

Safety Management in the Construction Industry 2026



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CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
Andrew Somosi

VICE PRESIDENT, RESEARCH
Andrew Rottas

DIRECTOR, INDUSTRY INSIGHTS RESEARCH
Donna Laquidara-Carr, PhD, LEED AP

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Dodge Construction Network is a solutions technology company providing an unmatched offering of data, analytics and industry-spanning relationships to generate the most powerful source of information, knowledge, insights and connections in the commercial construction industry. The company powers long-standing and trusted industry solutions to timely connect and enable decision-makers across the entire commercial construction ecosystem. For more than a century, Dodge Construction Network has empowered construction professionals with the information they need to build successful, growing businesses.

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Safety Management in the Construction Industry 2026 SmartMarket Report

EXECUTIVE EDITOR
Stephen A. Jones

MANAGING EDITOR
Donna Laquidara-Carr, PhD, LEED AP

RESEARCH PROJECT MANAGER
Dana Gilmore, MRA, PRC

ART DIRECTOR
Bella Lo

DESIGN AND PRODUCTION
Erbach Communications Group

CONTRIBUTORS
Greg Aragon
Katharine Logan

MEDIA CONTACT
Amy Roepke
amy.roepke@construction.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON THIS SMARTMARKET REPORT OR FOR ANY IN THE SERIES, PLEASE CONTACT:

Dodge Construction Network
56 Broad Street, Suite 14070
Boston, MA 02109
877-784-9556
Dodge.Analytics@construction.com

Introduction

This report is the seventh Safety Management study that Dodge Construction Network and CPWR-The Center for Construction Research and Training have collaborated on since 2012. Several of the topics included in the current research—planning for safety, heat exposure, and mental health and well-being—were first introduced in 2023, but others—such as safety training and communication, and the use of technology—have been studied for over a decade. A few findings stand out:

- **Small companies are more deeply engaging in safety.** More small companies (less than 20 employees) use online safety training, offer their staff an employee assistance program (EAP) and employ more measures to assess heat risk for their employees than in 2023. Growth in these areas for small companies significantly exceeds that of larger organizations. While they continue to lag their larger peers in the use of safety management practices, they are clearly increasing their commitments to improving safety, and the health and well-being of their employees.
- **Some practices are now widely used by most contractors,** including creating a health and safety plan before construction begins, utilizing online safety training, using several strategies to mitigate the risk of heat exposure and offering anti-harassment training (especially among midsize and large companies).
- **However, many opportunities still exist for safety in construction to be improved.**
 - > Only 43% of contractors involve health and safety directors in preconstruction planning.
 - > Many technologies that are used by contractors to improve safety, like predictive analytics and wearables, are frequently deployed by less than 10% of contractors.
 - > Over 50% of contractors report their workers have regular daily commutes of over 100 miles or extended overnight stays, and more consideration is needed about the toll this takes on their mental health and well-being.
 - > Less than half (41%) of contractors report that they do business in a state with a heat illness prevention standard, but the majority who do so experience enhanced heat illness protection on their jobsites, both within that state and beyond.

Dodge would like to thank CPWR for their ongoing partnership and NIOSH for their support for this critical research to help contractors assess and improve their safety management practices.



DONNA LAQUIDARA-CARR **PHD, LEED AP**

*Industry Insights Research Director,
Dodge Construction Network*

Donna Laquidara-Carr currently provides editorial direction, analysis and content to Dodge Construction Network's SmartMarket Reports. Prior to this position, she worked for nearly 20 years with their newsgathering and analytics divisions where she gained detailed insight into the construction industry.



STEVE JONES

Executive Editor

Steve Jones is an executive editor and advisor for the SmartMarket Report series. He is active in numerous industry organizations and frequently speaks at industry events around the world. Before Dodge, Jones was vice president with Primavera Systems (now part of Oracle), a global leader in project management software. Prior to that, he was principal and a Board of Directors member with Burt Hill, a major A/E firm (now merged with Stantec).

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Executive Summary

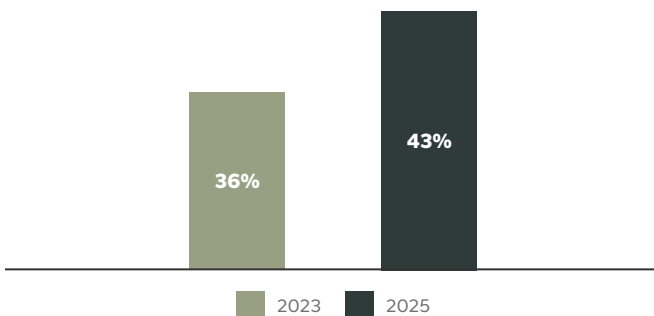
The findings in this report demonstrate that safety management continues to be a priority in the construction industry, with several areas for potential improvement.

Planning for Safety

The study examined the roles included in contractors' planning processes before construction and the benefits of creating a written health and safety plan in the preconstruction phase.

- Roles Engaged During Preconstruction Planning:** Over half of contractors involve project managers, estimators, owners, foremen and designers in planning before construction begins. Only 43% include a health and safety director, but that is an increase from 2023 (see chart below).
- Benefits of Creating a Health and Safety Plan in Preconstruction:** Nearly all (95%) contractors create these plans, and 97% receive at least one of the benefits shown in the table at lower right. The top benefits are reduced recordable injury rates and increased worker engagement in safety.
- Benefits of Including of a Health and Safety Director:** As the chart at right reveals, contractors who include a health and safety director during preconstruction planning see significantly more benefits from developing a health and safety plan in preconstruction.

Include a Health and Safety Director in Preconstruction Planning



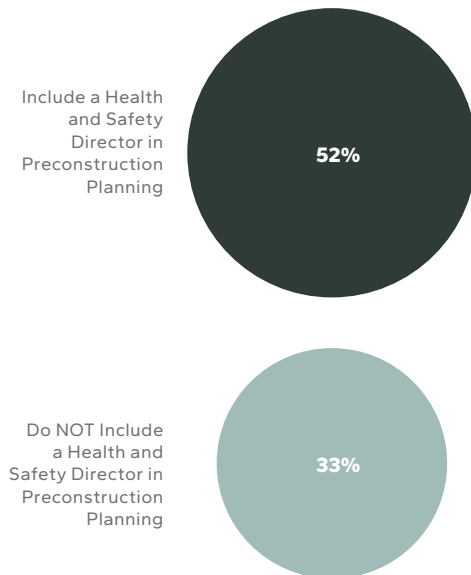
Managing Heat Exposure

The study examined the prevalence of heat-related illnesses and injuries, how contractors manage those risks and the impact of the heat illness prevention standards that some states have instituted.

- Incidence of Heat-Related Illnesses or Injuries:** The share of small companies (less than 20 employees) reporting that they experienced a heat-related illness or injury onsite in the last three years declined by six points, while the share of midsize companies (20 to less than 100 employees) remained steady and large companies (more than 100 employees) increased by two points.

Impact of Including a Health and Safety Director

Average Share Who Experience 9 Benefits Listed Below From Creating a Health and Safety Plan Before Construction Begins



Benefits of Creating a Health and Safety Plan
✓ Reduced Recordable Injury Rates
✓ Increased Worker Engagement in Safety
✓ Improved Training
✓ Better Able to Identify and Follow Requirements
✓ Improved Productivity
✓ More Predictable Costs
✓ More New/Repeat Business
✓ Less Rework
✓ Better Schedule Adherence

Executive Summary

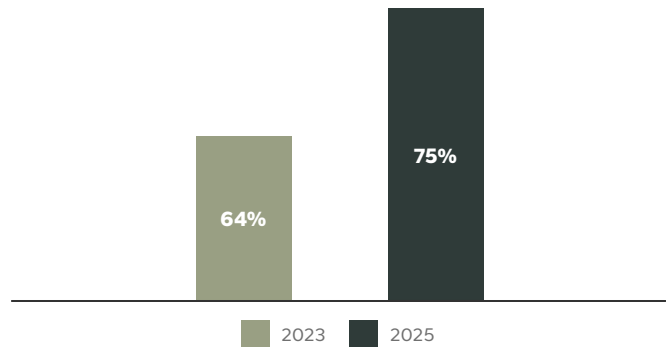
- Use of Means to Assess Heat:** More small companies report using weather forecasts, mobile heat safety apps and types of clothing/PPE to assess heat risks than did in 2023.
- Mitigating Heat Risks:** Use of water, rest and shade, training, emergency response plans, administrative controls and environmental monitoring to manage heat exposure is quite common (reported by 80% or more). Notably, increases in the use of heat risk mitigation practices in the last two years by midsize companies were concentrated on these practices. In contrast, fewer than half of the contractors in the study use acclimatization, PPE or physiological monitoring, but these also have experienced the highest growth in recent use among large contractors.
- Using a Written Plan to Manage Heat Exposure:** Using a written plan correlates with the use of more approaches to mitigate heat risks. While having a written plan is common among large and midsize companies, less than two-thirds of small companies have one.
- Heat Illness Prevention Standards:** Most contractors doing business in a state with a heat illness prevention standard experience enhanced heat illness protection on all their jobsites, including those in other states. Most report fewer heat-related illnesses, and over one-third report other benefits like fewer injuries in general and increased productivity.

Safety Training and Communication

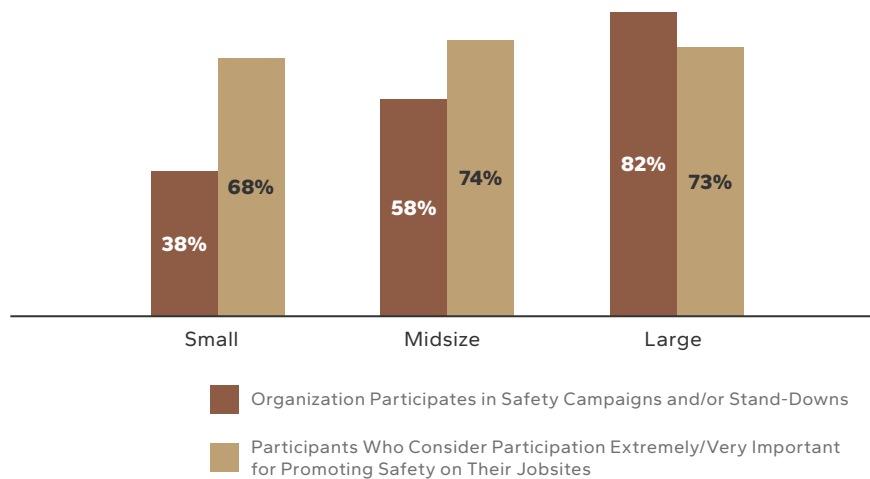
The study reveals the prevalence of using online training, participation in safety campaigns and the use of Foundations for Safety Leadership (FSL) training for site personnel.

- Online Training:** The chart below at upper right shows the increase in use of online safety training since 2023. The largest growth in its use was among small contractors.
- Safety Campaigns/Stand-Downs:** As the chart at bottom shows, nearly all who participate in safety campaigns and stand-downs think they are important to improve safety, but small companies still lag in participation.

Share of Contractors Using Online Safety Training Courses



Participation in and Importance of Safety Campaigns/Stand-Downs



Executive Summary

- **FSL:** The share of contractors utilizing FSL training for their staff onsite dropped for the first time since 2017, especially at small and large companies.

Mental Health

Contractors were asked about the extent of worker travel and their use of programs and training that support improved worker health and well-being.

- **Worker Travel:** Extended worker travel is common, with over 50% reporting workers have regular lengthy daily commutes of over 100 miles and extended overnight stays for at least three nights per week.
- **Programs That Support Worker Mental Health and Well-Being:** More small companies say that they have an employee assistance plan (EAP) now than did in 2023, but three-quarters still do not offer this benefit.

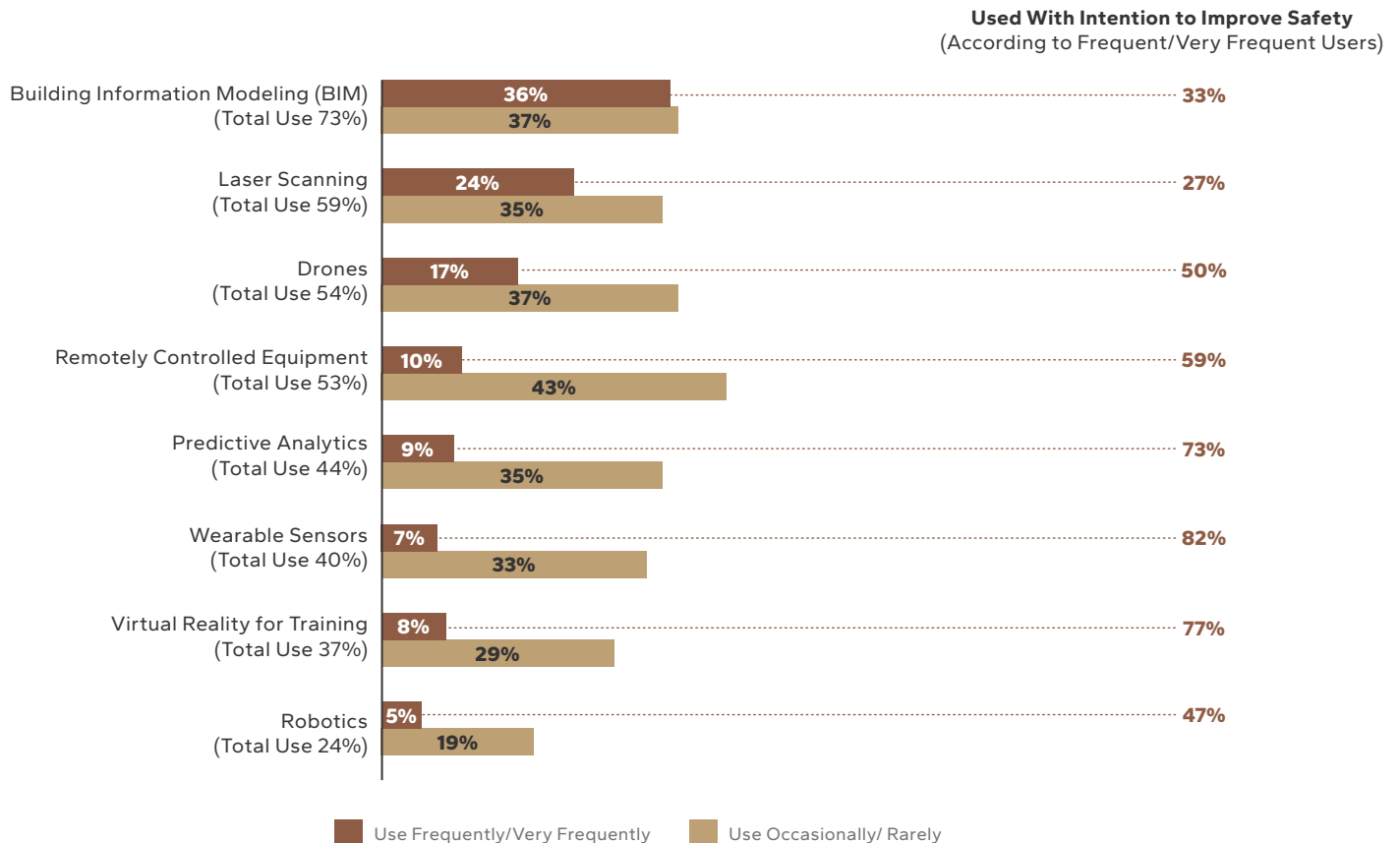
- **Training That Supports Worker Mental Health and Well-Being:** Onsite mental health or substance use training is not offered by most small companies, and just by half of midsize companies and three-quarters of large ones, but the majority of respondents from these organizations think their company would benefit from their introduction. In addition, only 35% of small companies offer anti-harassment training.

Technology and Safety

Contractors were asked about the technologies they use overall, and those frequently using the technologies were asked why they do so. The chart below shows the findings.

- **Use:** Although many of these technologies are used by a high percentage of contractors, only BIM is frequently used by more than one-third.
- **Used to Improve Safety:** The top technologies used explicitly to improve safety are wearable sensors, virtual reality and predictive analytics, but they only see moderate levels of use.

Technology Use (Overall and With the Intention to Improve Safety)



Data Introduction

This study features the responses by general and specialty trade contractors about their approach to safety management in construction in five major areas.

