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# Survey of Communications Interests of and Resources Used by Construction Industry Stakeholders

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## Introduction

CPWR – The Center for Construction Research and Training continues its three-decade commitment to reducing injuries, illnesses, and fatalities in the construction industry. A nonprofit created by North America’s Building Trades Unions (NABTU), CPWR is uniquely situated to serve the U.S. construction industry, including through our continuing service as the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health’s National Construction Center.

A key element of CPWR’s work is deepening our understanding of, and then responding to, demand from the industry about safety and health topics. CPWR uses multiple methods to develop these insights, such as analyzing engagement with our website, our emails, and our social media channels; interactions with industry stakeholders; and analyses of industry data. Market surveys are a particularly valuable tool, since they offer the opportunity to ask people directly about key topics, particularly what issues are most important to them and where they obtain information.

This report examines two market surveys CPWR conducted – one in 2015, the other in late 2019 – of construction industry professionals whose jobs focused on safety, health, and/or training. Together they show that the topics of greatest interest to these stakeholders (most notably, safety culture and falls) have remained consistent over the last five years, as have many of respondents’ key sources of information. But there have also been important shifts, such as greater use of social media and increased communications in Spanish to workers most comfortable in that language.

These results will guide CPWR’s future work, and we share this report in the hope that it also helps other individuals and organizations in keeping construction workers safe and healthy.

## Key Findings

- There continues to be significant demand for safety and health information..
- The 2015 and 2019 surveys showed no major shifts in safety topics of greatest interest, preferred web resources, or most popular publications.
- In both surveys, falls, safety culture, chemical exposures, and airborne silica were the top four topics about which respondents recently sought information or said they wanted to learn more, with opioids joining the leading topics for labor trainers in 2019.
- OSHA.gov remained the website that the highest percentage of respondents said they had visited in the previous week. The CPWR and NIOSH websites were the second and third most visited sites in both surveys.
- The OSHA QuickTakes e-newsletter continued to be the publication most commonly subscribed to, with Professional Safety having a high subscription rate among safety trainers working with construction firms.
- Respondents in 2019 indicated an increased use of social media resources, particularly Facebook, though these sources were not used as frequently as the OSHA, CPWR, and NIOSH websites.

## Survey methods

Both the 2015 and 2019 surveys contacted two groups of people who have frontline responsibilities in improving safety and health in construction—safety professionals employed by businesses (some working directly for the firms, others as consultants) and safety and apprenticeship trainers at labor organizations. All names came from CPWR’s database, which comprises people who have either signed up to receive updates from CPWR or have requested safety and health materials (such as Hazard Alert cards) from CPWR. The 2015 survey was conducted via paper forms and online; the 2019 survey was conducted entirely online.

The 2015 survey was sent to a total of 1,409 individuals in those two categories, 319 of whom responded. Thanks to the growth in the CPWR database, the 2019 survey was sent to a total of 3,444 individuals, 179 of whom responded. It is not clear why the response rate dropped.

