices into business operations. Non-renewable energy sources still dominate the majority of conventional factories; however, optimistic

projections forecast that 27% of total energy resources can come from renewable alternatives by 2030.

Greater computing power, unsurprisingly, comes with massive energy requirements. To put things in perspective, approximately 2% of the total U.S. electricity usage goes into the operation of data centers.

Taking advantage of renewable energy sources allows companies to instead scale operations sustainably. Popular options for cleaner energy continue to include solar and wind power, with technology giants like Google and Microsoft setting an example of deriving energy consumption from such sources.

Sustainable practices in sourcing supplies and production techniques are another focal point for manufacturers. Reducing waste by-products and resource conservation are among the top priorities in the industry.

Buyback programs provide another incentive for consumers to take part in recycling and the reuse of products. On the other hand, advanced technology promotes practices for utility conservation, particularly for water supply systems and heating and ventilation systems.

DIGITAL TWINS

Arguably one of the most aptly named concepts today, digital twins refer to a virtual replica of an existing system. A computer program reads and copies data from existing physical systems to create a digital model, which can provide valuable insights for running simulations and test scenarios.

The ability to run virtual tests provides information on production processes and helps identify ways to improve safety practices in manufacturing. Organizations can learn a few things from automotive manufacturers, who have thus far been able to squeeze the most value out of digital twins.

Ford, for instance, develops seven digital twins to narrow down improvement opportunities from several aspects of design and production. Each digital twin represents a set of variables for a specific area, including design, supply, construction and operations. Digital models then assess the manufacturing process and customer experience. Collectively,

these data sets allow Ford to understand the evolution of a product from conceptualization to usage.

By performing tests on a virtual replica, companies can evaluate the effectiveness of their programs better without the risk of any real-life incidents. While comprehensive planning can theoretically eliminate safety threats, simulations can uncover any unanticipated interactions of complex systems.

We've only scratched the surface when it comes to use cases and applications for digital twins. Such simulated platforms could even help improve safety procedures and protocols in the event of emergencies, including hazardous chemical spills, natural disasters and disease outbreaks.

WHY YOU SHOULD ADOPT THESE IDEAS

Technology has empowered us to uplift and streamline our practices. However, reaping its benefits does not stop at acquiring new tools. There needs to be proper care and attention in the execution of such significant changes.

Innovations in recent years continue to revolve around the availability of data and the capacity to perform agile actions. The use cases that can maximize these technologies include critical responses to potential hazards as well as a heightened precision in manufacturing processes. Employing the appropriate tools and strategies also can significantly impact safety and production efficiency.

A good start for companies is to take a step back, find the business critical priorities that will drive value and study the available technologies that can help them succeed in their goals.

The good news is that there is no shortage of tools to explore. If you have the budget for implementing them, you

can achieve a massive return on investment (ROI) through:

- » Enhanced operational efficiency attained through data-based strategies;
- » Real-time visibility into processes across the production cycle;
- » Quick decision-making with readily available data;
- » A strong focus on workplace safety through minimizing risks and hazards;
- » A significant improvement in crisis response time for shop floor engineers and plant managers; and
- » Infusing agility and sustainability across functions.

CONCLUSION

Stepping into uncharted territory can be daunting, even intimidating. The past few years, and all the challenges they have brought, have taught us that inventive work methods can help a facility gain a competitive advantage—and that can trigger a ripple effect across the entire business.

New ideas arise frequently, and a solution that fits your business might be just around the corner. Lean into, or at the very least don't be afraid of, new technologies and their untapped possibilities. **EHS**

For over 30 years, Eric Whitley has been a noteworthy leader in the manufacturing space. After an extensive career as a reliability and business improvement consultant, Eric joined L2L, where he currently serves as the Director of Smart Manufacturing. In his role, he helps clients learn and implement L2L's pragmatic and simple approach to corporate digital transformation and how to create a smart factory.

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NATIONAL ARCHIVES

The **8** Habits of a Highly Effective Safety Culture

Developing these habits will help create a safety culture in which it is safe for employees to fail.

By Rod Courtney

I began writing my new book, *The 8 Habits of a Highly Effective Safety Culture*, in 2004 while working as a civilian contractor for Kellogg Brown & Root in Iraq.