PLANNING FOR SAFETY

This section examines which roles contractors engage in planning before construction begins and the benefits of creating a health and safety plan. It also reveals the increased share of benefits from having a plan associated with engaging a health and safety professional during preconstruction, as well as how the engagement of these professionals has changed since 2023.

HEAT ILLNESS PREVENTION AND PPE

Findings featured in this section include how the prevalence of onsite heat-related illnesses and injuries and the use of written heat illness prevention plans have changed since 2023. The procedures contractors use to measure and manage heat exposure risk are also explored, and comparisons made to 2023 where possible. Newly added this year is data on the impact of state standards for heat illness protection on contractors' safety and other project outcomes.

A separate section on PPE compares the prevalence of finding right-sized PPE for workers currently with the findings in 2023.

SAFETY TRAINING AND COMMUNICATION

A few sections in this study look at how companies communicate with and train their staff about safety. This includes participation in safety campaigns, use of online safety training, participation in OSHA's Foundations for Safety Leadership training, other jobsite training programs, the top sources for current educational resources and the topics for which they need additional resources.

MENTAL HEALTH

The findings examine the use of programs and training designed to improve mental health, and they feature new data on the extent to which construction workers travel long distances to work onsite.

TECHNOLOGY AND SAFETY

This section looks at the overall use of technologies with the potential to impact safety and the degree to which safety is a driver in their use.

Note About the Data

The findings in this report are based on an online survey conducted by Dodge Construction Network from October to December 2025, using the Dodge Contractor Panel and in partnership with several contractor associations. Responses were received from 323 general and specialty trade contractors.

Analysis throughout this report examines the differences in responses by the size of company. Small companies are defined as those with less than 20 employees, midsize with 20 to 99 employees and large with more than 100 employees.

Other differences are called out where they are meaningful, including differences by type of company (GC versus specialty trade contractor) and, on occasion, by whether a company solely employs union or non-union craft workers. A third category was included in the survey for those who employ both, but their responses are not included in this comparison.

Further information on the respondents to the survey can be found in the Methodology section on page 40.

Planning for Safety

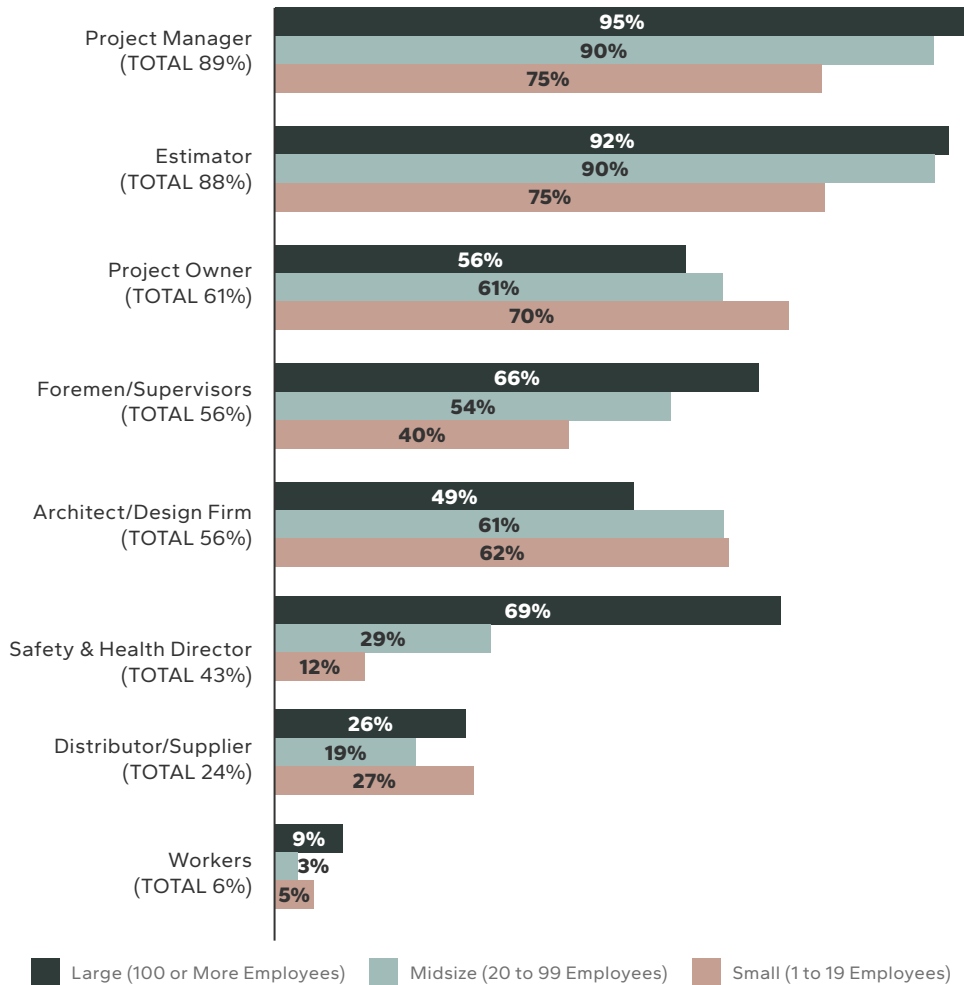
Roles Involved in Planning Before Construction

Insights from all stakeholders engaged in the design and construction of a project can help improve safety before construction begins.

- Fortunately, over half of contractors involve project managers, estimators, owners, foremen and designers in planning before construction begins. However, only project managers and estimators are included by most respondents.
- Less than half (43%) engage a safety and health director during preconstruction, and the vast majority who do so work for large companies. This offers a major opportunity, especially for midsize companies, to improve safety. (See page 10.)

- Promisingly, the share of contractors who engage a safety and health director during preconstruction has increased from 36% in 2023. Given their impact, it will be interesting to see if their engagement in this phase of the project continues to grow over time.
- Large and midsize companies tend to engage most roles more frequently than do small ones.
 - > This includes foremen and supervisors. Small companies may have a significant opportunity to improve safety by more frequently tapping their insights before construction begins.
 - > Surprisingly, small companies are more likely than large companies to engage the project owner in planning before construction.

Roles/Companies Normally Involved in Planning Process Before Construction



Planning for Safety

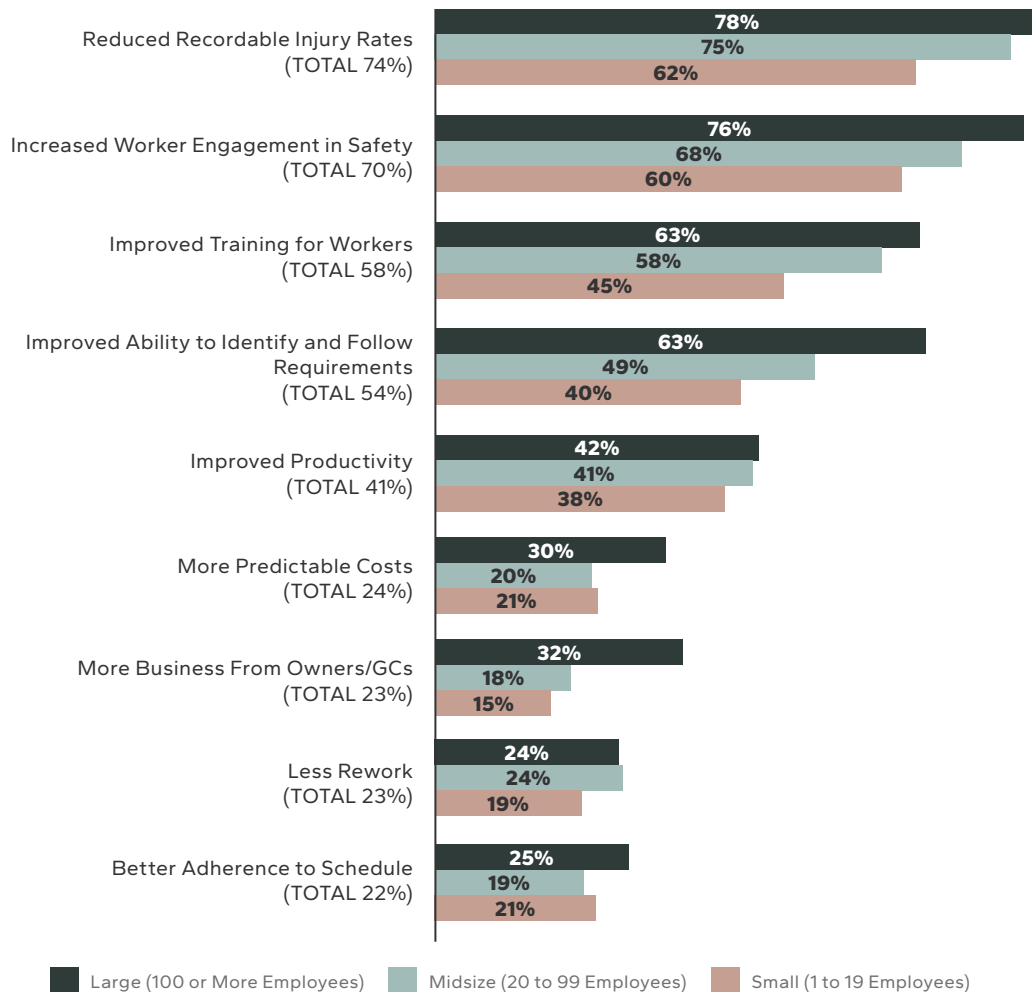
Benefits of Creating a Health and Safety Plan Before Construction Begins

Nearly all (95%) contractors create health and safety plans before construction begins. Contractors who do so were asked about the benefits of creating these plans. Their responses are shown in the chart below.

- **Overall:** 97% experience at least one project benefit.
- **Top Benefits:** Companies of all sizes widely experience reduced recordable injury rates and increased worker engagement in safety, although large ones see these most frequently.
 - > More trade contractors (74%) report increased worker engagement than do GCs (66%).
- **Common Benefits:** Around half see additional worker-related improvements, including better training, greater worker awareness of and compliance with safety requirements, and productivity gains. Improved productivity is experienced by a similar share of contractors regardless of size.
- **Occasional Benefits:** Some contractors also see project benefits like more predictable costs, less rework and better schedule adherence, just from implementing a health and safety plan before construction begins.

Benefits Experienced Due to Creating a Health and Safety Plan Before Construction Begins

ACCORDING TO CONTRACTORS WHO CREATE ONE



Planning for Safety

Benefits of Including a Health and Safety Director in Planning Before Construction

As the findings on the previous page reveal, most contractors create a health and safety plan before construction begins, and they typically experience several benefits from doing so.

The table below looks at those findings from a different angle: It compares the benefits reported by contractors who include a health and safety director in the planning process during preconstruction to those reported by contractors who do not do so. It clearly reveals that those who include their health and safety directors experience more benefits.

The biggest gains involve increasing worker engagement in safety—improving their ability to identify and follow requirements, improving their training and increasing their overall engagement.

Worker engagement drives improved safety, and health and safety directors bring their expertise about how to get workers more engaged. It is likely that many of the other benefits associated with having a health and safety director as part of the planning process are due to getting workers more involved with safety.

These findings are particularly important because, as was shown on page 8, only 43% of contractors include a safety and health director in planning during preconstruction. Clearly, this reveals an opportunity for many companies to potentially improve their safety outcomes onsite.

The findings on the previous page show that large companies experience more benefits from having a health and safety plan. These results strongly suggest that it is their increased tendency to engage a health and safety director in preconstruction planning that contributes to this:

- On average, 19% more construction companies that include a safety and health director experience these benefits than those who do not.
- In contrast, large companies only report achieving these benefits, on average, about 2% more than midsize ones and 8% more than small ones.

Benefits Experienced From Creating Health and Safety Plans Before Construction Begins

THOSE WHO INCLUDE A HEALTH AND SAFETY DIRECTOR IN THE PLANNING PROCESS VS THOSE WHO DO NOT

	Includes a Health and Safety Director	Does Not Include a Health and Safety Director
Reduced Recordable Injury Rates	80%	63%
Increased Worker Engagement in Safety	80%	57%
Improved Training for Workers	70%	43%
Improved Ability to Identify and Follow Requirements	67%	39%
Improved Productivity	50%	30%
More Predictable Costs	34%	15%
More Business From Owners/GCs	32%	15%
Less Rework	27%	18%
Better Adherence to Schedule	28%	16%

60% or More
 50% to 59%
 40% to 49%
 30% to 39%
 20% to 29%
 Fewer Than 20%

Building Safety Before the Build Begins

For most of construction's history, safety has been treated as a field issue—supervision, PPE and hazard controls once crews are onsite. But by then, significant risks may already be baked in—through design, schedule or contract. Leading construction companies are pushing safety planning upstream, embedding it in pursuit, design, trade partner selection and work planning months before sitework starts. "The earlier we engage in the process, the better the outcome," says Paul Haining, senior vice president responsible for environmental health and safety at Skanska USA. "Influencing decisions higher up in the hierarchy of controls opens bigger opportunities to eliminate risk."

IN PURSUIT OF SAFETY

At Mortenson, especially on large, complex projects, safety leaders engage during pursuit—sometimes six to 12 months before the project begins. Early discussions address major scopes, proposed trade partners and high-risk activities. On projects that can involve thousands of workers, considerations also include logistics, emergency management and staffing. "Doing this early on, before we get selected, we can really think through some of the high-level risks that the project may entail," says Cody Davidowski, senior safety director for Mortenson's power delivery, solar and energy storage groups.

Once a project is awarded, those discussions translate into structured planning. Teams develop integrated site safety and emergency response plans, then move through "pre-prep" and "prep" meetings for each major scope of work. Forepersons, trade partners and client representatives participate in reviewing work instructions, identifying hazards and confirming direct controls are in place for each one: "So it's not my plan. It's not their plan," Davidowski says. "It's collaborative; we're planning together." To ensure the plan is fresh in everyone's mind, final review typically happens just days before work begins. And once the job starts, emerging risks—such as weather or altered conditions—become a focus for daily pre-task planning.

SYSTEMATIZING RISK: DATA AND DIGITAL CONTROLS

To systematize its upstream approach, Skanska has developed a digital planning framework that produces activity-specific risk manuals and construction work plans, broken down by trade and task. Over a six-year period, internal analytics revealed that five categories—

human-machine interface, line of fire, energized systems, lifting operations and falls from height—account for 93% of serious or potentially serious incident causes, allowing teams to focus their planning for highest impact.

A proprietary cloud-based platform (PlanIt), developed in-house after no commercial tool met Skanska's needs, connects data from across the company's business units. It integrates AI features such as large language modeling and machine learning to identify risks, predict safer work strategies, deliver control measures to crews and gather frontline feedback. "We've got a digital means to get some very, very useful information to the frontline worker," Haining says, "and also to extract ideas and push continuous improvements right through the organization."

COLLABORATION, QUALITY AND CULTURE

Both firms stress that collaboration is central to risk reduction. Mortenson brings specialty partners into planning early—sometimes visiting active jobsites to observe high-risk work, such as helicopter-assisted transmission line construction, before selecting a partner. Pull planning sessions align sequencing and deliveries across multiple trades and make sure everyone is connected before work starts. "We look at communication as really important," Davidowski says. "When you peel back the onion of a safety issue, it probably had something to do with a misstep in communication along the way."

Mortenson's preconstruction planning also addresses a less obvious risk: rework. Correcting defective equipment once it reaches site can introduce new hazards, particularly in energized environments. To reduce that possibility, the firm sends team members to factories to audit quality processes before equipment ships. "Quality and safety go hand in hand," Davidowski says.

For Skanska, culture reinforces process. Alongside digital systems, its safety program emphasizes human factors—so that the systems "have more relevance, more meaning and people tend to use them with intent," Haining says. Particularly hard to plan for are the risks of complacency, where routine dulls attention. Daily hazard analyses and "Take Five" pauses empower workers to reassess plans in light of changing conditions.

While emphasis and strategy vary by project, a common thread is clear: Safety performance is increasingly determined long before work starts onsite.

Heat Illness Prevention

Prevalence of Heat-Related Illness/Injury and Means to Assess Heat Risks

Reducing the risk of exposure to heat continues to be a significant safety and health issue for contractors as temperatures rise in many regions of the country. This section explores how contractors are managing these risks.

HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS OR INJURY ON JOBSITES

Nearly 1 in 5 contractors (18%) have experienced a heat-related illness or injury on a jobsite in the last three years, about the same percentage that reported this in 2023 (19%).

As the chart at bottom left shows, large contractors are more likely to have these heat-related issues on their jobsites than are midsize and small ones. Large firms, by definition in this study, have more employees, so the likelihood of experiencing a heat-related illness is higher.

MEANS USED TO ASSESS HEAT RISKS

The table at right lists nine ways that contractors assess heat risks. These tools and strategies are essential to help contractors know when they need to use their heat mitigation approaches. A similar question with only five options was also asked in 2023.

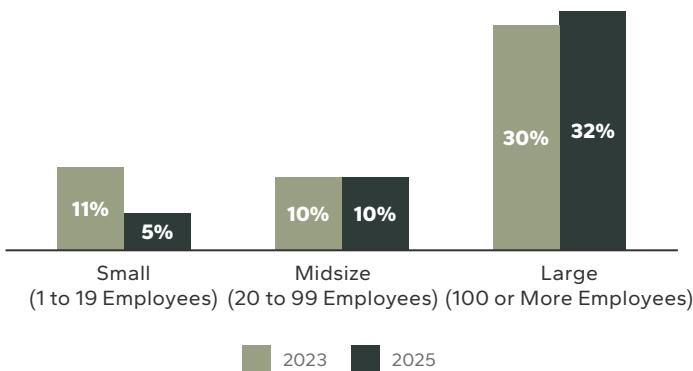
Notably, 4 out of 5 options examined in 2023 declined a little in overall use in 2025: weather forecasts (95% to 87%); physical demands of the work (86% to 79%), type of clothing and PPE (69% to 62%) and mobile heat safety apps (35% to 22%, despite the fact that in 2023, the response included only the OSHA-NIOSH app and not any mobile heat safety apps). Only wet bulb globe temperature use remained the same at 13%. These lower percentages, however, may be influenced by the addition of more options to the question in 2025, rather than a drop in use, but it will be interesting to examine this again in two years to see if the percentages continue to decline.

VARIATION BY SIZE OF COMPANY

Interestingly, small companies buck that overall trend. Their use of weather forecasts, mobile heat safety apps and types of clothing/PPE increased in 2025, ranging from a small two-point jump for mobile heat apps to a substantial 13-point leap for types of clothing/PPE.

It is possible that fewer small companies report experiencing heat-related illnesses/injuries in 2025 compared with 2023 in part because of their increased use of tools to assess heat risk.

Experienced Heat-Related Illness or Injury on Their Jobsites in the Last Three Years



Means Used to Assess Heat Risk

Commonly Used	
Weather Forecasts	87%
Heat Index (Temperature and Humidity)	84%
Physical Demands of the Work	79%
Moderately Used	
Types of Clothing and PPE	62%
Direct Jobsite Measurement	42%
Infrequently Used	
Temperature Only	27%
Mobile Heat Safety Apps (e.g., from OSHA-NIOSH, AIHA)	22%
Wet Bulb Globe Temperature	13%
Wearable Sensors	3%

Heat Illness Prevention

Procedures to Manage Heat Exposure

Contractors were asked whether they use nine approaches to manage heat exposure. The question also flagged those who have used them for less than two years, and overall, only about 9% on average per procedure are recent adopters. Notably, recent use occurs at similar rates for common strategies—water, rest, shade, training, having an emergency response plan, and using administrative controls and environmental monitoring—and for many less common ones—such as acclimatization or using PPE. These findings demonstrate that:

- Most contractors are trying to manage the risks of heat exposure to some degree and have been for many years.
- Contractors are also slowly adopting new strategies, but no single strategy is being rapidly adopted across the industry.

Interestingly, 28% use physiological monitoring, but only 3% on page 12 report using wearable sensors.

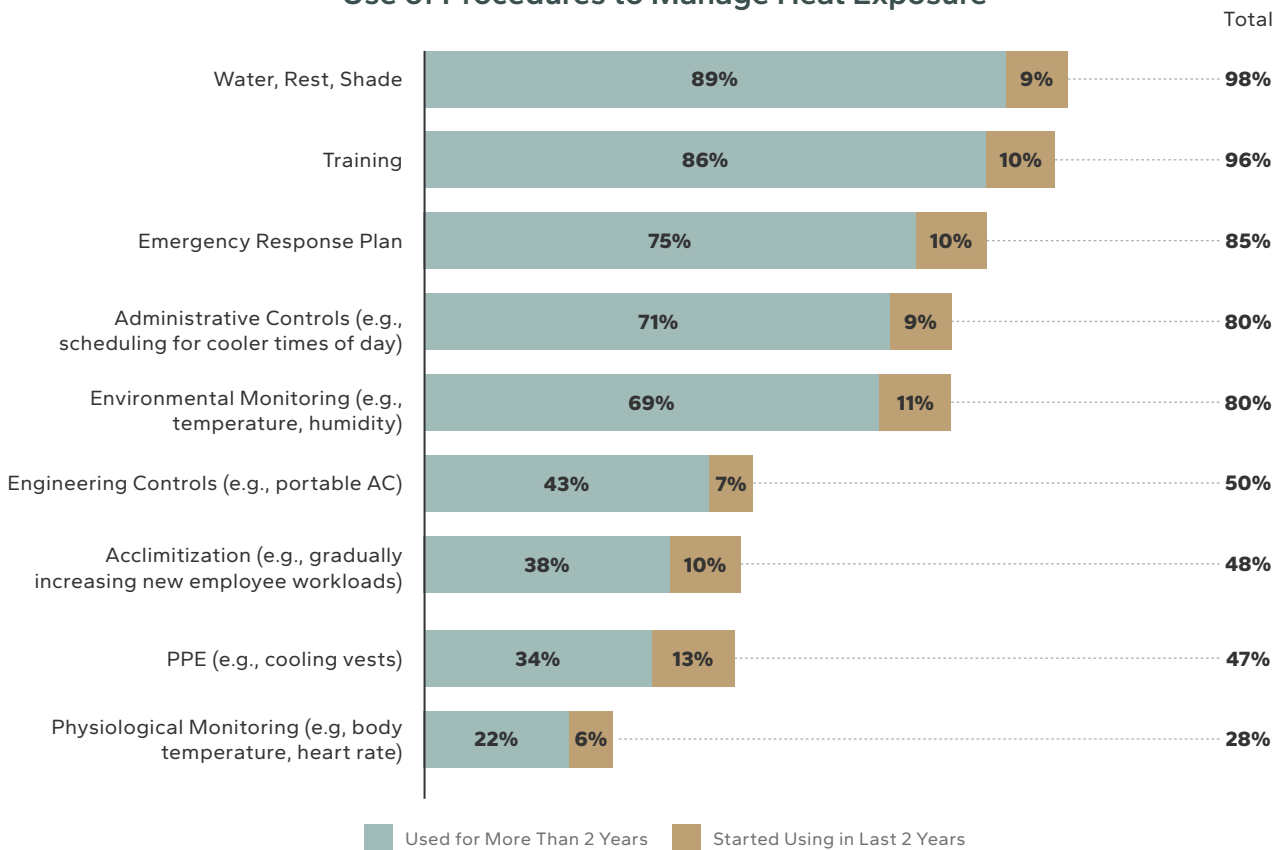
Although some may be using other types of devices, such as forehead thermometers, this discrepancy may suggest that the use of wearables is under-reported, perhaps because of the use of that terminology.

VARIATION BY COMPANY SIZE AND TYPE

More large companies (12%) report that they have started using these methods in the last two years than midsize (8%) or small (6%) companies. The strategies recently adopted also vary by size between large and midsize companies:

- **Large Companies:** Less widely used approaches such as PPE (19%), environmental monitoring (15%) and acclimatization (13%), top the list of new approaches for large companies.
- **Midsize Companies:** In contrast, the largest share of midsize companies (10%) have recently adopted some of the most common approaches, such as environmental monitoring, water, rest and shade, and emergency response planning.

Use of Procedures to Manage Heat Exposure



Heat Illness Prevention

Use of a Written Heat Illness Prevention Plan

Contractors were asked about whether their company has a written heat illness prevention plan, and the findings are shown by size of company in the chart at upper right. Among midsize and large companies, these plans are now standard practice, and even small companies more frequently have one than not.

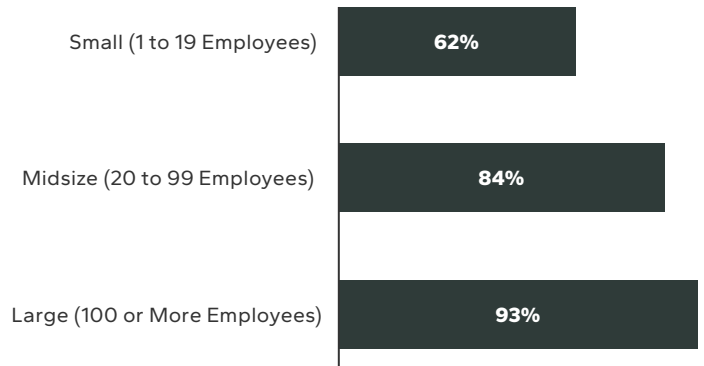
A much higher share (21%) of those whose companies have had a heat-related illness on a jobsite have a written prevention plan than those who have not yet experienced one (8%). As heat waves become more common and prolonged in the US, those who have not experienced this challenge may want to proactively consider this best practice.

IMPACT OF USE OF A WRITTEN HEAT ILLNESS PREVENTION PLAN ON THE USE OF SPECIFIC PROCEDURES TO MANAGE HEAT EXPOSURE

The table below compares how many contractors with and without a written heat illness prevention plan use each of the nine procedures to manage heat exposure discussed on the previous page.

Contractors with a heat illness prevention plan clearly do more to protect their workers from the risks of heat exposure. The biggest differences are in the use of emergency response plans, physiological monitoring and engineering controls.

Company Has a Written Heat Illness Prevention Plan



Use of Procedures to Manage Heat Exposure

	Has a Written Plan (Use 6.4 Procedures on Average)	No Written Plan (Use 4.6 Procedures on Average)
Water, Rest, Shade	99%	92%
Training	98%	81%
Emergency Response Plan	91%	51%
Environmental Monitoring (e.g., temperature, humidity)	84%	62%
Administrative Controls (e.g., scheduling for cooler times of day)	82%	68%
Engineering Controls (e.g., portable AC)	53%	30%
Acclimatization (e.g., gradually increasing new employee workloads)	51%	32%
PPE (e.g., cooling vests)	50%	30%
Physiological Monitoring (e.g., body temperature, heart rate)	31%	5%



Heat Illness Prevention

Impact of State Standards for Heat Illness Prevention

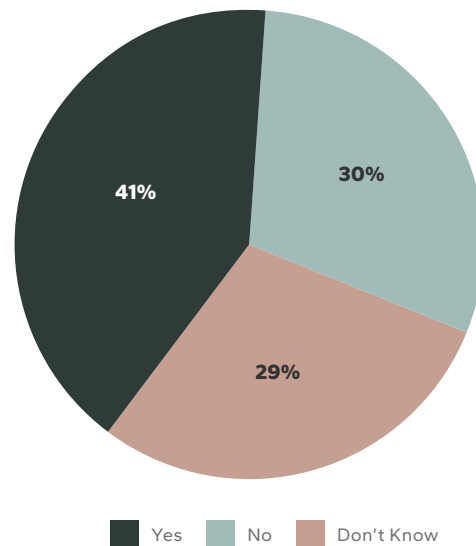
Nearly three-quarters (72%) of contractors who do business in a state with a heat illness prevention standard find that the standards in those states help enhance heat illness protection on their jobsites. Even more strikingly, the vast majority of those who report this find that it occurs, not just on the jobs conducted in the states with those standards, but on all their projects.

Those who reported that compliance enhanced heat illness protection were asked about the specific impacts they experienced. Over three-quarters (78%) have fewer heat-related illnesses. Strikingly, 1 in 3 also report that they experience fewer injuries from any cause and increased productivity as well.

Unfortunately, heat illness prevention standards are not yet common in the US. Only seven states¹ have implemented them, and fewer than half of the contractors surveyed (41%) report doing business in one of them. These findings suggest that more widespread use of standards would help contractors better protect their workers and may offer significant ancillary benefits as well.

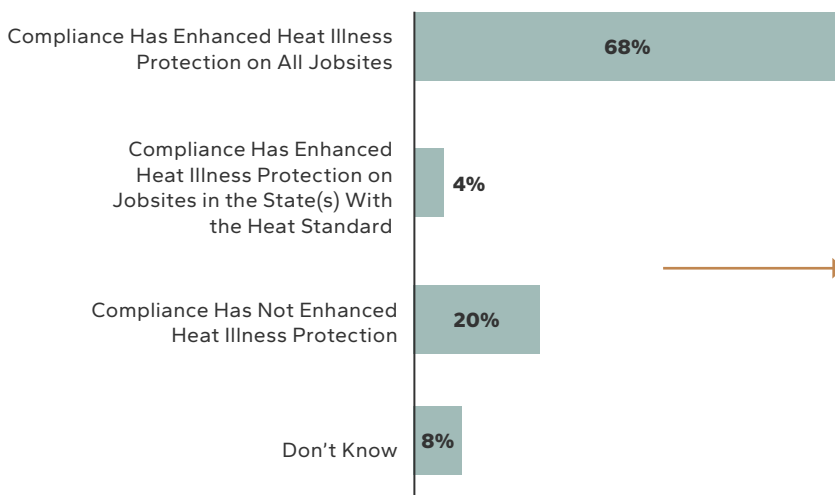
¹States with heat illness prevention standards: California, Colorado, Maryland, Minnesota, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington

Does Business in a State With a Heat Illness Prevention Standard



Impact of Complying With Heat Illness Prevention Standards

ACCORDING TO THOSE WHO HAVE DONE BUSINESS IN A STATE WITH THOSE STANDARDS



IMPACTS REPORTED	
Fewer Heat-Related Illnesses	78%
Fewer Injuries From any Cause	35%
Increased Productivity	35%

Providing Right-Sized PPE for Workers

Providing Right-Sized PPE for Workers

Having correctly sized personal protection equipment (PPE) for workers is essential to ensure that the PPE functions as it is intended to. Fortunately, 87% of contractors report that their organization provides PPE specifically designed to fit women or other workers who are significantly smaller or larger than the average-size American man.

However, despite the fact that this practice is widespread overall, there are significant differences by size and by union engagement in the types of companies that provide this. It is notable, though, that there is no significant difference in the share of GCs (88%) and specialty trade contractors (85%) who provide right-sized PPE.

VARIATION BY SIZE OF COMPANY

As the chart below reveals, small companies are less likely to provide right-sized PPE than are midsize or large contractors.

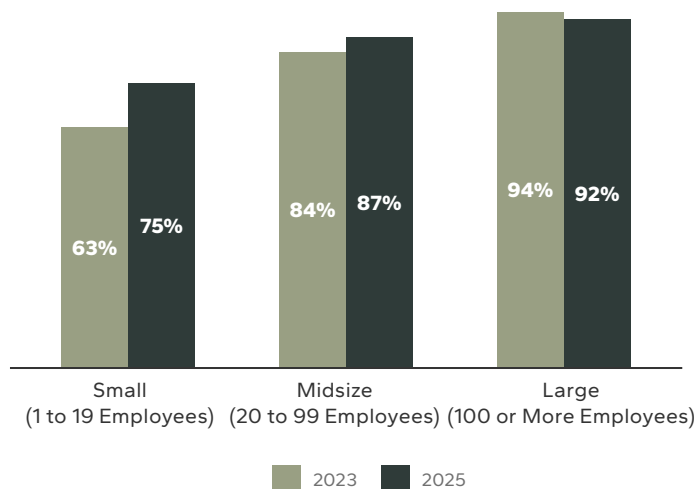
Happily, the findings shown below also reveal that many more small contractors report that their company provides right-sized PPE in the current survey than the one conducted in 2023. It will be interesting to see if this trend holds, and the number of small contractors using right-sized PPE continues to grow.

VARIATION BY EMPLOYMENT OF UNION OR NON-UNION CRAFTWORKERS

Nearly half (41%) of the contractors participating in the survey employ only union craftworkers, and nearly as many (37%) employ only non-union workers, with the remainder employing both.