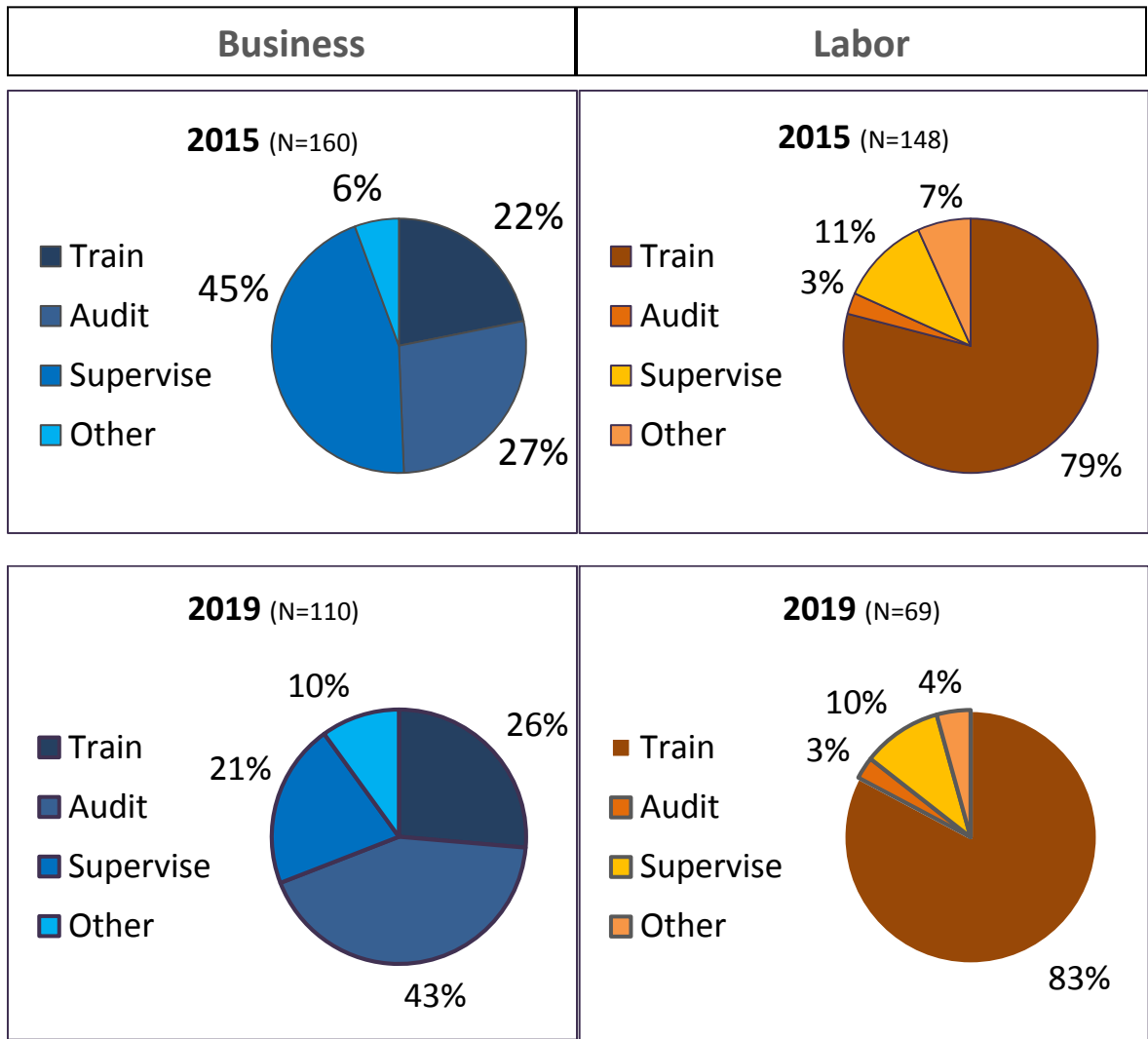
The questions in the two surveys were similar. The most significant change involved Questions 8 through 10, which focus on specific hazards. Because of developments over the last five years, the 2019 survey included “opioids” as a choice in those three questions. In addition, question #5 in 2019, about the materials and tools respondents use, added the choices of laptop, smartphone, and tablet. Question 7—about communicating with Spanish-speaking workers—was also adjusted in 2019, allowing respondents to choose more than one method; in 2015, they could select only one.

While it has largely been possible to directly compare the two surveys, some details of the data from 2015 are missing. As a result, responses for questions 4, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 10 in that survey consolidate the answers from the business safety professionals and the labor professionals, which has limited some comparisons between the two periods.

