

New Study Reveals Influence of Pandemic, New Tech and Company Size on Construction Safety Management

The fifth SmartMarket Report on construction reveals how safety management is evolving to respond to the current era while still demonstrating the business value of investing in safety.

HAMILTON, NJ – September 21, 2021 – COVID-19 and new technologies are creating significant changes in how contractors manage safety, according to a new study from Dodge Data & Analytics. There are stark variations in how companies of different sizes are responding, with small employers lagging behind their larger peers.

Safety Management in the Construction Industry 2021 SmartMarket Report, the fifth in this series, shows how contractors and workers are adapting well-established principles of safety management to respond to the pandemic and are beginning to take advantage of increased access to real-time data. The report was published with the support of the CPWR – The Center for Construction Research and Training (CPWR) and Newmetrix.

Safety Management in the Construction Industry 2021 documents how COVID-19 accelerated existing shifts in contractors' approaches. More than one in three contractors (35%) increased online training over the past 12 months, and nearly two-thirds (63%) of contractors now use it. More than 75% of the contractors who reported using more online training attributed that growth either partly or completely to COVID-19. However, while 96% of large employers with 100 or more workers have developed a written plan to protect jobsite workers from the spread of COVID-19, only 57% of employers with less than 20 employees had written plans.

An even bigger trend resulting from COVID-19 is the greater use of health and wellness measures. While these measures have long been a part of construction safety, the study found that many new measures have been adopted during the pandemic. Nearly two-thirds (61%) of contractors plan to keep some of these measures after the pandemic subsides, although respondents varied widely in their views of which practices will continue.

The study benchmarks current use of health and wellness programs for workers on the

job site and in company offices. Between 40% to 50% of contractors offer their workers mental health services, including alcohol and substance abuse programs, but only about 25% offer stress management or smoking cessation programs. Again, large contractors were significantly more likely to take this step than small contractors. These statistics suggest both wide recognition of the value of these programs and opportunities for much wider adoption.

"COVID-19 has emphasized that worker safety and health are crucial to successful construction," said Chris Trahan Cain, CPWR's executive director. "This report shows that contractors of all sizes must continue addressing persistent concerns like falls and ergonomics at the same time they respond to COVID-19 through planning, training, and advances in technology."

The report also shows that the construction industry continues to move towards a data-driven approach for managing safety.

- One in five contractors (19%) rank making better use of the safety data they currently collect as one of the top means of improving their safety program.
- A slightly higher share believes that the use of observational data from jobsite imagery (26%) and of predictive analytics (21%) is essential to a world-class safety program.

The study also points to the likelihood for wider adoption of a data-driven approach. Contractors identified several technologies as most likely to improve safety in the future, including wearable sensors, predictive analytics and visual monitoring with artificial intelligence (AI). Currently only about 10% of contractors are using wearable sensors or predictive analytics, and only 5% use visual monitoring with AI. Forty-one percent of small employers do not currently use data for their safety programs, but 96% larger companies do. Overall, the share who expect to implement these technologies in the next three years is more than double those who currently do.

The study emphasizes that contractors are continuing their existing safety practices. Both the practices and the benefits from their use — including the ability to negotiate better insurance terms, improved standing in the industry and improved ability to bring in new work — remain remarkably consistent with previous SmartMarket Reports.

"Despite the new requirements and challenges brought about by having to deal with COVID-19, the study findings demonstrate contractor commitments to their top safety practices," says Steve Jones, Senior Director of Industry Insights at Dodge Data & Analytics. "They still see that making these investments has positive implications not only for their workers, but for their projects and their businesses."

Along with the report, Dodge Data & Analytics and Newmetrix will be hosting a seminar on Wednesday, Sept. 22, 2021, at 1:15 p.m. ET at the Orlando World Center Marriott. The seminar, "Improving Safety Through Technology: A Tactical Guide to the Best Investments," will be led by Steve Jones of Dodge Data & Analytics and Timothy Gattie of Newmetrix. It

will cover the companies' perspectives on promising industry technologies and the latest processes best preparing teams to adopt improved safety measures.

The full report is available for free download at www.construction.com.

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About Dodge Data & Analytics: Dodge Data & Analytics is North America's leading provider of commercial construction project data, market forecasting, and analytics services and workflow integration solutions for the construction industry. Building product manufacturers, architects, engineers, contractors, and service providers leverage Dodge to identify and pursue unseen growth opportunities that help them grow their business. On a local, regional or national level, Dodge empowers its customers to better understand their markets, uncover key relationships, seize growth opportunities, and pursue specific sales opportunities with success. The company's construction project information is the most comprehensive and verified in the industry.

As of April 15th, Dodge Data & Analytics and The Blue Book -- the largest, most active network in the U.S. commercial construction industry -- combined their businesses in a merger. The Blue Book Network delivers three unparalleled databases of companies, projects, and people. Dodge and The Blue Book offer 10+ billion data elements and 14+ million project and document searches. Together, they provide a unified approach for new business generation, business planning, research, and marketing services users can leverage to find the best partners to complete projects and to engage with customers and prospects to promote projects, products, and services. To learn more, visit: construction.com and thebluebook.com.

About CPWR: CPWR - The Center for Construction Research and Training is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit created by North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU). Its mission is to improve safety and health conditions in the U.S. Construction Industry. CPWR is uniquely situated to serve U.S. construction workers, contractors and the scientific community, having partnered with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in NIOSH's construction safety and health research initiative for three decades.

About Newmetrix: Newmetrix reduces project risk in the areas of safety, productivity, and quality with its easy-to-use and industry-tuned artificial intelligence (AI) platform, Vinnie. With Newmetrix, construction customers have been able to cut their recordable incident rates in half and use the platform's data to demonstrate lower risk to secure lower insurance premiums. For more information on Newmetrix, please visit <http://newmetrix.com>.

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