Significantly more (92%) of those who employ only union craftworkers supply right-sized PPE than those who only employ non-union workers (81%). While this is likely influenced by the fact that one-third of the companies that employ non-union workers are small companies, compared with just 8% of those that employ only union workers, it still may suggest that workers who are union-enrolled are more likely to have access to right-sized PPE.

Provide Right-Sized PPE
BY SIZE OF CONTRACTOR



John Howard, MD, MPH, JD, LLM, MBA | Director, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the US Department of Health and Human Services

What has had the most positive impact on worker safety in the construction industry in the last five years?

Howard: I've seen a positive impact on the safety of construction workers from using technology—automated processes occurring that sometimes remove the worker from the zone of danger ... One example is using drones in large building projects to assess the integrity of a structure as it's being built, instead of having a worker hanging from ropes on the side of the building.

Automation in modular construction has [also] reduced workers' safety and health risks.

People are looking at these from a safety perspective to figure out [how they can help] and the additional risks they raise as well.

What research would currently help improve worksite safety?

Howard: Some of the areas that we just outlined in terms of these new technologies, because, as we all know, technology races forward and we're there trying to figure out how it affects worker safety and health. Whatever technology you think of, we're always a little behind ... The early adopters and the folks that make these technologies are trying to push them, and a lot of large construction companies are still trying to figure out [what works] from a safety and health perspective and [what doesn't]. Between the employer, worker, labor union and academic research, there are disconnects all over the place.

What are the biggest challenges of converting research into improved safety onsite?

Howard: We don't do a good enough job at selling our data. Years ago, I said we need a research-to-practice movement. Researchers spend a lot of time designing studies, collecting data, analyzing and making sure that

it has the right kind of significance, etc. and getting it published. But that's only the beginning. You have to go to conferences where they all come together. You have to be able to talk their talk, without all the graphs, statistical significance and confidence intervals.

That's where I think CPWR does a great job because they are closer to the worker population, to the constructor-employer population, and they know what kind of language to use.

What should be considered to ensure that AI has a positive impact on construction safety?

Howard: One thing that I've stressed is personal education on AI. We don't understand what all types and phases of AI are doing—classic old-school AI, generative AI, embedded AI where it's part of a machine or a device, agentic AI and embodied AI where you have a humanoid robotic device—because [even the] developers don't seem to have a grasp of how this particular device is doing the things it's doing or how it comes up with some of its outputs. Traditionally, when an employer introduces a device into the workplace, they know exactly what it does and how it does it, so they can have safety features involved, but in this case, it's a real challenge for us to know ... Designing the safety parameters of anything related to AI is going to be a real challenge.

The second area is the psychosocial, emotional challenges of a worker. What is my role with this machine? Do safety and health professionals understand that their job is to protect the robotic worker and the human worker and the relationship between the two? Have they been schooled only in this human worker world that we've created in the last 50 years?

The challenges are only beginning for safety and health

as we see more of these devices adopted ... Whatever industry you're in, I think that it will be the challenge going forward for the rest of the 21st century.

How can the construction industry improve the way it addresses the challenge of substance use?

Howard: We have concentrated on opioids, but not so much on some hallucinogens, cocaine, MDA. And the role of cannabis in workplace safety is an area that we need to spend a little more time on. More research [is needed] to figure out what works, what doesn't work [to deal with this] large spectrum of chemical use and the effect on the workplace.

What is the next big challenge in improving mental health?

We are only at the beginning of understanding the role of mental health and work. We still have this mind-body dichotomy. An employer finds mental health very distressing to talk about in many cases because it is not physical, it's a little harder to grasp and a little more complicated.

There's [also the use of] algorithms to evaluate, and sometimes even terminate, employees. Having a less person-to-person, less human workplace creates alienation, which will be exacerbated by AI.

What can contractors do to get the most out of NIOSH's research investments?

Howard: Employers could get their safety and health folks plugged into the communication that CPWR does—whether it be individual meetings, printed materials, podcasts, webinars—and contribute to critical review, be willing to say “that doesn't make any sense to me, that that's not what I'm experiencing.” That give-and-take is a conversation that we often don't have.

Organizational Participation in Safety Campaigns

Participation in Safety Campaigns

Contractors were asked whether their organization participates in several different types of safety campaigns/stand-downs. Nearly two-thirds (64%) report that they participate in at least one. There is also broad agreement that this participation helps improve safety at their organizations, with 77% of those participating rating it as very/extremely important and nearly all of the rest (21%) rating it as moderately important.

As the chart below shows, though, participation varies strongly by the size of company, with most at large companies (82%) reporting that their organizations participate compared with just 38% at small companies. Promisingly, the share of those who participate at small companies who regard that participation as very/extremely important for improving safety (68%) is close to the share at large companies, which suggests that small companies benefit when they engage with these campaigns.

SPECIFIC SAFETY CAMPAIGNS THAT THEY PARTICIPATE IN

Participation in different events varies from almost half to less than 15% of contractors:

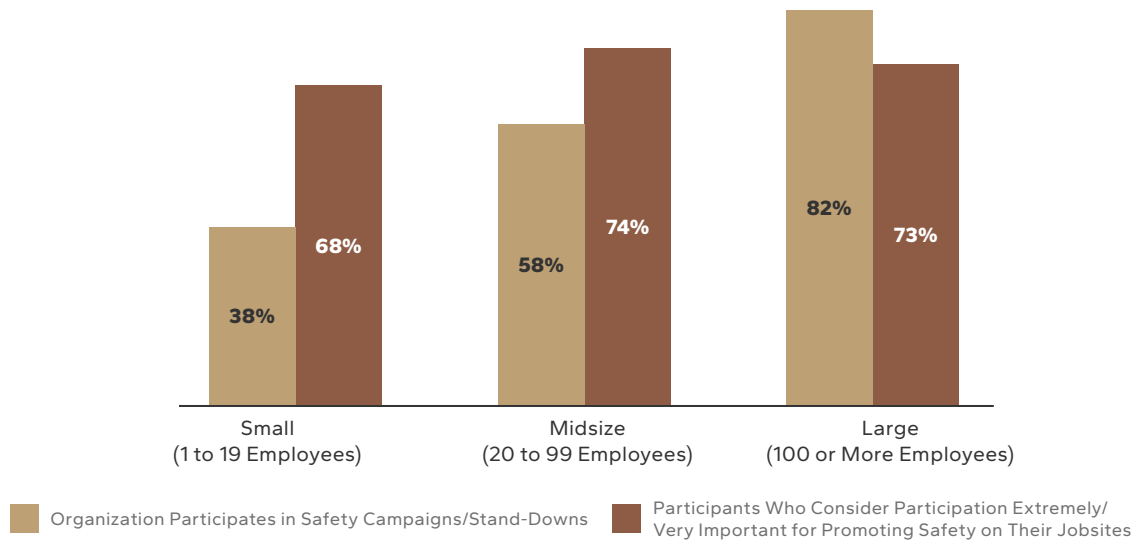
- Construction Safety Week: 51%
- OSHA Safe + Sound Week: 32%
- Construction Suicide Prevention Week and/or National Suicide Prevention Month: 29%
- National Campaign and Annual Safety Stand-Down to Prevent Falls in Construction: 28%
- National Stand-Down to Prevent Struck-By Incidents: 14%
- National Trench Safety Stand-Down: 14%

In addition to these prompted options, a few contractors also mentioned other campaigns they participate in, including CBIA Safety Expo, Women in Construction and client events. They also mention in-house events organized by their companies or by the general contractors on their projects.

HOW COMPANIES PARTICIPATE IN SAFETY CAMPAIGNS AND STAND-DOWNS

Respondents who report that their companies participated in these events were also asked about how their organization participates. The various ways

Participation in and Importance of Safety Campaigns/Stand-Downs



Organizational Participation in Safety Campaigns

Participation in Safety Campaigns CONTINUED

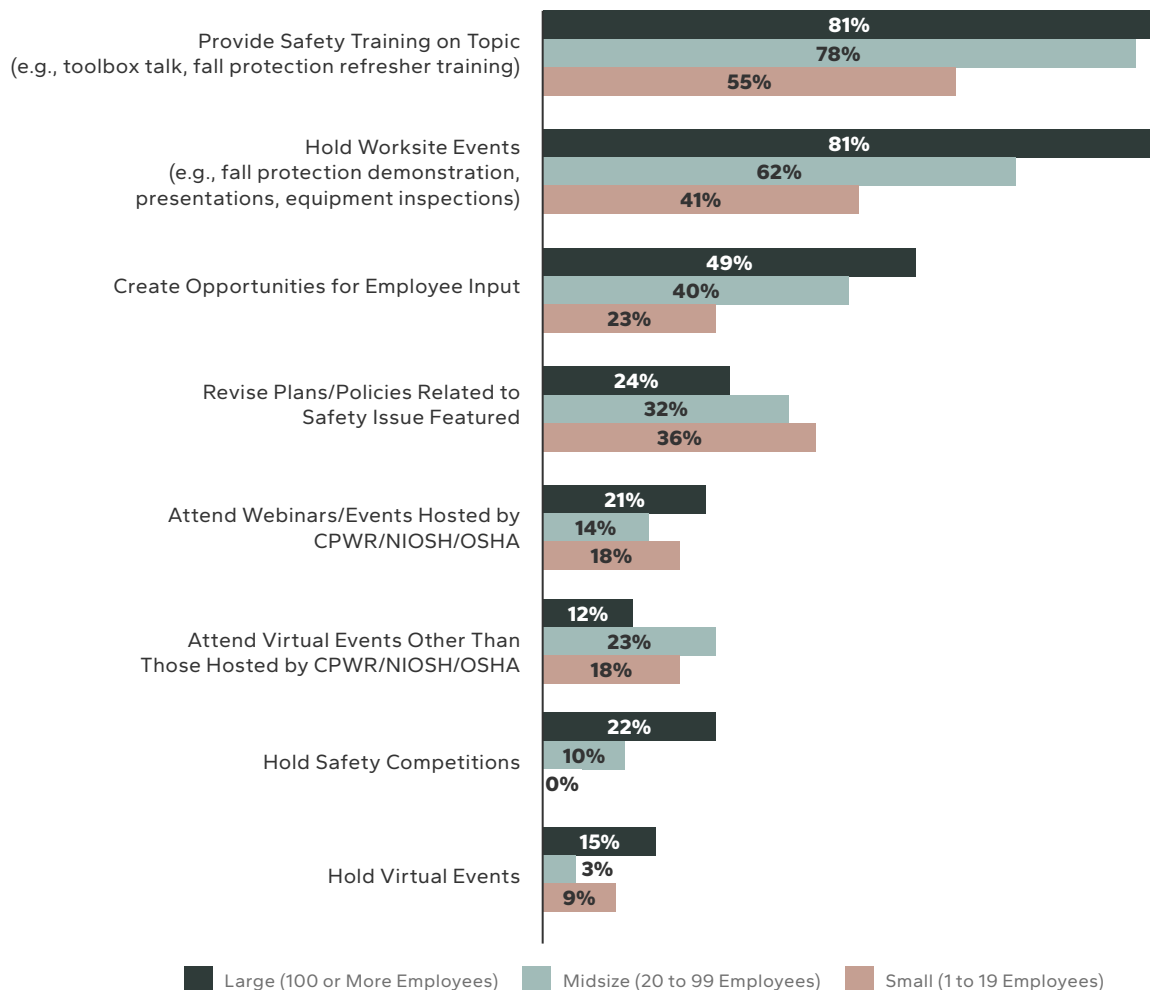
they do so are shown in the chart below, which reveals that size of company influences how companies engage in these events.

- Top Means of Participation:** The largest share of contractors, regardless of size of company, provide safety training on a specific topic or hold worksite events. However, large or midsize companies engage in each of these far more frequently than small companies, which may lack the resources to support additional training or events.

- Less Common Means of Participating:** Large and midsize companies more frequently use these events as an opportunity to get employee input. However, smaller companies most frequently revise plans and policies related to safety issues featured, which could have a long-term impact on the safety of their employees. Webinars and virtual events are not frequently used by companies of any size.

Ways That Organizations Participate in Safety Campaigns/Stand-Downs

ACCORDING TO THOSE WHO PARTICIPATE IN THESE EVENTS



Safety Training

Use of Online Safety Training

CURRENT USE OF ONLINE SAFETY AND HEALTH TRAINING

Online training has become an established way to deliver safety and health courses in construction. Currently, 75% of contractors report that they use online training, up from 64% in 2023.

As the chart at lower left shows, more companies of all sizes are using online training than were doing so in 2023, but the greatest growth has been among small companies.

Slightly more trade contractors (79%) than general contractors (71%) report that they use online training, but the difference is not big enough to be statistically significant.

Notably, all those who use this training now (with the exception of one contractor) plan to either maintain or increase their use of it, which suggests that the growth trend will continue (see page 21 for more details).

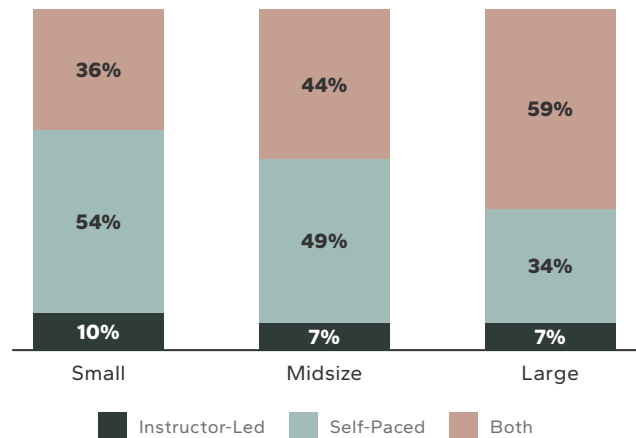
TYPES OF TRAINING OFFERED

Online training may be delivered in a very similar fashion to in-person training with an instructor and a set class, or it can be self-paced, accessed by the user at any time and without an instructor.

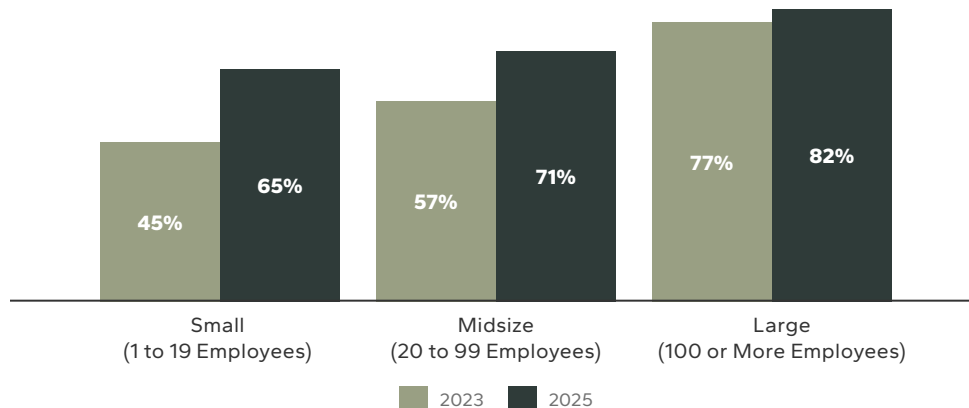
- Very few companies rely solely on instructor-led online training, but over half (56%) of contractors report that at least some of the training is delivered in that format.

- Small and midsize companies rely more on self-paced training than do large companies, with around half solely using this method, compared with about one-third of large contractors.
- 68% of contractors with only union craftworkers use instructor-led online training at their companies, compared with 50% of those with only non-union craftworkers. It is likely that the unions provide more access to instructor-led courses for contractors to use.

Type of Online Training Offered by Contractors



Uses Online Safety and Health Training



Safety Training

Anticipated Future Use of Online Safety Training

Those who use online training currently were asked about how they expect that use to change, and their responses are shown in the chart at right. Those who do not currently use online training were asked if they plan to do so in the next three years, and their responses are shown in the chart below.

ANTICIPATED CHANGE IN USE IN ONLINE TRAINING BY USERS

None of the contractors currently using online safety and health training plan to stop using it in the next three years, and only one contractor thinks its use will be reduced. It is clear that, among those who use it, online safety and health training is considered valuable enough to continue to invest in.