# Results

## 1. Which responsibility occupies the LARGEST part of your time and effort?<sup>1</sup>

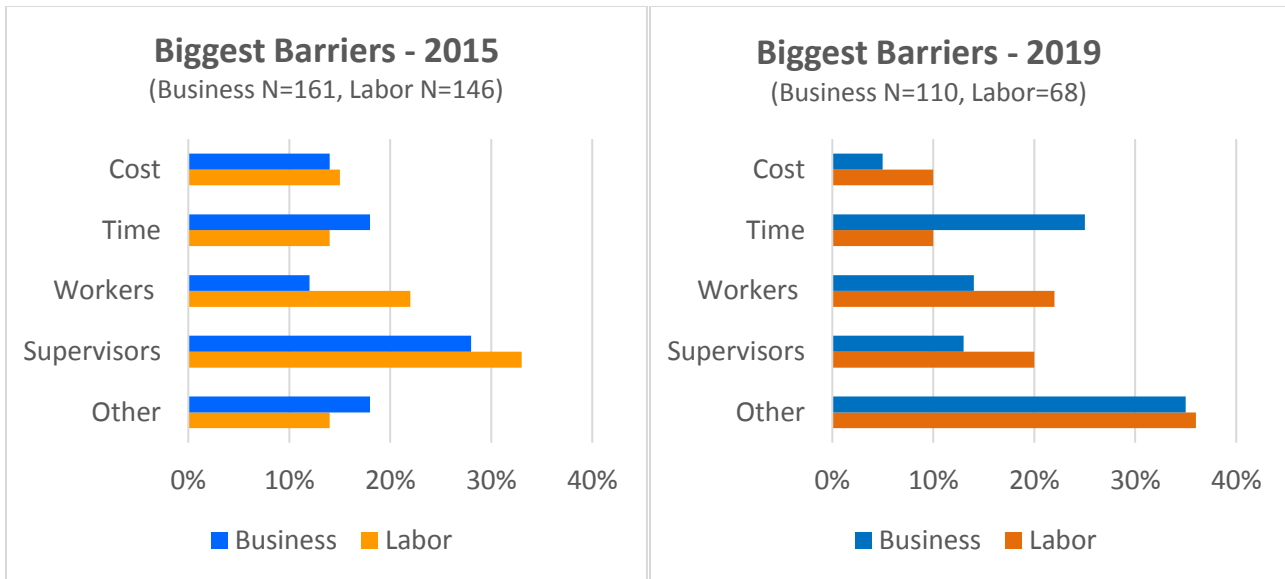
Responses from business safety and health professionals showed some change between 2015 and 2019, with the percentage reporting that they audit jobsites and correct hazards increasing from 27% in 2015 to 43% in 2019. There was an accompanying decline (from 45% to 21%) in respondents who say they focus on setting policy and supervising other safety personnel. The responsibilities of labor respondents have not shifted greatly since 2015, with more than three in four still saying they mainly train workers.



<sup>1</sup> Questions have been edited slightly in this part of the document to improve readability. See the original phrasing in the Appendix.

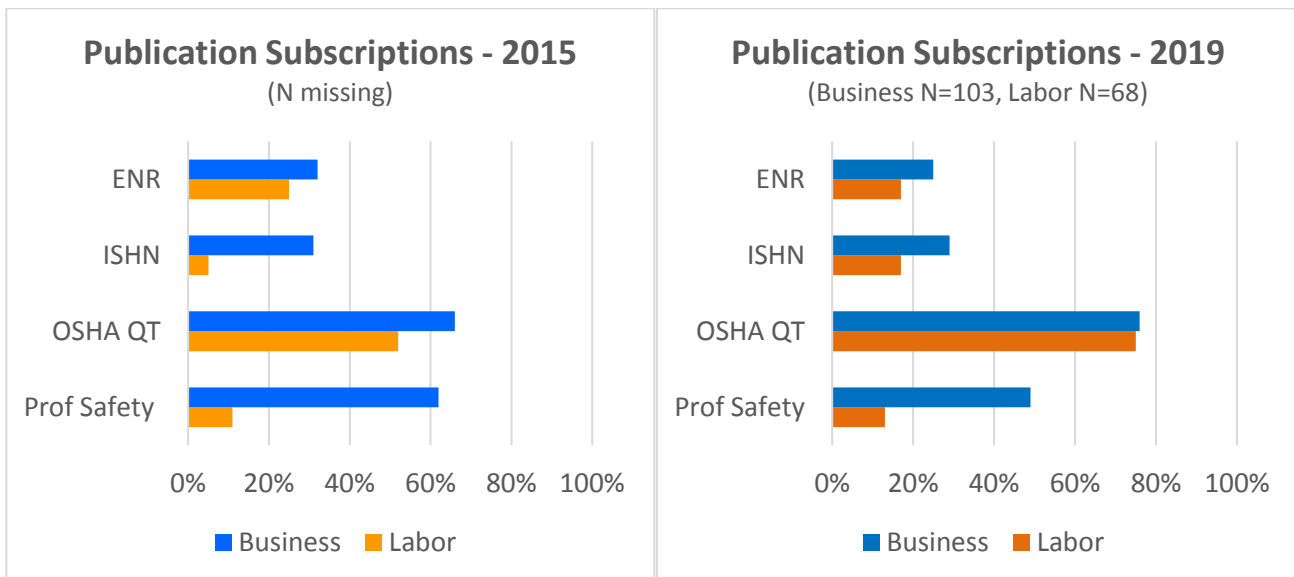
**2. What is the BIGGEST BARRIER to improving occupational safety and health in our industry?**