I was the area HSE manager for a large portion of the Logistical Civilian Augmentation Program #3 Project. Our contract required us to hire a certain percentage of local national employees (Iraqis) to help build bases for the U.S. military and coalition forces. This was to help the local economy and to teach the Iraqi people new skills that they could use once we were gone. In theory, this was a great idea; in reality, however, it was a safety nightmare.

Being a U.S.-based company, we were required to follow OSHA 29 CFR 1926 (Construction) and OSHA 1910 (General Industry) and, in some cases, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers EM 385. But none of this translated to the way of life in that part of the world. Without turning this into a discussion of religion, I just need you to understand that many people in Iraq believe they have zero control over the things that happen to

them. So, bring this culture to an American construction site and I'm sure you can see the difficulties.

IN THE BEGINNING

My time in Iraq got me thinking about how safety cultures have evolved over the past few hundred years. (Note: For the purposes of this article, the term "safety culture" refers to what your employees are doing when no one is watching.)

Safety cultures can be traced all the way back to the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in 1760. While workplace safety now and workplace safety back then are two very different things, 1760 marked the first accounts of company rules being written to keep employees from hurting themselves.

In 1802, the very first legislation dealing with workplace safety was passed. Due to an outcry over child labor conditions, Sir Robert Peel introduced the Health and Morals of Apprentices Act 1802, commonly known as the Factory

Act. It applied to all textile mills and factories employing three or more apprentices or 20 employees. The legislation also required that factories: have sufficient windows and other openings for ventilation; be cleaned at least twice yearly with quicklime and water; and limit working hours for apprentices to no more than 12 hours a day, excluding time taken for breaks.

Although limited to a small portion of the workforce and with limited enforcement, the Factory Act is still generally seen as the beginning of health and safety regulation.

It took another 31 years before any other related laws were passed. In 1833, workers, tired of spending over 12 hours a day in factories, began a movement—known as the Ten Hours Movement—to reduce working days to 10 hours. Pressure from the group led to the Factory Act of 1833, which extended the 12-hour working limit to all children and included wool and linen mills. Perhaps the most important development, however, was the introduction of factory inspectors.

Over the next 137 years, the following laws were passed to help workers:

- » In 1837, “duty of care” was introduced.
- » From 1842 to 1878, several acts helped strengthen protections toward women and children. These included: preventing them from working in underground mines, stopping the use of child labor to clean and maintain moving machinery, and introducing a 56-hour workweek for women and children.

- » The Employers’ Liability Act was signed in 1880.
- » From 1880 to 1969, a number of acts and reforms were passed that improved upon health and safety regulations. Employers were required to provide safeguarding for machinery, the legal working age was gradually raised, and more inspectors were appointed across industries.
- » On Dec. 29, 1970, President Richard Nixon signed the Occupational Safety and Health Act. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) was created in April 1971.

THE 1970S TO THE 1990S

In the early 1970s, the company philosophy was simple: “Don’t get hurt.” Company leaders honestly didn’t think this new federal department, OSHA, would issue fines for unsafe conditions.

OSHA’s first citation was written to Gimbel Brothers department store in New York City. They found two violations and, while a citation was written, no fine was issued.

The first fine was issued Oct. 23, 1972, to Diane Inc., a manufacturing company in Manhattan, for \$45 (about \$300 today). It was then that the new company philosophy became, “Get caught getting hurt and get fired.” This did have a profound effect on the way companies viewed employee safety and helped reduce the number of accidents. However, we later learned this philosophy was counterproductive.

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Editor's Note: Rod Courtney will be speaking at EHS Today's 2023

Safety Leadership Conference,

to be held Sept. 18-20 in Orlando, Fla.

For more information, visit safetyleadershipconference.com.

Sometime around 1980, the new company philosophy became, "Accident occurs, discipline employee(s), create new policy and enforce the new policy." Then, when another accident happens, it starts all over again: accident, discipline, create new policy and enforce new policy.

In the early 1990s, we started doing more behavior-based safety (BBS). While Ford Motor Co. was the first company on record to use the BBS model, DuPont developed the first widely utilized BBS program called DuPont STOP (Safety Training Observation Program). For over 30 years, we've been trying to fix worker behaviors to avoid accidents.