However, as the chart at right shows, most companies will maintain their use of online training at its current level.

There are some differences among those whose companies plan to invest in more online training:

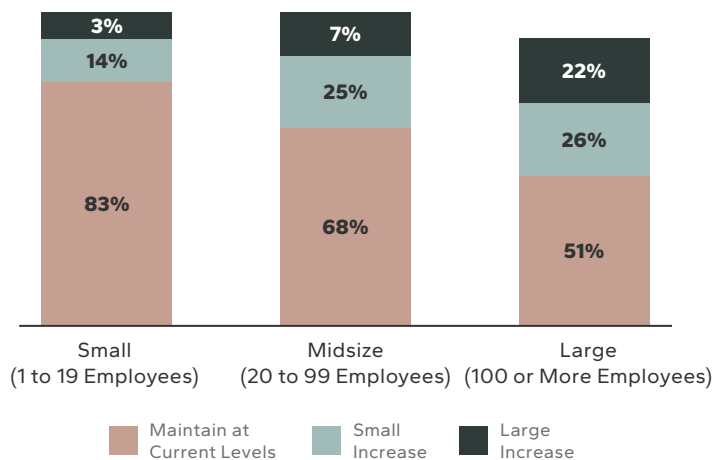
- Small companies are less likely than midsize or large ones to increase their use of online training.
- More trade contractors (18%) expect a large increase in their use of online training than do GCs (8%).

ANTICIPATED USE OF ONLINE TRAINING BY CURRENT NONUSERS

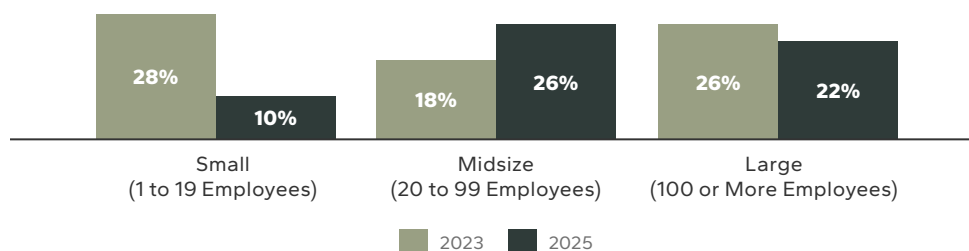
As noted on the previous page, 25% of contractors do not use online safety and health training. As the chart at the bottom of the page reveals, only about 1 in 5 has plans to adopt it in the next three years

This is significantly less potential growth in the use of this method than the 2023 study indicated, especially among small companies. Their spike in use noted this year was predicted by the high expectations for future use by nonusers from small companies at the time. This study suggests that many small companies interested in using this approach have now adopted it.

Planned Changes in Use on Online Health and Safety Training
ACCORDING TO THOSE USING IT NOW



Plans to Use Online Training in the Next Three Years
SHARE OF THOSE WHO REPORT NOT USING ONLINE TRAINING



Safety Training

Participation in Foundations for Safety Leadership

Contractors were asked whether supervisors, foremen and other onsite workers participated in the Foundations for Safety Leadership (FSL) Training, which has been offered as an elective by OSHA since 2017.

CPWR describes the FSL Training as “a highly interactive training program that teaches foremen, supervisors and other front-line leaders on construction job sites about the costs of ineffective, and the benefits of effective safety leadership such as improved safety climate and reduced negative safety outcomes. Most importantly, it includes information on critical leadership skills to use on the job site and presents students with different safety scenarios which they review and then decide which leadership skills would help address the specific worksite hazard.” (<https://www.cpwr.com/research/training-and-awareness-programs-from-research/foundations-for-safety-leadership/>)

Dodge has been tracking participation since 2017. In 2023, 49% said that their teams used the FSL course, a nine-point growth that capped a steady rise in use since that question was first asked in 2017. Unfortunately, the number participating has now declined to only 43% in 2025.

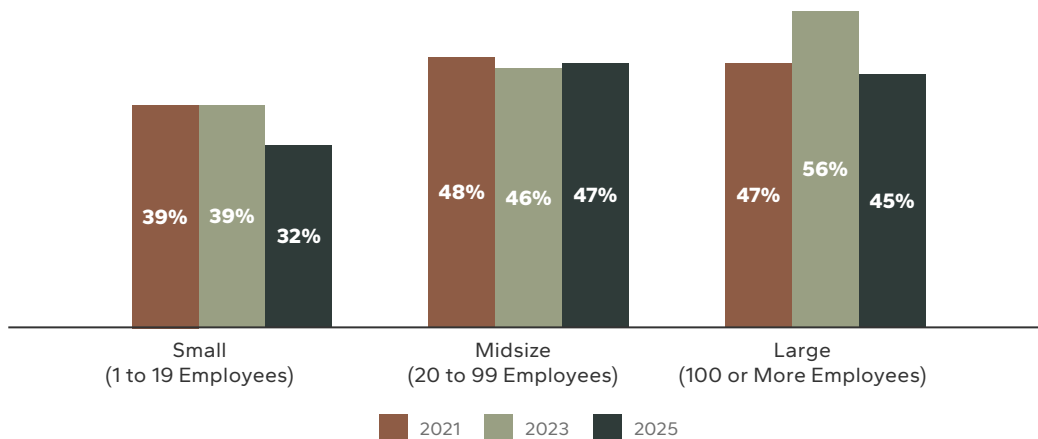
Participation in the training did not significantly vary between GCs and specialty trade contractors in the current study, but it did vary by size of company, as the chart below shows.

- Small companies have used this training less than midsize or large companies since at least 2021, and they also contributed to its decline in use in 2025 compared with 2023.
- However, large companies dropped the most between 2023 and 2025.
- Midsize companies have largely remained steady in their use of the training since 2021, and they slightly exceed large companies in the current study.

In 2023, one-quarter (25%) of respondents did not know if their field staff participated or not. That share has dropped slightly to 22%, and it is consistent regardless of size and type of company.

These findings suggest that OSHA may need to promote the advantage of using this training more among companies. For example, case studies from companies that utilize FSL training could promote how participation in it benefits their organizations.

Supervisors, Foremen and Other Onsite Workers Participated in Foundations for Safety Leadership Training



Safety Training

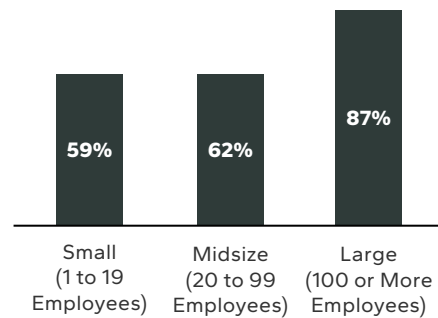
Jobsite Training

Nearly all contractors offer at least some programs or training on one of the seven topics shown in the chart below, including 93% of small companies, 95% of mid-size ones and 98% of large ones. However, small firms do not offer training or programs on as many topics as midsize and large companies, no doubt due to resource constrictions and less formalized programs.

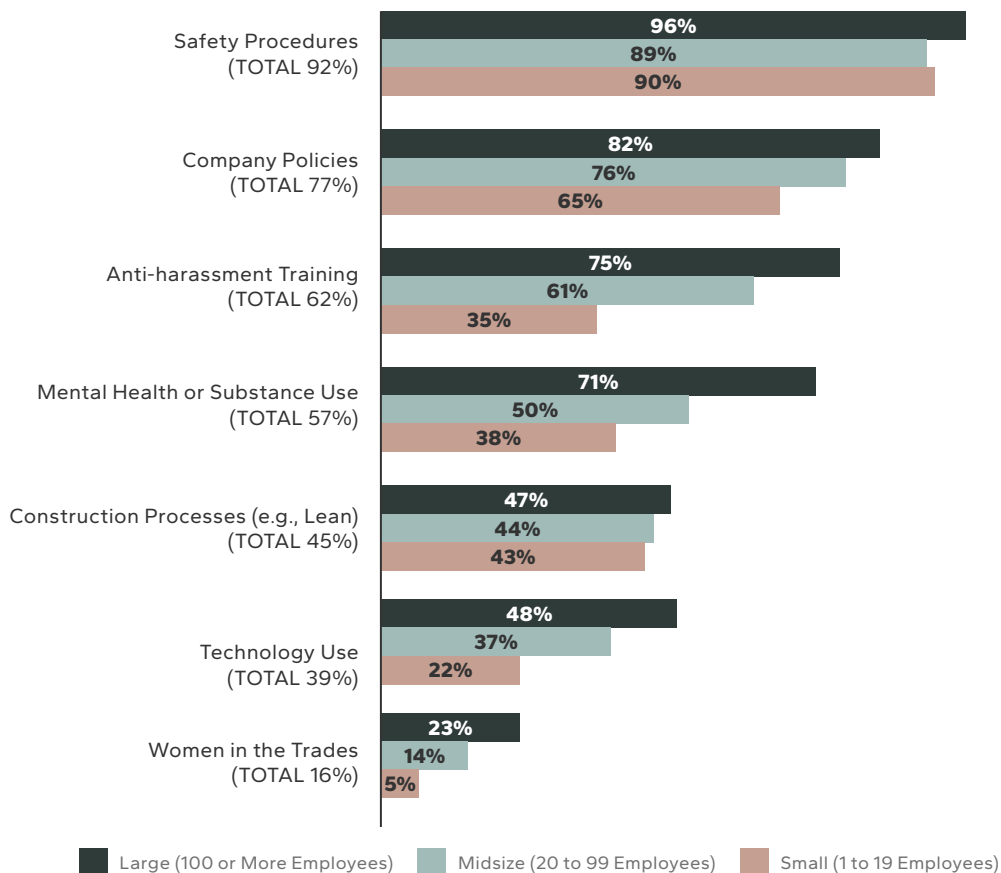
However, even among midsize and large companies, the findings suggest opportunities to provide more programs and training on many of the topics, including anti-harassment, mental health/substance use, construction process, technology use and women in the trades. (Further discussion of the findings related to mental health/substance use and anti-harassment training and programs can be found in the Mental Health section of this report on pages 28 to 31.)

Fortunately, as the chart at upper right shows, far more than half offer training to prepare the people who provide these programs. That practice is especially common at large companies.

Organization Offers Training to Prepare People Who Provide These Programs



Topics Offered by Contractors as Jobsite Programs or Training



Safety Training

Sources Contractors Use for Educational Resources

Contractors get educational resources to use on their jobsites, such as toolbox talks, fact sheets and infographics, from a wide range of sources. The most common is the OSHA website, used by about two-thirds of contractors. It is the top source regardless of the size of company, although the larger a company is, the more likely they are to use it.

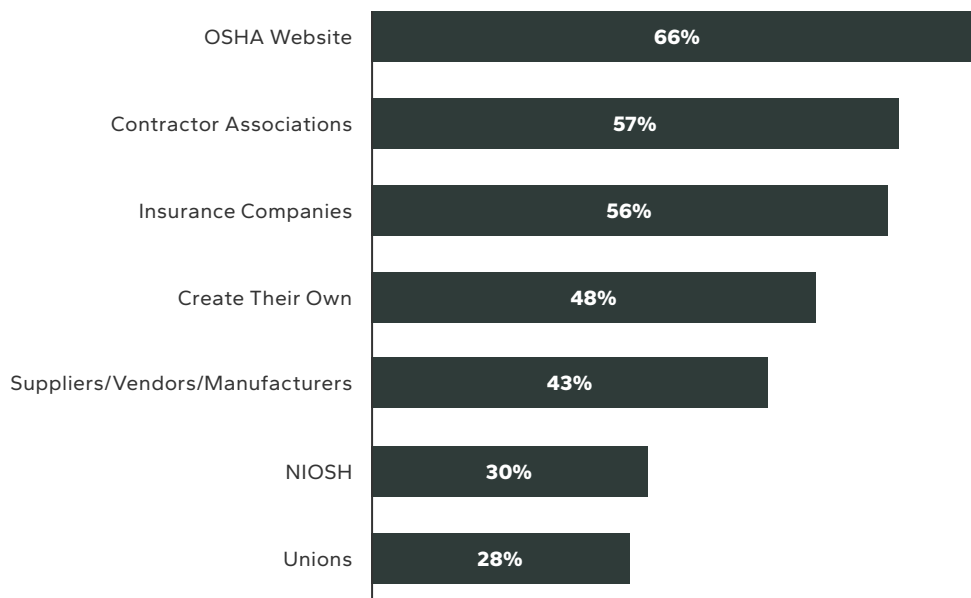
Use of other organizations for educational resources vary notably by size and type of company.

- Contractor Associations:** Large and midsize companies both frequently rely on these associations to supply them with materials, as the table below reveals. In addition, 61% of trade contractors use them for educational resources, compared with 52% of GCs.

- Insurance Companies:** Insurance companies are among the top sources of educational materials for small and midsize companies. Again, 61% of the trades report them as a source, compared with just 50% of GCs.
- Suppliers/Vendors/Manufacturers:** Small companies' reliance on these sources, along with insurance companies, suggests that they tend to get more information from private companies they do business with than nonprofits or other options.
- Unions:** Notably, unions are a bigger source of educational resources for the trades (34%) than they are for general contractors (21%)

Fundamentally, the findings in the chart and the table both make clear that all contractors have an opportunity to access educational resources from many more sources than they currently use.

Sources for Educational Resources Used by More Than 25% of Contractors



Top Three Sources of Educational Resources BY SIZE OF COMPANY

Ranking	Small Companies (1 to 19 Employees)	Midsize Companies (20 to 99 Employees)	Large Companies (100 or More Employees)
1	OSHA Website (52%)	OSHA Website (65%)	OSHA Website (72%)
2	Insurance Companies (43%)	Insurance Companies (62%)	Contractor Associations (69%)
3	Suppliers/Vendors/Manufacturers (40%)	Contractor Associations (52%)	Create Their Own (67%)

Safety Training

Additional Educational Information Needed

Contractors were also asked to select the topics they would like to see covered more by webinars, fact sheets, infographics or toolbox talks from the list of options shown in the chart below.

The findings clearly demonstrate that contractors are most interested in getting more information on mental health, suicide and opioid overdoses, as the industry continues to struggle with these difficult and complex challenges.

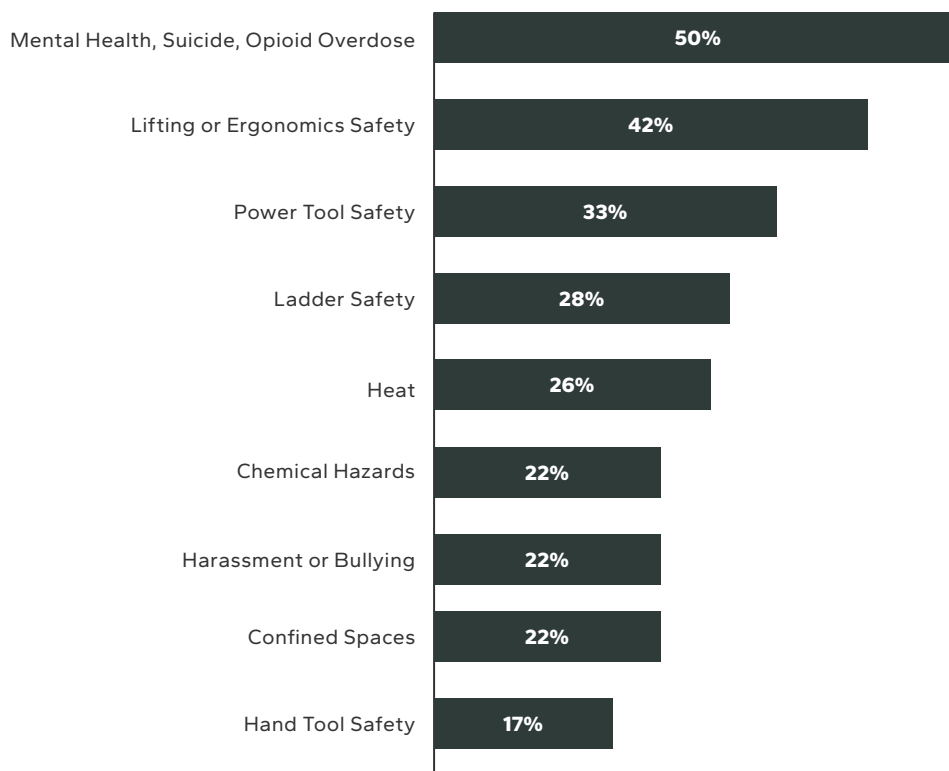
- There has been little change in the level of interest in this topic since 2023, when 52% selected it.
- Trade contractors are particularly interested in getting more information on these subjects, with 57% requesting this compared with 42% of GCs.