There were some notable differences in responses between the two surveys and between the two groups. In 2015, both groups cited “supervisors who resist change” as the biggest barrier; in 2019, “other” was the most common response. In the recent survey, multiple respondents in each group who chose “other” included the name of specific states, apparently a reference to state policies. Although “time” had been cited by a substantial number of respondents in both groups in the 2015 survey, responses diverged dramatically in 2019: business safety and health professionals chose it more than 25% percent of the time, labor trainers only 9%.



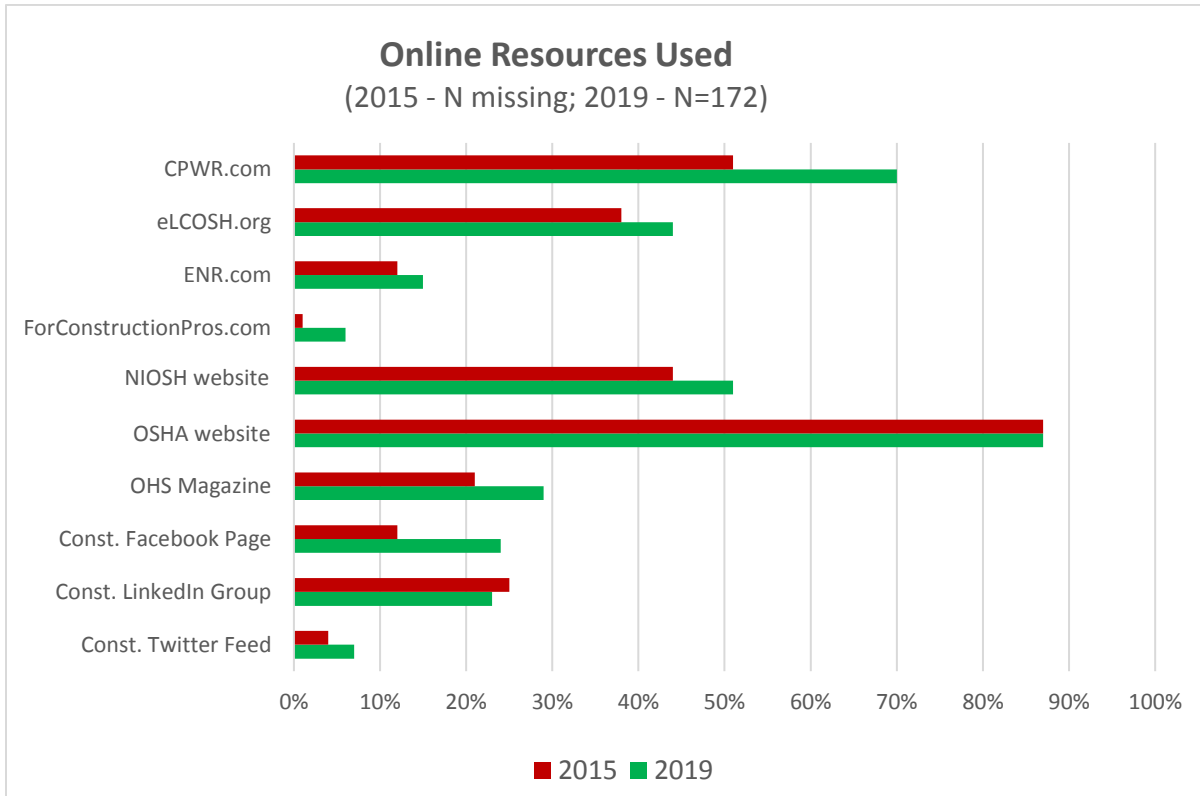
**3. Do you subscribe to any of the following print or electronic publications?**

In both surveys and groups, OSHA QuickTakes was the publication that respondents subscribed to most frequently, with the percentages rising substantially (to above 75%) for each group by 2019. The most noticeable variation between business and labor respondents came with Professional Safety, with the former group nearly four times more likely to subscribe than the latter. Respondents could select as many publications as they wished.