2000S

The 2000s have brought about very few significant changes in safety. There have been numerous variations of the BBS program, but nothing that will take us to the next level.

It is time for a paradigm shift in how we view and do safety.

I believe there are eight habits that will create a safety culture in which it is safe for your employees to fail. We know errors will happen. Moreover, errors are predictable. So, if we build them into the process, then employees can perform their jobs in complex environments. They can also help us create the very systems to protect them.

THE EIGHT HABITS

The first three habits are:

1) Stop Making Safety a Priority—it should be a value;
2) Make it Safe to Raise Concerns; and
3) Make Safety a Responsibility of Operations. These habits are designed to create a just safety culture that then enables you to truly focus on leading indicators and stop accidents before they happen.

That's where the fourth habit, **Focus Left of Zero**, comes in. In a just culture, you can track and trend the information you get from the field. When these first four habits are done in conjunction, we can actually see an accident before it happens and implement measures to stop it.

Stop Managing People is habit five. This habit focuses on leadership principles that are essential in creating a culture that is sustainable in every environment. The only constant in life is that things will change. Be prepared to lead your team no matter what comes your way.

Habit six is **Stop Trying to Fix the Worker and Fix the Work**, and habit seven is **Find the STCKY (stuff that can kill you) and Stop the SIF (serious injuries and fatalities)**. When I originally wrote the eight habits, these two were based on BBS and using Heinrich's Triangle Theory to stop unsafe acts/behaviors, thereby reducing the number of significant injuries and fatalities. While BBS has helped reduce overall incident rates, it has done little to reduce the number of fatalities we have each year on jobsites around the country.

So, developing these two habits is going to take quite a shift in the way we view and do safety.

The final habit, **Stop Trying to Influence Everyone**, is one that will help you implement the first seven. When you try to influence everyone, you end up influencing no one.

HUMAN PERFORMANCE PRINCIPLES

I want to mention here that all safety programs should be built on the principles of human performance. I use these five principles designed by safety expert and author Todd Conklin:

- » Error is normal. Even the best people make mistakes.
- » Blame fixes nothing.
- » Learning and improving are vital. Learning is deliberate.
- » How you respond to failure matters. How leaders act and respond counts.
- » Context influences behavior. Systems drive outcomes.

You, however, can select as many or as few principles as you'd like. Choose the ones that fit your organization. In my book, I list a total of 25 principles called "The Incomplete List" because I'm sure there are others; it all depends on your organization and what it is you are trying to accomplish.

FINAL THOUGHTS

During the process of writing the book, I had quite a few aha moments and learned so much from all of you in the safety industry. Here are a few final takeaways for you to consider.

- » Workers aren't the problem; workers are the problem solvers.
- » Safety doesn't prevent bad things from happening; rather, safety ensures good things happen while workers perform tasks in complex and adaptive work environments.
- » Safety is not defined by the absence of accidents but by the presence of capacity. **EHS**

Rod Courtney, CUSP, CHST, WCLS, began his career in the U.S. military. After working for a couple different companies, he went to Iraq with Kellogg Brown & Root in 2003 and was the HSE manager for the world's largest construction project. In 2007, he began work in the renewable energy sector, building thousands of megawatts of wind turbines and solar plants across the U.S. He is now the HSE manager for Ampirical and serves as a board member for the Utility Safety & Ops Leadership Network. He was the keynote speaker at EHS Today's 2021 Safety Leadership Conference in Cleveland.

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How to Manage Workers' Comp for Remote Workers

You can't just phone it in with workers' comp when it comes to remote workers.

By Kevin Ring

Many things about our daily lives have returned to normal now that COVID-19 cases have declined in the United States. But there is one change that is likely never to go back to pre-pandemic ways, and that is employees working from home.

Much has been asked about managing remote employees effectively: Are they putting in the hours? Are they as accessible remotely as they were in the office? Is the lack of employee interaction a detriment? Are they staying in their pajamas all day? (OK, maybe that one's not important.) But what can't be ignored is how a remote workplace impacts an employer's workers' compensation policy.

Let's explore three questions that every employer needs to ask to ensure their workers are protected and they are covered.