- Less than one-third (30%) of small companies select this topic, compared with over half of midsize (53%) and large (56%) companies.

The only topic where interest has grown noticeably is in lifting or ergonomics safety, with an increase from 34% who wanted this topic covered more frequently in 2023 to 42% in 2025. Notably, the percentage of small, midsize and large companies all increased by 4 to 10 percentage points on this topic, suggesting it is of broad general interest.

In fact, there are no significant differences by size or type for any topic except mental health, suicide and opioid overdoses, which demonstrates that many companies would benefit from more information on all of these topics.

Topics That Contractors Would Like to See Covered More by Webinars, Factsheets, Infographics or Toolbox Talks



Beyond Compliance: Training the Trainer in Midsize Construction

Safety training often focuses on what to teach: fall protection, confined space, scaffold assembly. Less attention is paid to who is doing the teaching—and whether they are equipped to lead. “Train the trainer” isn’t simply about credentials, says Kenneth Seal, deputy director of the International Finishing Trades Institute, it’s about cultivating supervisors who think critically, model safe behavior and have the authority to act. At TSI Corporations, a Maryland-based subcontractor, safety director Jean-Luc Leclerc has seen what happens when that investment is made in-house: Supervisors gain confidence, crews engage more fully, and even office staff get a better understanding of issues in the field.

FROM BOX-CHECKING TO JUDGMENT

For Seal, one reason training the trainer gets sidelined is that safety itself is too often treated as a documentation exercise. Many firms, he says, develop programs to satisfy general contractors or regulatory requirements, checking boxes without examining whether supervisors are truly equipped to teach. Companies frequently promote their best workers into leadership roles, assuming technical skill will carry over to safety. “Oftentimes that’s not the person that is fit for the position,” Seal says. “The right person really has to have a heart about keeping people safe.” In looking for capable trainers, he says, companies should look for workers who model safe behavior—consistently wearing the right PPE, inspecting equipment properly and pausing work when safety requires it. Just as important, trainers need to develop judgment. Online modules can teach theory, he says, but they can’t convey the practical knowledge needed to keep a site safe or to respond effectively to the unexpected. For that, embodied, experiential learning is essential: “Especially in a small or midsize company, where you’re going to have somebody multitask,” Seal says, “it has to be quality training.”

BUILDING CONFIDENCE THROUGH HANDS-ON TRAINING

At TSI, safety training is hands-on and in-house. Leclerc uses union facilities and the company’s own shop to run a range of scenario-based sessions, including fall protection, rescue, scaffolding and OSHA 30. Training happens company-wide during

paid work hours, as opposed to individuals attending evening classes or missing work, “so there’s a lot more motivation and interaction,” Leclerc says. “Rather than supervisors taking an attitude of ‘I’m good where I’m at—I don’t need more training,’ they’re actually very happy about it.”

With increased confidence in making safety-critical decisions, supervisors gain overall confidence in running the job. “The worst thing when you’re running work is not having enough knowledge and trying to figure it out as you go,” Leclerc says. “We want to get ahead of that for our supervisors, to get them the knowledge before they run into a situation.”

TSI also extends safety training beyond the jobsite. Project managers, estimators and office staff participate alongside field crews in rotating, problem-solving exercises. That shared experience, Leclerc says, improves communication across departments, and the deeper understanding of site safety issues even leads to more realistic planning upstream. Just as important, training reinforces relationships: “When TSI takes time out to do these trainings,” Leclerc says, “our workers onsite know that they’re looked at as a person, not just as an employee.”

AUTHORITY IS PART OF THE TRAINING

Perhaps the most significant obstacle to an effective program, Seal says, is that trainers are often given responsibility without real authority. “A lot of companies say you have the right to stop work for safety, but you don’t,” he says, and when workers have bills to pay and families to support, they’ll be reluctant to risk getting fired because they made a safety call. “That can all be brought out on a quality training program,” he says. “You have to give them the authority to do what they’re supposed to do.” And because accidents can entail costs far beyond the injury itself, that empowerment makes business sense, too.

Ultimately, in training the trainers, both Seal and Leclerc return to the same point: Effective safety leaders need more than technical knowledge—they need judgment, authority and a genuine commitment to the people around them. When companies invest in developing those qualities, the benefits extend from safer sites to stronger teams and more resilient operations.

Mental Health

Worker Travel

Extended travel is part of the work of construction. Some workers have lengthy commutes to jobsites, while others are required to live away from home for multiple days during the week. The chart below shows just how common this is in the construction industry.

Both of these types of extended travel can impact workers' mental health and well-being. The former assistant secretary for OSHA, Doug Parker, among many others, notes that the impact of this travel is that it keeps workers away from home and support systems, and cites it as a unique cause of stress in this industry.¹

Overall, 52% of contractors report that their workers regularly experience some sort of regular travel more than 100 miles from home. This is especially a challenge at large companies, where most (72%) report that it is a common occurrence.

LENGTHY DAILY COMMUTES TO JOBSITES

Most (71%) of those whose company's workers experience extended travel say that they commute more than 100 miles to jobsites.

- 73% of small companies whose workers are required to do extended travel report this long

commute. It is also common at large companies (74%), but slightly less so at midsize ones (65%).

- 77% of trade contractors report that their workers travel this far, compared with 65% of GCs.

EXTENDED OVERNIGHT STAYS

Nearly the same share (72%) also report that their workers stay in hotels or other accommodations for extended periods (e.g., more than three nights per week).

- Midsize companies most frequently report that their workers have extended overnight stays (75%), while small companies have the smallest share (67%) and large companies fall in between (72%).
- The breakdown between GCs (66%) and trade contractors (77%) is similar to that reported for lengthy commutes.

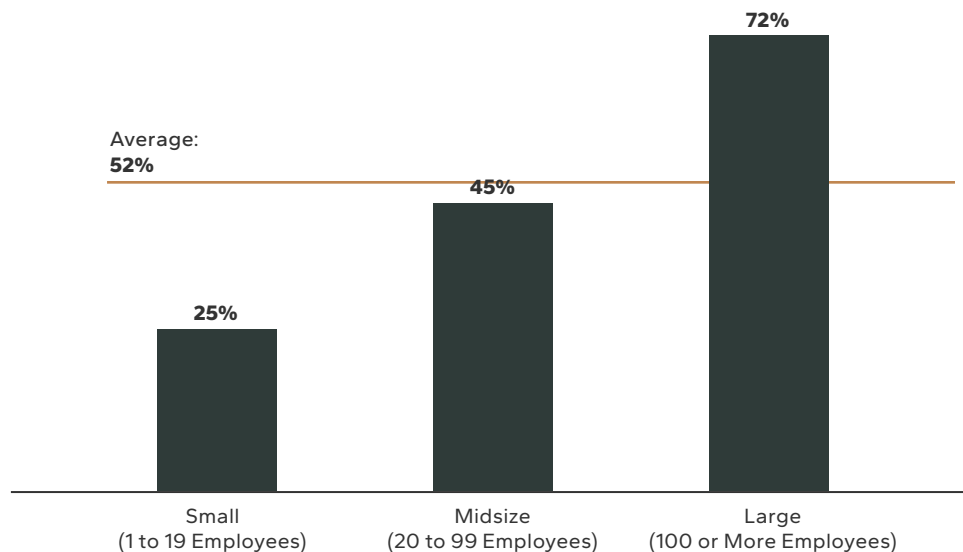
TRAVEL OUT OF STATE

60% of those reporting extended travel say some workers travel out of state. This is relatively rare among small companies (33%) but quite common among large ones (71%), with midsize organizations (49%) falling in between.

¹ (www.dol.gov/newsroom/releases/osha/osha20220906-0)

Workers Experience Extended Travel

LONG COMMUTES OF MORE THAN 100 MILES, EXTENDED OVERNIGHT STAYS OR TRAVEL OUT OF STATE



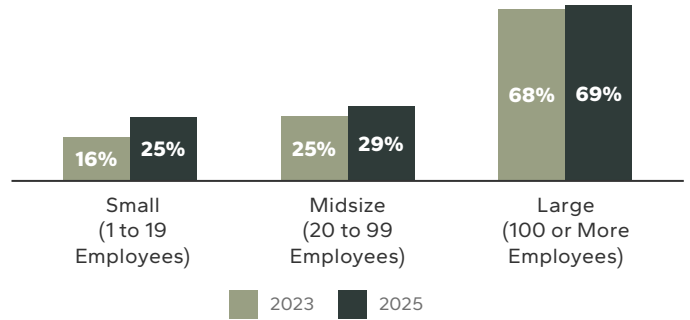
Mental Health

Substance Use/Mental Health Programs Provided

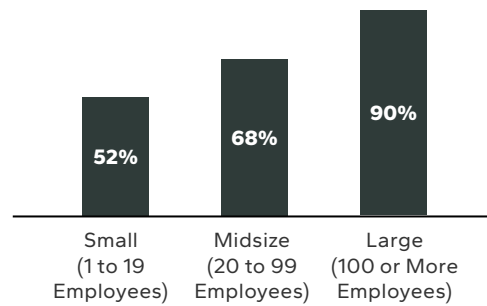
The construction industry has recognized the challenges associated with substance use and mental health issues, and they have begun providing support.

- Contractors were asked a simple question about whether they have an employee assistance plan (EAP). Nearly half (46%) report that they do. While overall, the share of companies that offer an EAP has remained relatively stable since 2023, there has been significant growth among small companies, as the chart at upper right reveals. However, small and midsize companies continue to lag behind large companies in providing this resource.
- Size of company also influences the likelihood that a company provides a program for substance abuse and mental health, as is shown in the chart at lower right.
- The chart at the bottom of the page shows the types of programs that these companies offer, with awareness training at the top.

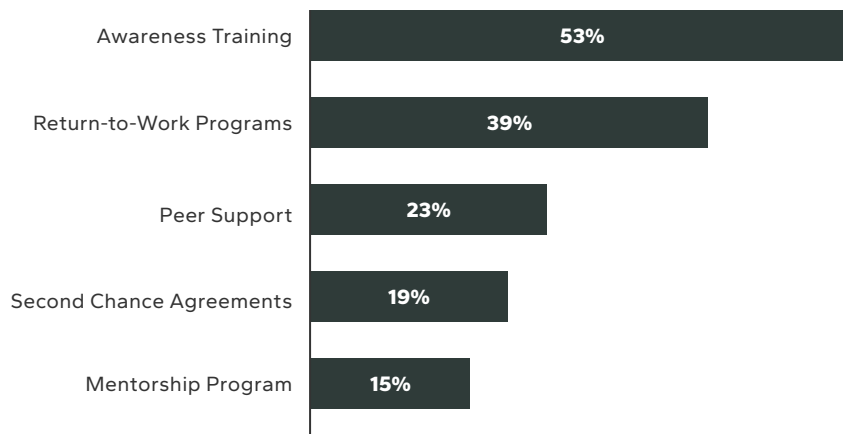
Company Has an Employee Assistance Plan (EAP)



Company Provides at Least One Program for Substance Abuse and/or Mental Health



Programs Offered for Substance Abuse and/or Mental Health



Mental Health

Desire for Jobsite Training and/or Programs on Substance Use/Mental Health

When asked about a list of eight different types of jobsite training or programs, 57% of contractors reported that their company provides these for mental health or substance abuse (the findings about the frequency of all eight types of training/programs can be found on page 23.)

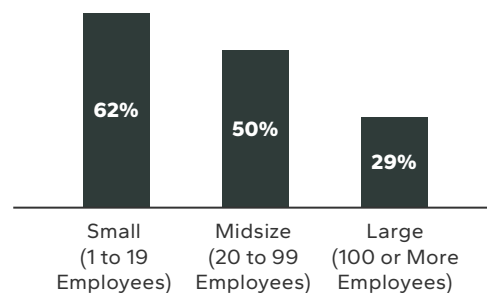
The chart at right shows how the remaining 43% whose companies do not offer these programs are distributed by size of company. Not surprisingly, the biggest percentage work for small companies. However, small companies are clearly not alone in not offering these types of programs. Half of midsize companies and well over one quarter of large companies also do not offer them.

All of these respondents were asked whether their company would benefit from having a program for substance use or mental health onsite. Their responses are shown in the chart below, also by size of company.

- At least half of those working at midsize and large companies and nearly one-third of those at small companies believe their company would benefit from offering this kind of program. These findings clearly demonstrate a demand for more ways to address these challenges onsite.

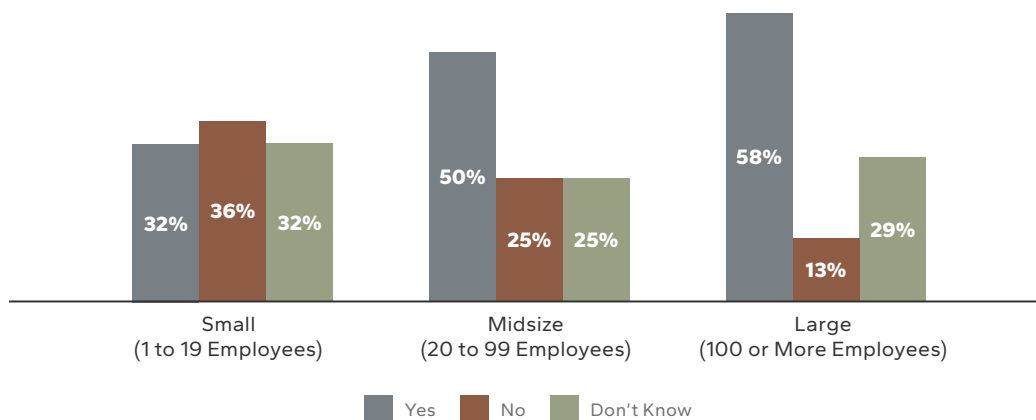
- Interestingly, the share who don't think that these programs would be helpful decreases as the size of the company increases. It is possible that those working for larger companies have more opportunities to interact with workers struggling with these issues than those working at companies with 20 people or less.
- About one-third are uncertain, with no meaningful difference by size of company. This may suggest that a strong program that supports workers effectively could be well-received by even more of the respondents than those who currently affirm that they think it would be useful.

Company Does Not Have Onsite Mental Health or Substance Use Training



Company Would Benefit From a Program for Substance Use or Mental Health

ACCORDING TO THOSE WHO HAVE NO ONSITE PROGRAM AT THEIR COMPANY



Mental Health

Anti-harassment Training

Anti-harassment training was also included in the list of onsite training/programs that contractors were asked about, with the full list shown on page 23. Nearly two-thirds (62%) of contractors reported that their company offers this training onsite.

The chart at right shows how those respondents are distributed among small, midsize and large companies. It clearly reveals that more large and midsize companies offer this training than small ones. However, it is still notable that over one-third of small companies have invested in this training, despite often limited training resources, and that 25% to 39% of midsize to large companies have yet to do so. Both of these findings suggest the potential for more companies to embrace this training than currently do so.

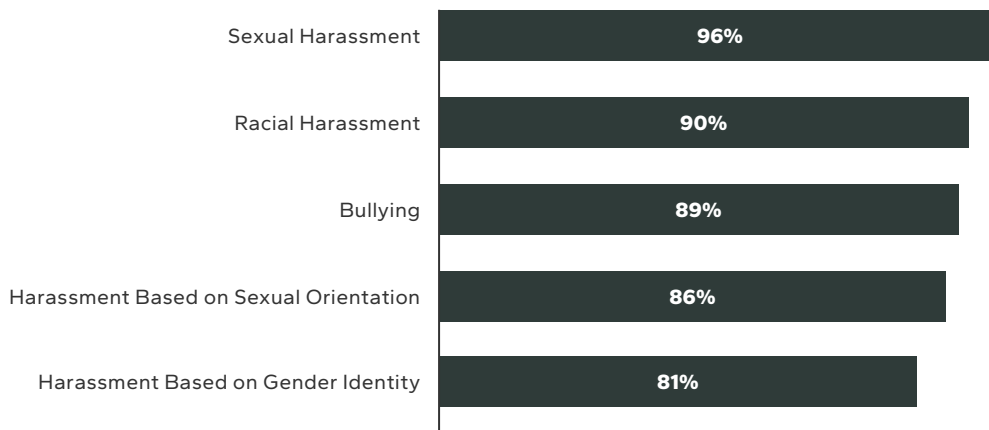
Interestingly, participation in a union appears to help drive the use of this training, with 77% of contractors who only use union contractors offering it compared with 47% of those who only employ non-union contractors. The only other type of training offered by significantly more contractors employing only union contractors is for mental health/substance use training and programs (73% of those employing only union workers versus 47% of those who do not employ union workers). It is likely that unions make more training resources available.