#### 4. Have you visited the following online resources in the past week?

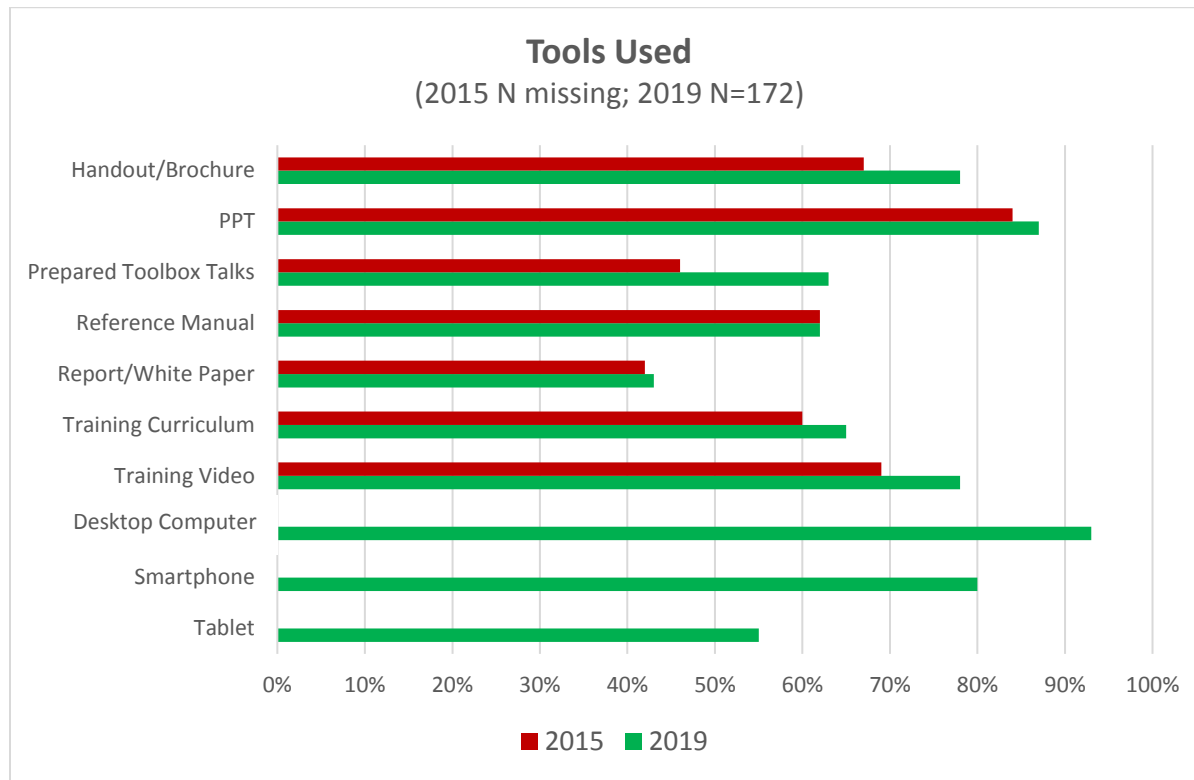
The 2019 survey showed an increased use of online resources, with all options being visited more often than in 2015. (Because only consolidated responses are available for 2015, the responses for 2019 are also combined. Although there was some variation between the business and labor groups in 2019, their responses were similar overall.) OSHA’s website remains the site respondents were most likely to visit within the previous week; the next most frequently visited sites are those managed by CPWR and NIOSH. Although construction-based social media pages are visited less, their use—particularly Facebook pages—has grown significantly. Respondents could select as many publications as they wished.





**5. Have you used the following tools for your work in the past month?**

Respondents are now more likely, compared to 2015, to use each of the tools listed in question 5. Desktop computer, tablet and smartphone were not included in the 2015 survey but were added to the 2019 survey to gain additional insight into how people access information. Respondents could select as many publications as they wished. (Because responses from people employed by businesses and those employed by labor unions were similar, data for each year was combined to simplify the charts.)