1. WHERE ARE THEY WORKING FROM WITHIN THEIR HOME?

Over the past several decades, a tremendous amount of time and money has been spent on improving office ergonomics.

The setup changes when employees work from home. Are your employees working from home lying on the bed, couch or floor in all sorts of problematic positions?

Insist that employees working from home have a space where they consistently work with an appropriate work surface and a chair that is at an appropriate height to work safely and not trigger any ergonomic issues. Employers may consider helping their remote employees obtain appropriate furniture if they don't have a home office.

2. WHERE ARE THEY WORKING WITHIN THE COUNTRY?

One joy of full-time remote work is that you are no longer tethered to a specific location. In many cases, remote workers can do their job from anywhere.

However, this benefit for the employee can become an issue for the employer because of how the workers' compensation policy is written. A standard workers' compensation policy covers "primary" states, which are states where your business has locations staffed with employees. It can also cover other states where an employee may travel temporarily.

In communities near a state line, it is common for an employee to live in one state and work in another state. When everyone was in the office, you would likely have a single state on your policy as primary: the state where you have your office. If employees are now working from home in a different state, you must add that state as primary to your workers' compensation policy.

For some businesses, employees have left the area altogether. Case in point: My former next-door neighbor moved from Texas to North Carolina to work remotely. The same issue applies here, too, because employers must list the states where their employees work as primary states on workers'

compensation policy. Thus, her employer in Texas had to include North Carolina on their policy.

This seems a simple issue to solve, but in reality, it can be quite complicated. Many insurance companies are limited as to what states they can add to policies, or they may decline to do so. This can result in your business having to purchase separate workers' comp policies for the states where your primary insurance provider can't or won't issue a policy.

If you have employees working from home outside your primary state(s) of operation, you will want to discuss this with your insurance agent.

3. WHEN ARE THEY WORKING?

A frequent question we hear regarding remote workers is, "What if my employee decides to check their e-mail in the middle of the night and falls down the stairs? Is that a workers' comp claim?"

Many factors go into the answer, but the more significant concern is your expectations for when your employee is working. You can't control the housekeeping at your employees' homes the same way you can in your office. It's not your fault that there might be a Barbie or a Lego spaceship left on the darkened step at 2 a.m. However, setting clear expectations about when you do and do not expect your employees to be working could potentially help determine whether or not an after-hours injury is covered by your workers' compensation policy.

“Simply saying, ‘Out of sight, out of mind’ isn’t a plan for managing the safety of your remote employees.”

CONCLUSION

Remote work is not going away. Now that we are well past the early days of the pandemic, where droves of employees shifted overnight from in-person to working from home, it's time to focus on strategies that make remote work effective and safe for your business—and your employees.

Simply saying, "Out of sight, out of mind" isn't a plan for managing the safety of your remote employees. You must not just phone it in when thinking about how your remote workers will ultimately affect your workers' compensation policy. That lack of forethought will result in increased injuries, increased costs and lack of productivity. **EHS**

Kevin Ring is the lead workers' compensation analyst for the Institute of WorkComp Professionals.

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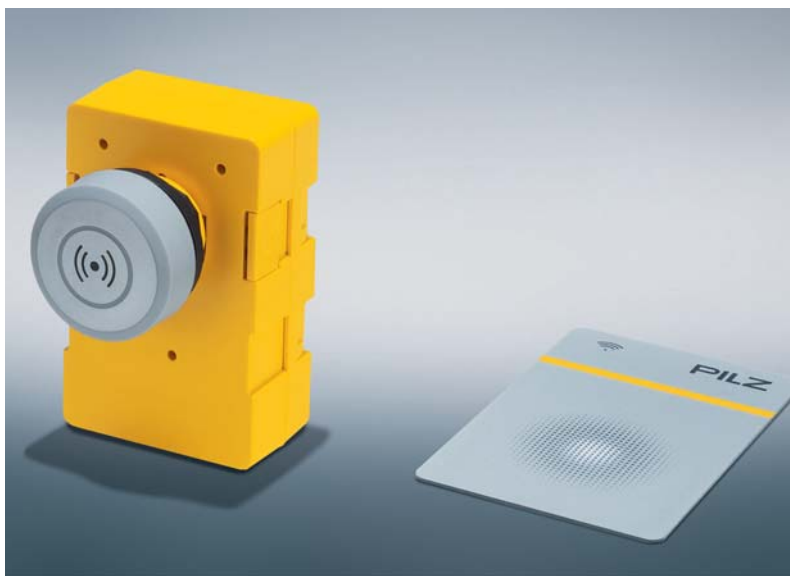
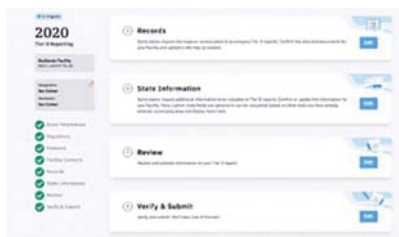
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Nicole
Stempak
Managing Editor