TYPES OF ANTI-HARASSMENT TRAINING OFFERED

The contractors who offer this training were asked what types of anti-harassment training they provide. Their responses are shown in the chart at the bottom of the page, revealing that most companies that offer anti-harassment training do so for many different types of harassment. Even the least common type of training offered—on harassment based on gender identity—is offered by over 80% of those who provide any of this training for their workers.



Types of Anti-harassment Training Offered



Mental Health

Anti-harassment Training CONTINUED

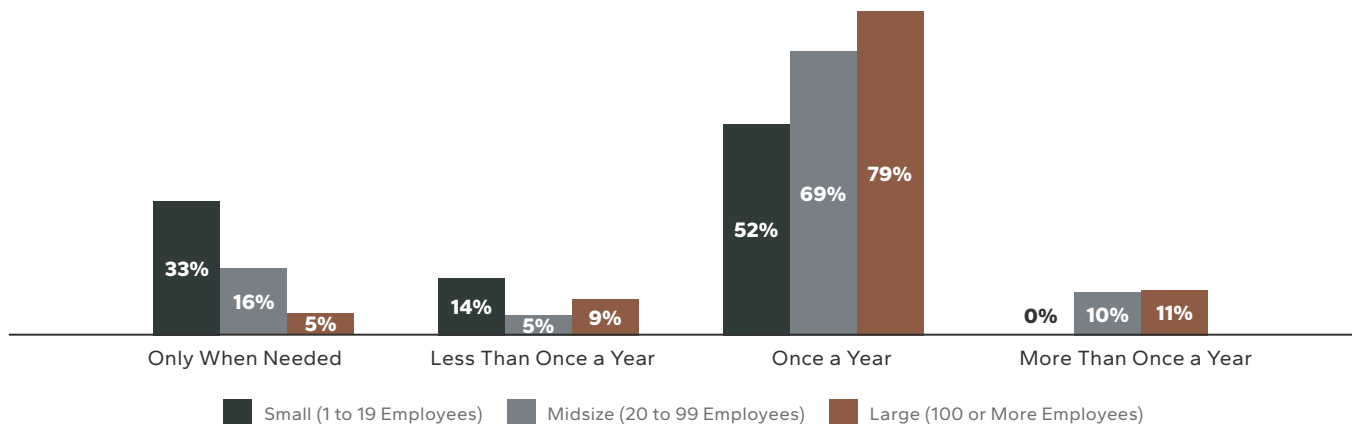
- GCs and specialty trade contractors both tend to offer these training topics.
- Training about bullying and sexual harassment are also offered about equally by companies that offer anti-harassment training in general, regardless of the type of company. However, large companies more frequently offer anti-harassment training based on race, sexual orientation and gender identity than midsize companies, with small companies falling in between.
- Companies with only union craftworkers also provide anti-harassment training based on sexual orientation or gender identity significantly more than those who only hire non-union craftworkers, even among those who offer anti-harassment training in general.

Contractors whose companies offer anti-harassment training were also asked how frequently they offer it, and the findings are shown in the chart below.

- The largest share of contractors of all sizes offer the training once a year.
- However, nearly half of small companies offer it less frequently than that or only when needed, rather than at regular intervals.
- 26% of specialty contractors offer the training only when needed or less than once a year, compared with 13% of GCs.

Offering the training at least once a year has a few advantages. It reinforces company leadership's concern about this issue, it allows new employees to experience the training, and it reinforces the training for those who have previously experienced it.

Frequency With Which Anti-harassment Training Is Offered
ACCORDING TO THOSE WHO OFFER ONSITE ANTI-HARASSMENT TRAINING



Building a Mentally Fit Workforce at the Tennessee Valley Authority

Construction is one of the most physically demanding industries, but mounting evidence shows the work can be just as punishing mentally. The profession faces one of the highest suicide rates in the nation.¹ Although construction workers make up less than 8% of the U.S. workforce, they account for nearly 20% of all worker suicides, more than 5,000 lives lost each year.² These trends have pushed industry leaders to recognize mental health as a core safety issue and consider how jobsite conditions can be improved to reduce stress. Alongside current initiatives, upstream efforts such as reducing excessive overtime, preventing injuries that lead to chronic pain, expanding access to paid leave and strengthening safety culture can help create a healthier environment and further reduce these preventable deaths.

At the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA)—the nation's largest public power provider employing thousands of construction contractors—the data on construction suicide rates has prompted staff to redefine what it means to keep a workforce safe. As the leader of decommissioning and demolition operations for TVA, Jayme Hobson manages some of the most high-hazard work in the industry. She knows that being “fit for duty” means more than physical health; it requires a workforce that feels mentally safe.

A NEW BLUEPRINT: THE RESPECT FRAMEWORK

To help workers feel mentally supported, TVA partnered with North America's Building Trades Unions (NABTU) to create a landmark pilot called the RESPECT framework. This initiative formalized the belief that safety must include psychological safety.

Hobson says with the RESPECT framework, “mental wellness is normalized and we are reinforcing that it's okay to not be okay.” She says the program is working to change day-to-day jobsite culture in the following ways:

- **Behavior is treated like safety:** Respectful conduct is reinforced in orientations, pre-job briefs and contractor onboarding, right alongside physical safety expectations.
- **Safe reporting pathways:** Clear channels and protections empower craftworkers to speak up without fear of retaliation.
- **Equipped supervisors:** Frontline leaders are given tools to address conflict, stress and crew dynamics early.

Hobson also understands that in construction, distractions can be fatal and “clarity under pressure is what keeps everyone going home safe.” To this end, her team integrates psychological safety directly into execution plans.

“In decommissioning and demolition, psychological safety isn't separate from safety, it's foundational to it,” says Hobson. “We build this into execution by promoting a speak-up culture that is nonnegotiable. Anyone can stop work, challenge conditions or question a plan without consequence.”

Hobson describes how pre-job briefs address the unknown. “We walk through contingencies and decision triggers, so crews aren't carrying silent stress into critical tasks,” she says, adding that supervisors are expected to watch for “fatigue, tension or breakdowns in crew dynamics and intervene early.”

ADDRESSING OCCUPATIONAL RISK FACTORS

One of the most vital shifts in TVA's strategy is the recognition that while suicide is deeply personal, many of its risk factors are actually occupational. As an advisory board member for the Construction Safety Research Alliance (CSRA), Hobson applies the same lessons learned from Serious Injury and Fatality (SIF) research to mental health and suicide prevention.

“The worst outcomes are rarely the result of a single event. They stem from stacked risk factors and weak signals that go unnoticed,” she says. “Using that lens, we encourage the industry to treat mental health as a hazard with controls, managing psychosocial risks like fatigue, isolation, job

¹ www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/72/wr/mm7250a2.htm

² www.cpwr.com/wp-content/uploads/DataBulletin-September2024.pdf

insecurity, substance misuse and chronic stress with the same discipline used for fall protection or energized work—identify, mitigate and verify.”

TVA emphasizes a shift from lagging to leading indicators, watching for early warning signs such as excessive overtime, repeated conflict, clusters of near misses or abrupt behavior changes, and they build clear escalation pathways before a crisis develops.

“Research consistently shows frontline supervisors set the tone, so we translate findings into practical field behaviors, regular check-ins, clear expectations and concrete guidance on how to intervene, not just awareness campaigns,” explains Hobson.

Research from groups like CPWR—The Center for Construction Research and Training—and CSRA have helped the industry better understand what conditions elevate risk, and TVA is focused on the stressors that can be controlled. The organization’s Workforce Optimization and its Labor Forecast Center allow leaders to geographically plan long-term projects where possible to reduce constant travel, instability and construction’s “feast or famine” cycle that can strain families and finances. Predictable scheduling and better sequencing also help by reducing excessive overtime and last-minute compression, both of which are linked to fatigue, poor decision-making and mental strain.

Hobson also points to employee-led safety structures like the Tri-Lateral Safety Alliance (TLSA), Represented Safety Team (RST), and Agency Health and Safety Committees that give craftworkers a voice in site conditions, reducing the isolation that often compounds stress. TVA further supports workers by collaborating with local recovery groups and setting up social jobsite trailers—areas equipped with TVs, newspapers and games—which allow for “belongingness and community in a safe environment.”

TANGIBLE RESOURCES AND THE “INVISIBLE” HAZARD
PPE for physical hazards in construction is usually the focus of safety, but mental strain is an ever-present

“invisible” hazard. For TVA employees, there are multiple tangible resources in place:

- **Construction Careline:** A confidential, 24/7 support line for craftworkers and their families covering mental health, substance misuse, financial stress and crisis support.
- **Employee Assistance Programs:** All TVA employees have access to confidential counseling and referral services.
- **Labor Partner Resources:** Many union partners provide their own crisis hotlines and member assistance programs, expanding the safety net.
- **Supervisor and Peer Awareness Training:** Leaders are trained to recognize warning signs—behavior changes, isolation, fatigue, irritability, risk-taking—and how to intervene constructively. To date, TVA has trained thousands in peer-to-peer intervention.

These resources represent a massive logistical effort, but their success depends on overcoming a much older obstacle: the industry’s long-standing “tough it out” mentality. At TVA, the goal is to dismantle old-school silence and replace it with a culture where workers are, as Hobson describes them, “strong enough to speak up.”

Hobson makes it clear that raising a concern—physical or mental—will not cost a worker their job. Through the RESPECT framework and contractor alignment, anti-retaliation expectations are clear. “We reinforce that ‘fit-for-duty’ includes mental readiness,” she says, “and stepping back from high-risk work because you are not mentally locked-in is treated as a safety decision, not a weakness.”

Ultimately, Hobson believes suicide prevention is about designing work environments that reduce chronic stressors upstream. She states, “When we improve stability, predictability, voice and support, we’re not just improving morale, we’re reducing risk in a very real way.”

Technology and Safety

Frequency of Using Technology

Contractors were asked to rate how frequently they use nine technologies, from do not use at all to use very frequently. The findings are shown in the chart below, with the bars divided between frequent and infrequent use, and the total share using them at all shown at right.

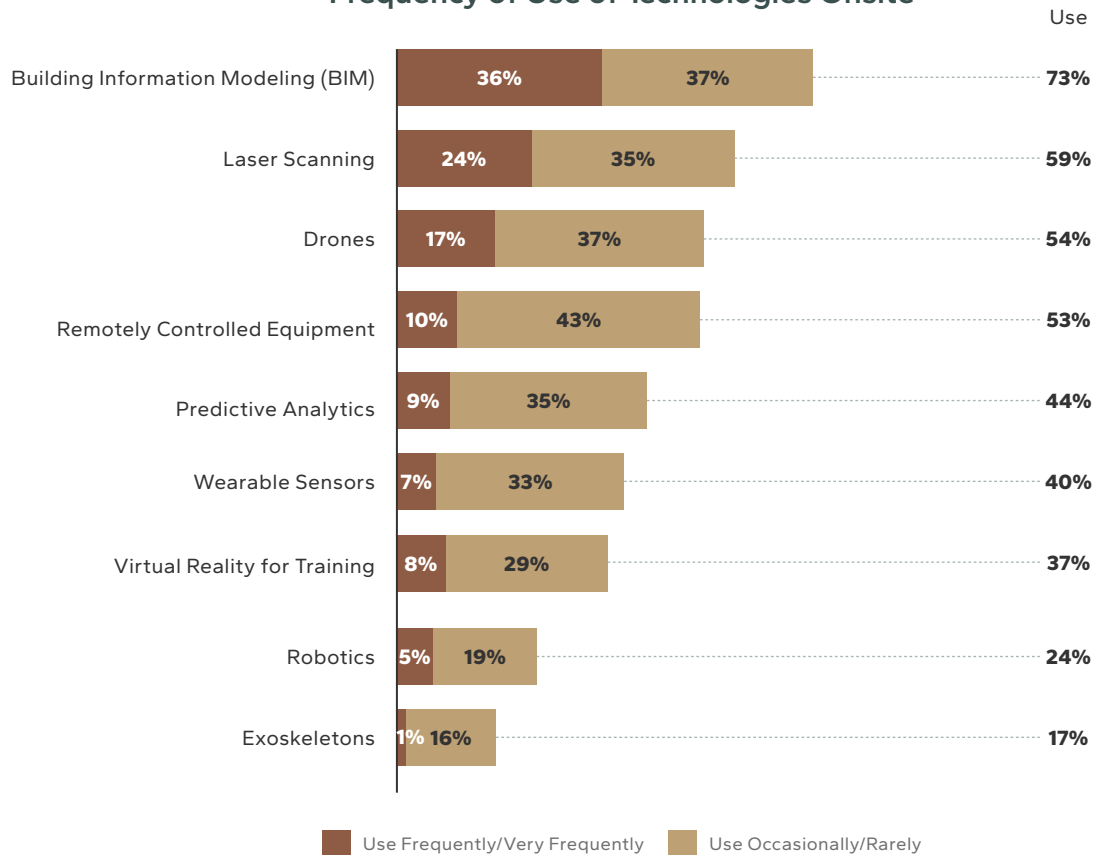
GROWTH IN THE USE OF TECHNOLOGIES SINCE 2023

Contractors were also asked about their use of these technologies in the study conducted in 2023, but they were simply asked in that study to select any technologies they used. The change in the manner in which the question was asked does not support a direct comparison, but some basic trends can still be divined:

- The overall share using each of the nine technologies increased in 2025 compared with 2023.

- The biggest increases were in the use of remotely controlled equipment, predictive analytics and virtual reality for training, which are not surprising given the advances in artificial intelligence and other technologies since 2023.
- The share using drones and laser scanning is quite similar to what was reported in 2023, with only nominal percentage increases. This suggests that these are mature technologies in terms of adoption. It will be interesting to examine any changes in the frequency of their use in future studies to see if they are being more widely implemented.
- Exoskeletons and robotics are still not used by many contractors. However, the share using robotics doubled since 2023, suggesting that they may be gaining some traction. The share using exoskeletons increased only slightly, as that technology continues to remain on the cutting edge.

Frequency of Use of Technologies Onsite



Technology and Safety

Frequency of Using Technology CONTINUED

VARIATION IN IMPLEMENTATION OF TECHNOLOGIES

The top two technologies—BIM and laser scanning—are not only widely used, but also widely implemented.

Other technologies are used by between one-third and one-half of contractors, but occasional/rare use is more common than frequent use, including drones, remotely controlled equipment, predictive analytics, wearable sensors and virtual reality for training. The frequency of use may increase as the value of these technologies becomes clearer to the user.

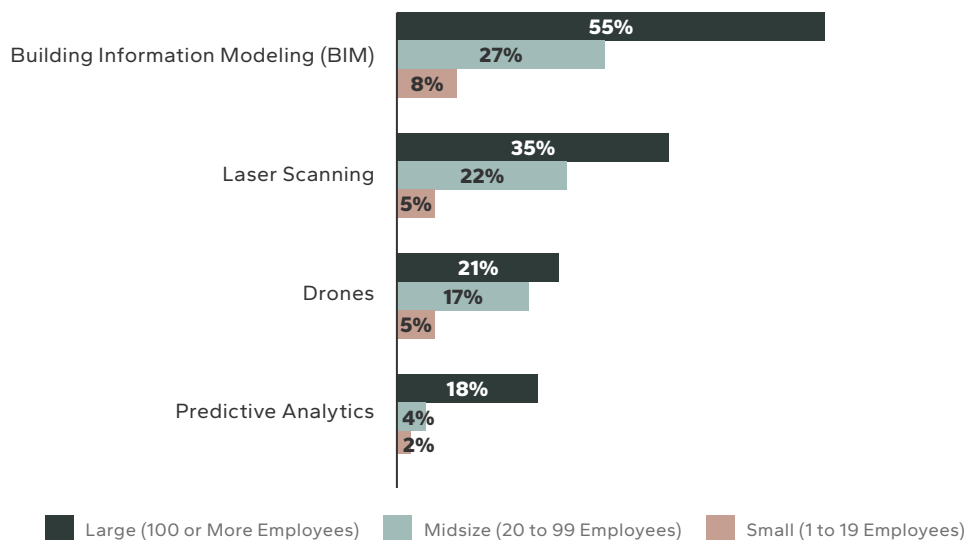
VARIATION BY SIZE OF COMPANY

The chart on the previous page shows the total use of technologies by the respondents. The chart below examines only those who report frequent/very frequent use of the technologies, and it only shows the technologies used with frequency by significantly more large companies than smaller ones.