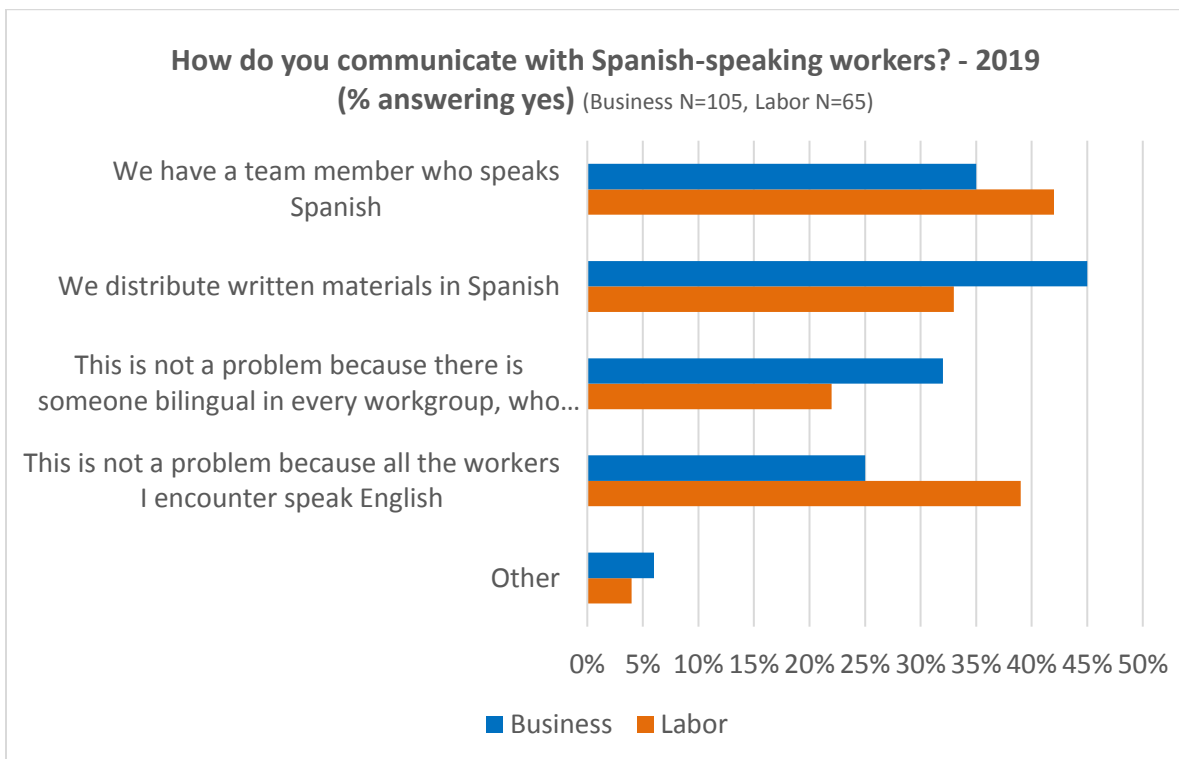
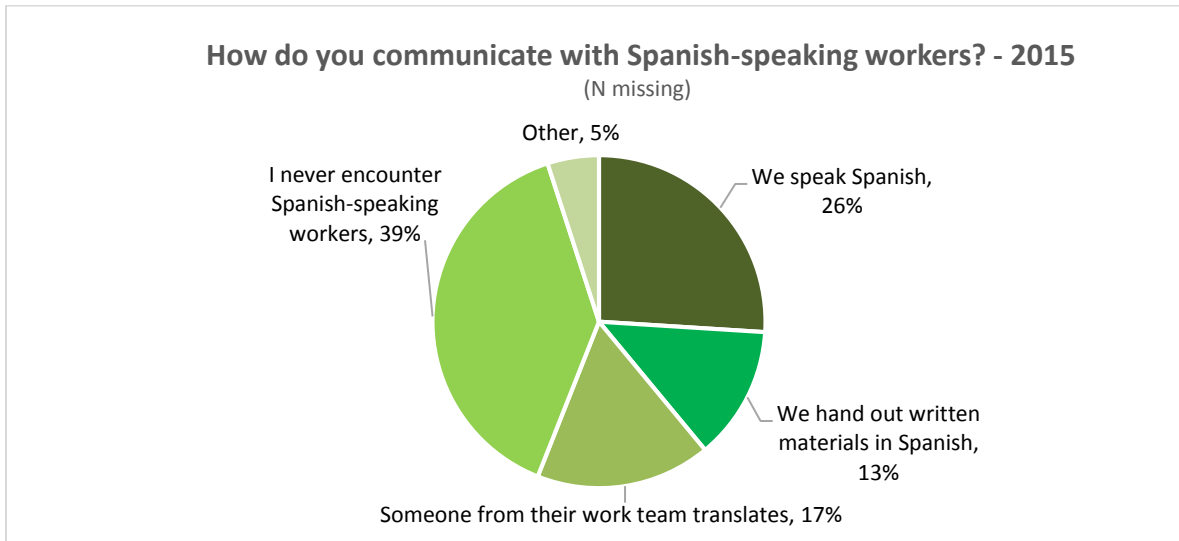
**6. What are your most important sources of information on new products and practices to improve safety and health on the jobsite?**

