

Report from a Stakeholder Workshop

Safety Culture and Climate in Construction: Bridging the Gap between Research and Practice

(in alphabetical order) Matt Gillen, Linda M. Goldenhar, Steve Hecker and Scott Schneider. CPWR Report, March 2014.

Overview

Researchers and practitioners agree that the safety culture and safety climate are key to reducing injuries, illnesses and fatalities on construction worksites. Construction industry stakeholders from business, labor, academia and government participated in a workshop in June 2013 to 1) help create construction-specific definitions of “safety culture” and “safety climate,” 2) discuss reliable and valid ways to measure the concepts, and 3) have a dialogue about interventions that could be implemented to improve safety climate.

During the workshop, session leaders presented several definitions for safety culture and safety climate, and they were discussed. Participants acknowledged that the industry remains too dependent on lagging rather than leading indicators to measure the effectiveness of worksite safety activities. Workshop discussions were held with the entire group and with stakeholders breaking into small working groups with many disciplines represented in each.

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See full report:

<http://bit.ly/1eoKhzA>

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Key Findings

■ **Definitions:** After the workshop, meeting organizers examined the voting results and other sources and developed definitions that 1) help clarify the distinctions between culture and climate, 2) facilitate assessment as well as intervention development and implementation, 3) reflect that safety is integrally related to overall organizational operation and performance, and 4) account for the particular characteristics of the construction industry.

■ **Measurement:** Workshop participants concluded that general safety climate assessment tools are needed to understand how safety climate is perceived at the organization or project level and to compare perceptions across different groups. Targeted assessment tools are needed to answer the questions “What are the specific leading indicators (factors) of safety climate that need to be improved, and how will I know if the change I implement actually leads to improvement?”

■ **Interventions:** The report lists potential interventions that could be used to improve safety climate factors identified earlier in the workshop. The factors are *supervisory leadership, safety as a value/safety alignment, management commitment, employee empowerment and involvement, accountability, communication, training, and owner/client involvement*. The full report contains specific interventions and barriers to implementing them; a link to the full report is at left.

■ **Next Steps:** The committee hopes that this report spurs continued dialogue between industry and researchers to further clarify the role of safety climate in construction injury prevention efforts.



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