It Always Comes Back to Safety

At a time with so much divisiveness, let's focus on what unites us.

Recently, I went to a dinner party with some friends and friends of friends. I worked my way around the table, both catching up and making acquaintances. Not surprisingly, I heard a lot of stories. Surprisingly, they all shared a common theme.

Hào yú* told me about how an employee got injured with a forklift at one of his employer's plants. In response, the company hosted a training on forklifts a couple days later. Unfortunately, during that training, someone else sustained a forklift injury. And there was another incident a few days later.



MONKEY BUSINESS IMAGES | DREAMTIME

A few people at the party work at the same company and are familiar with the dangers of forklifts. Others have never seen a forklift or been on a factory floor, so they couldn't understand how getting hit with something going a couple miles per hour could be so dangerous. Hào yú and his colleagues tried to communicate the potential harms forklifts can cause.

The topic soon shifted to Carmen's new house. There was a mix of renters and homeowners at the table, so Carmen was explaining all the things she loved about her new home—and some things she was watching out for on her house hunt. Another couple talked about how on their search they have seen foundation concerns, water damage, mold and other structural issues that could pose health risks to dwellers.

Kwame and Rohan talked about their recent trip to Bogota, Colombia. Among other anecdotes, they described how the flies swarmed around their food and how they (and some people they met) got ill on their trip. They suspected the flies and other unsafe food prep practices they noted were to blame.

I asked if they ever felt unsafe. They said no. Sophia and I marveled at how they could travel to another country and not fear for their safety. Sophia said she didn't like working night shift at the hospital because she didn't want to walk the lengthy distance to and from her car outside in the dark.

A while later, I met Mateo, a resident orthopedic surgeon. He and his family are preparing to move to Missouri, where he will be doing a fellowship specializing in hand surgeries.

"You mean like carpal tunnel?" I asked.

"Yeah, that and trigger fingers are pretty common," Mateo said. "But I really like reattachment surgeries, like when a finger gets sawed off or an arm gets mangled in a machine."

"Gross! Does that really happen?" someone asked.

"It's more common than you think," Mateo said.

Don't you and I know it.

The rest of the party passed amiably, and I was met with the best kind of sadness when I headed home.

On the drive back, I thought about the motley crew I had spent the last few hours with. We come from different backgrounds and work in different fields. But there are a few things we all have in common, safety chief among them. In one way or another, we were all concerned about our own personal protection or the well-being of others.

Over the past few years, there have been plenty of conversations at the dinner table about COVID-19. Nonetheless, I was still struck that at this little dinner party so much of the conversations centered around so many different aspects of safety.

As part of my job with *EHS Today*, I spend a lot of time talking with you about OSHA reporting, compliance and training. But safety is so much more than that. Safety drives nearly everything we do. Put that way, it seems like something everybody—regardless of age, gender, politics, background and skin color—can agree on.

I'm probably not telling you something you don't already know, but in a time of such divisiveness, it's a refreshing reminder of our shared humanity. Here's my challenge for myself—and for you too, if you'd like to join: Let's focus on how safety unites us.

If you have any suggestions, you know how to reach me. I'll do my best to address your concerns and share them, so we can all learn from one another and improve workplace safety together. **EHS**

**Names and some personal identifying information have been changed to respect people's privacy.*

Nicole Stempak

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

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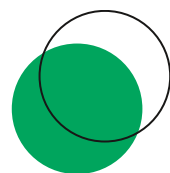
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