In both surveys and among both groups, the answers were similar: the most important sources of new information were OSHA, people already using the products and practices, and associations/unions.

	Business	Labor
<b>2015</b> (N missing)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contractors</li> <li>2. OSHA</li> <li>3. Trade Association</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. OSHA</li> <li>2. Unions</li> <li>3. Contractors</li> </ol>
<b>2019</b> (Business N=109) (Labor N=69)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. OSHA</li> <li>2. Contractors</li> <li>3. Trade Associations</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unions</li> <li>2. OSHA</li> <li>3. Contractors</li> </ol>

**7. Does your work require interacting with Spanish-speaking workers with limited English fluency? If so, how do you do this?**

Directly comparing the 2015 and 2019 surveys for this question is difficult because of loss of data from the earlier survey and because of a change in the 2019 survey, which allowed respondents to choose more than one method for how they communicate with Spanish-speaking workers. Based on the available data, in 2015 and 2019 approximately 25% of business professionals reported they did not encounter Spanish-speaking workers; for labor trainers, the figure in both periods was over 40%. (The figures for 2015 are based on the existing, partial data.) For the 2019 study, the most common method among those working at or for firms was distributing materials in Spanish; for labor trainers, using a team member who speaks Spanish. This survey also showed that some respondents use more than one method, which is why the figures for 2019 add up to more than 100%.



**8. In the past month I have looked for information about:**

The topics respondents most often mentioned searching for remained similar between the two surveys, with fall prevention at the top of both lists. The 2019 survey added opioids as a choice because it has become a priority topic for many in the field. Because of the partial data from 2015, the list from that year consolidates responses from both safety trainers and apprenticeship trainers, and the percentage of respondents selecting each choice was not retained. Respondents could select as many publications as they wished.

**I have looked for information about:**

<b>2015</b> (N missing)	<b>Business 2019</b> (N=105)	<b>Labor 2019</b> (N=68)
Fall Hazards/Preventions	1. Fall Hazards/Prevention – 86%	1. Fall Hazards/Prevention - 84%
Safety Culture	2. Safety Culture – 77%	2. Chemical Exposure – 80%
Chemical Exposure	3. Airborne Silica – 66%	3. Airborne Silica – 78%
Airborne Silica	4. Chemical Exposure – 52%	4. Safety Culture – 75%
Welding Fumes	5. Ergonomics and MSDs – 39%	5. Ergonomics and MSDs – 55%
Ergonomics and MSDs	6. Opioids – 38%	6. Opioids – 54%
Nanomaterials	6. Welding Fumes - 38%	7. Welding Fumes – 38%
	8. Nanomaterials – 10%	8. Nanomaterials – 20%

**9. I want to learn more about:**

Responses to this question largely parallel those from the previous question. Safety culture, airborne silica, chemical exposure, and fall prevention remain the top issues; while welding fumes and nanomaterials are the topics mentioned the least frequently, even they are cited by nearly half the business safety professionals and far more often by labor trainers. It is also worth noting that each topic was selected by more than half of labor respondents. As in Question 8, the list from 2015 consolidates responses from both safety trainers and apprenticeship trainers, and the percentage of respondents selecting each choice was not retained.

**I want to learn more about:**

<b>2015</b> (N missing)	<b>Business 2019</b> (N=101)	<b>Labor 2019</b> (N=69)
1. Safety Culture	1. Safety Culture – 77%	1. Safety Culture - 78%
2. Fall Hazards/Prevention	2. Fall Hazards/Prevention – 72%	2. Fall Hazards/Prevention – 75%
3. Chemical Exposures	3. Airborne Silica – 59%	3. Airborne Silica – 72%
4. Airborne Silica	4. Chemical Exposures – 52%	4. Opioids – 71%
5. Welding Fumes	5. Ergonomics and MSDs – 49%	4. Chemical Exposures – 71%
6. Ergonomics and MSDs	6. Opioids – 42%	6. Ergonomics and MSDs – 68%
7. Nanomaterials	7. Nanomaterials – 41%	7. Nanomaterials – 65%
	7. Welding Fumes – 41%	8. Welding Fumes – 58%

## **APPENDIX: 2019 Survey Questions**

Yes No

www.cpwr.com (CPWR)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
www.elcosh.org (electronic Library of Construction Occupational Safety and Health)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
www.enr.com (Engineering News-Record)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
www.forconstructionpros.com (ForConstructionPros)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
www.niosh.gov (NIOSH)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
www.osha.gov (OSHA)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
www.oshonline.com (OH&S Magazine)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A construction-oriented facebook page	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A construction-oriented LinkedIn group	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A construction-oriented Twitter feed	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

5. Have you used the following tools for your work **in the past month?**

	Yes	No
A prepared toolbox talk	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A powerpoint presentation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A training video	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A report or white paper	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A reference manual	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A prepared training curriculum	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A printed handout, flyer or brochure	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A desktop or laptop computer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A tablet	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
A smartphone	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

6. **New OSH Products and Practices.**

What are your most important sources of information on new products and practices to improve safety and health on the jobsite? Please rank the following sources on a scale of 1 to 5 (**1 = Not Important; 5 = Highly Important**). If you have other important sources you may add them in the comment field.

	1	2	3	4	5
Construction Contractors already using the product or practice	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Insurance Companies/Risk Consultants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
OSHA	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Occupational Safety and Health Consultants	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sales Representatives promoting Safety Products	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Scholarly Journals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trade Associations/ Professional Associations/ Labor Unions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trade Magazines	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trade Shows	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Comment:

500 characters left.



7. Does your work require interacting with Spanish-speaking workers with limited English fluency? If so, how do you do this? (You may select more than one response.)

- We have a safety team member who speaks Spanish
- We distribute written materials in Spanish
- This is not a problem because there is someone bilingual in every workgroup, who translates for the others
- This is not a problem because all the workers I encounter speak English
- Other



8. **In the past month** I have looked for **information** about:

	Yes	No
Ergonomics and musculoskeletal disorders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Controlling exposures to airborne silica	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Controlling exposures to welding fumes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Controlling exposures to hazardous chemicals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fall hazards or fall prevention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nanomaterials in construction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opioids	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety culture and safety climate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



9. **I want to learn more** about:

	Yes	No
Ergonomics and musculoskeletal disorders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Controlling exposures to airborne silica	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Controlling exposures to welding fumes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Controlling exposures to hazardous chemicals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fall hazards or fall prevention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nanomaterials in construction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opioids	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety culture and safety climate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

10. **I need materials to educate workers about:**

	Yes	No
Ergonomics and musculoskeletal disorders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Controlling exposures to airborne silica	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Controlling exposures to welding fumes	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Controlling exposures to hazardous chemicals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fall hazards or fall prevention	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Nanomaterials in construction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opioids	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Safety culture and safety climate	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

11. Are there other important construction occupational safety and health topics you want to know more about or need materials to educate workers about? You may suggest them here:

350 characters left.

12. Thank you for your help! If you would like to be informed of the results of this survey, please enter your contact information below:

First Name:

Last Name:

Email Address:

emailaddress@xyz.com