It is not surprising that midsize or small companies use these technologies less frequently than large ones, but it is notable that less than 40% of large companies frequently deploy laser scanning, drones and predictive analytics. These findings suggest that all these technologies are still emerging in the construction industry, even among companies with more resources to adopt technology.

These findings also reveal that the potential for technology to improve safety is still largely untapped. More frequent use of most of these technologies can provide more information about hazards that need to be addressed, reveal when workers are under stress, remove the need to put workers in dangerous situations and help target safety training to where it is needed most.

Technologies Used Frequently/Very Frequently by Significantly More Large Companies Than Small Ones



Technology and Safety

Reasons for Using Technology

While all the technologies discussed on pages 34 to 35 could have a positive impact on safety, that is not necessarily the reason that contractors use them. To better understand what is being used to improve safety, all contractors who frequently use any of the technologies shown in the table below were asked whether they use them to improve safety, increase productivity and/or decrease their reliance on labor.

TOP TECHNOLOGIES USED TO IMPROVE SAFETY

Over 70% of the contractors frequently using wearable sensors, virtual reality for training or predictive analytics said that safety was one of the top reasons that they do so.

Promisingly, use of virtual technology for training and predictive analytics also grew notably between 2023 and 2025 (see page 34 for more information).

FREQUENTLY USED TECHNOLOGIES TO IMPROVE SAFETY

About half of contractors frequently using remotely controlled equipment, exoskeletons, drones and robotics said that safety was one of the top reasons for doing so. However, it is not the top reason: Productivity is what drives the use of these types of technologies.

Contractors who are primarily using technologies like these for productivity gains, though, may also find ways to use them to improve safety onsite. Safety does not need to be the primary driver for the technologies to help make worksites safer. However, for that to occur, contractors must actively consider how their use can impact safety.

LESS FREQUENTLY USED TECHNOLOGIES TO IMPROVE SAFETY

Less than one-third of frequent BIM or laser scanner users say that safety is a top reason that they deploy these technologies. Instead, nearly all of them cite increasing productivity as the top choice. Again, though, once the technology is in use, companies can find ways for them to help improve safety.

DEPLOYING TECHNOLOGIES TO DECREASE RELIANCE ON LABOR

One promising finding from the study is that, while most contractors deploy many of these technologies with the hope of increasing productivity, far fewer do so with the expectation of eliminating people from their processes.

Exoskeletons and robotics have slightly higher percentages, but these are also based only on a handful of respondents who frequently use them.

Top Reasons for Using Technologies

(ACCORDING TO THOSE USING THEM FREQUENTLY/VERY FREQUENTLY)

	Improve Safety	Increase Productivity	Decrease Reliance on Labor
Wearable Sensors*	82%	32%	23%
Virtual Reality for Training*	77%	50%	12%
Predictive Analytics	73%	67%	23%
Remotely Controlled Equipment	59%	69%	19%
Exoskeletons*	50%	75%	50%
Drones	50%	69%	24%
Robotics*	47%	87%	40%
Building Information Modeling (BIM)	33%	97%	27%
Laser Scanning	27%	86%	23%

*Used frequently/very frequently by less than 30 respondents.

Selected by 70% or More
 Selected by 60% to 69%
 Selected by 50% to 59%
 Selected by 40% to 49%
 Selected by 30% to 39%
 Selected by Fewer Than 30%

AI and Safety: How Artificial Intelligence Can Help HSE Professionals

Contractors have begun to use artificial intelligence (AI) for their project and company management processes, but so far, deploying it to improve safety is not common. A recent Dodge study reveals that only 36% of contractors are aware of AI capabilities for safety risk assessment, and only 4% currently use those capabilities.

Josh Kanner, senior director of product and strategy for analytics and AI at Oracle Construction and Engineering, believes that “safety is a great place to start with AI because of the relevant OSHA and other reporting regulations. Generally speaking, most contractors have decent data sets. Also, it is a priority, and everyone agrees about its overall value.”

Ryan Pollack, director of health, safety and environmental resources at Michels Construction Inc., has found ways to implement AI despite his initial reluctance to use it. “Then I figured out how to prompt an open AI, and it’s been monumentally beneficial. I am probably anywhere from 50% to 70% more efficient because it is taking a lot less time for me to analyze documents.”

INCREASING ENGAGEMENT WITH SAFETY

Pollack and Kanner both agree that a good sign for the success of a safety program is when workers actively report near misses and incidents. Pollack says of incident reporting: “I call it a good catch program because 99% of what is submitted is a good catch and not a near miss [Our field craftworkers] identify more hazards than our safety professionals. In 2025, our employees identified and corrected more than 12,000 hazards.”

Kanner describes how HSE professionals can use AI to take this data further. “We are able to build predictive models that on a Monday can tell a head of safety with 40 projects which eight will have 80% of their safety incident risk on an ongoing basis, which is incredibly useful in terms of managing their teams, focusing their attention and ultimately trying to prevent risk before it happens.”

Michels is currently piloting the use of AI to analyze recordings of their morning safety meetings, based on the engagement of the attendees. “There is a direct correlation between the scores for how

the meeting is conducted with the overall safety performance on the projects,” Pollock explains. “It is not a Big Brother program, not a way to discipline anybody. This is truly an opportunity for us to identify how we can get better.”

AI can help construction companies spot safety risks and improve on how work gets done, but only if workers trust how it is being used. The point is not to monitor behavior, but rather to reveal the bigger structural hazards and planning issues that employers can and should fix.

Kanner describes how using AI can help new employees get up-to-speed quickly on jobsite risks. “Some AI tools can suggest things like pre-task plans that have relevant risks to be aware of. They look at a photo and suggest things that could go wrong or aren’t to code. They can be very useful in bringing those early career, less experienced workers up the curve and have a meaningful impact on safety.”

MOVING FORWARD WITH AI

The first step to prepare to use AI for safety, according to Kanner, is to improve consistency across a contractor’s safety program. “You have to make sure your internal processes are aligned and measured consistently, so that there is a scaffolding in place to make use of the AI-related insights and guidance. Applying AI can really help improve safety. It can also magnify the differences between approaches that different projects, regions or lines of business might have within a given contractor.”

As Kanner and Pollack makes clear, AI is just a tool that is part of a larger safety program. Its users should consider how it supports strong management leadership, meaningful worker participation, systematic hazard identification and control, comprehensive training, ongoing evaluation, and clear communication and coordination across the jobsite. Everyone needs to understand the purpose and scope of AI use, what data is collected and how it is processed, stored and protected, third-party involvement and how concerns will be addressed. Applying these safety principles to AI implementation will allow it to make work safer, while addressing its limitations and navigating the ethical and privacy concerns related to its use.

Building With Pride: How Blach Construction Integrates Safety and Workmanship

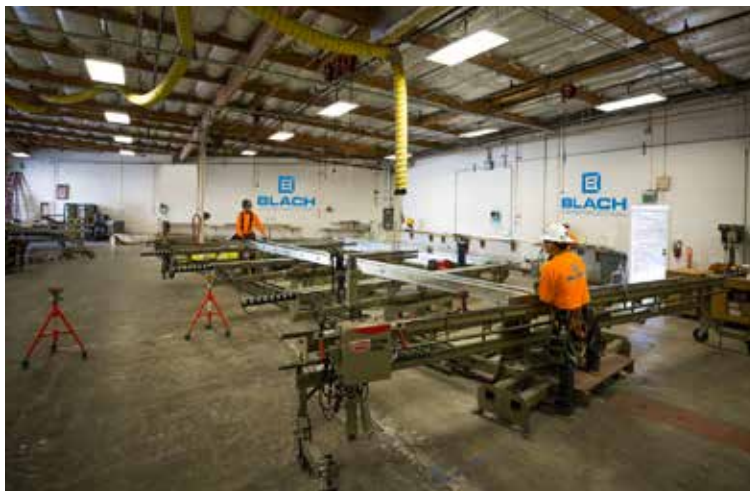
Blach Construction has taken the concept of workplace safety and made it a core value. Through a disciplined approach, the San Jose, California-based firm maintains a repeatable safety culture across all projects, reflected in an Experience Modification Rate (EMR) of 0.55, which is significantly better than the industry average of 1.0. Blach's rate demonstrates risk reduction and reliable performance for clients by fully integrating safety into daily operations through leadership involvement, standardized procedures and clear communication.

"What distinguishes Blach's safety culture is our emphasis on ownership and pride in workmanship," says Steve Acosta, Blach's senior safety manager. "We believe that when craftspeople feel personally connected to what they are building, they take greater responsibility for how the work is performed. This connection drives safer behaviors, higher-quality construction and stronger jobsite engagement."

Dan Rogers, president of Blach, says executives and project leaders consistently reinforce safety by embedding it into decision-making, planning and execution across all projects. This commitment moves directly from the boardroom to the field; safety is addressed in every meeting—often as the first agenda item—and project leaders maintain an active field presence through regular site walks, project reviews and operational checkpoints.

"Safety as the first agenda item ensures it receives consistent focus and validation," says Rogers. "This practice reinforces alignment and ensures safety considerations are embedded in operational, scheduling and financial discussions. Leaders understand accountability starts at the top and consistently follow through on commitments to set the example by verifying alignment with Blach's standards directly with project teams and subcontractors."

Safety at Blach also extends beyond the jobsite. Through executive oversight, leaders review project documentation and outward-facing materials such as photos and proposals to confirm that represented work aligns with the firm's safety practices and standards before being shared externally. "This consistent, hands-on approach demonstrates that safety at Blach is



reinforced through action, accountability and follow-through supporting risk reduction and predictable project outcomes," says Rogers.

TRAINING AND WORKFORCE EMPOWERMENT

At Blach, safety training begins with role-specific onboarding provided by each employer, ensuring workers understand the expectations, tools and tasks associated with their scope of work. Blach reinforces this with a project-wide informational onboarding for every worker onsite.

"From the outset of each project, we clearly communicate that hazard identification, reporting concerns and stopping work are not only permitted but expected," says Justin Cabral, Blach's general superintendent. "Our culture reinforces that raising concerns is viewed as a professional responsibility and a contribution to project success, not a disruption."

This cultural foundation is supported by formal systems like Stop-Work Authority, which serves as the specific mechanism ensuring that every person on a Blach site—from laborers to subcontractors—is empowered to halt operations immediately if a hazard is identified. By constantly reinforcing this authority, the company has created an environment where workers feel supported in speaking up when something does not look right.

Ongoing training is further reinforced through regular all-hands tailgate safety meetings that focus on active site conditions and upcoming work. Cabral adds that training is strengthened through the pairing of less experienced workers with seasoned journeymen,



allowing practical skills and safe work practices to be passed on to the next generation. This layered approach results in an informed, engaged workforce and is reflected in the quality of work, he says.

The company's Injury Illness Prevention Program (IIPP) establishes uniform requirements for preconstruction risk reviews, trade-specific Job Hazard Analyses (JHAs) and daily Pre-Task Plans (PTPs). To ensure all voices are heard, each project is equipped with QR code signage that allows anyone—workers, subcontractors or even neighbors—to report concerns anonymously or with identification. This has allowed the team to address project-related issues proactively that may not have been immediately visible.

MANAGING GROWTH AND TECHNOLOGY

The company's current safety program took shape through a deliberate evolution as it expanded its geographic footprint across California. "While safety has always been foundational to Blach's operations, growth created the need for a more unified, scalable approach that ensured consistent standards regardless of location or team composition," says Rogers.

As the firm expands, it faces the challenge of ensuring new employees and trade partners fully understand how safe outcomes are achieved. To address this, Blach implemented detailed, company-wide Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) across all departments. To ensure these policies are more than just words on a page, Blach leverages a centralized, cloud-based software platform that serves as the "single source of truth" to digitize and enforce these SOPs statewide.

The software platform allows the company to:

- **Embed Compliance:** Task-based systems automatically flag potential issues related to higher risk activities such as scaffolding, excavations and other critical work. "These built-in checks draw immediate attention to conditions that may be out of compliance, prompting review and corrective action before work proceeds," says Cabral.
- **Centralize Documentation:** Orientations, JHAs, PTPs, permits, inspections and corrective actions are managed in one platform and accessible from mobile devices.
- **Gain Visibility:** The program provides real-time insight into the health of projects through tracked actions in the field. This visibility allows leadership to proactively identify trends and ensure expectations are executed in practice, not just on paper.

By keeping close working relationships with subcontractors, Blach further reinforces this approach. "Construction at Blach is viewed as a collaborative effort, and trade partners know they may be asked to provide input when issues arise," says Cabral. This inclusive mindset encourages open communication and shared ownership of safety, quality and project outcomes.

As the company continues to evolve, Cabral says it is exploring emerging technologies, including machine learning, to further enhance communication and workforce engagement. By aligning safety requirements with tangible construction processes, Blach remains committed to maintaining consistent safety performance and a high-quality, uniform experience for clients across all regions.



Methodology

The **Safety Management in the Construction Industry** study was conducted by Dodge Construction Network as an online survey, which was fielded by Dodge from Oct. 14 to Dec. 1, 2025.

Many of the questions included in the study were consistent with questions asked in the one conducted in 2023, and where possible, longitudinal analysis of those questions is included in this **SmartMarket Report**.

RECRUITMENT OF RESPONDENTS

Survey respondents were recruited from the following sources:

- Dodge Construction Network Contractor Panel (210 respondents)
- Industry associations (113 respondents), including National Electrical Contractors Association, Mechanical Contractors Association of America, The Association of Union Contractors and National Insulation Association

RESPONDENT CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION

The survey was open to general, specialty trade and engineering/heavy civil contractors who conduct work in the United States.

TYPE OF COMPANY

For the analysis in this report, survey respondents were categorized into two groups based on the type of company at which they are employed:

- **General Contractors** (153 respondents): Includes general construction companies (110 respondents), design-build firms (11 respondents), construction management companies (11 respondents), heavy and civil engineering construction (21 respondents).
- **Specialty Trade Contractors** (170 respondents): Includes over 17 different trades: Over 5 responses were received from electrical contractors (66 respondents), plumbing, heating and air-conditioning contractors (43), drywall and insulation contractors (15) and roofing contractors (6).

TYPES OF PROJECTS

Respondents' companies worked most frequently on the following project types:

- High-Rise (4+ Stories) Commercial Buildings (47%)
- Low-Rise (3 Stories or Less) Commercial Buildings (77%)
- High-Rise Residential Buildings (22%)
- Low-Rise Residential Buildings (33%)
- Industrial Building Construction/Maintenance (64%)
- Transportation Buildings (28%)
- Nonbuilding Projects (33%)

SIZE OF COMPANY

- Small (Less Than 20 Employees): 19%
- Midsize (20 to 99 Employees): 39%
- Large (100 or More Employees): 42%

EMPLOYMENT OF UNION CRAFTWORKERS

- Only Employs Union Craftworkers: 41%
- Only Employs Non-Union Craftworkers: 37%
- Employs Union and Non-Union Craftworkers: 23%

RESPONDENT ROLES

- C-Level, Owner, Partner, Principal: 31%
- Senior Vice President, Vice President or Director Level: 28%
- Manager-Level: 29%
- Other: 12%

Resources

Organizations, websites and publications to help you get smarter about safety management in the construction industry.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank CPWR-The Center for Construction Research and Training for partnering with Dodge on this research for more than a decade and helping us to identify the topics that can best help the industry.

We thank our research partners for engaging their members to participate in our survey, including National Electrical Contractors Association, Mechanical Contractors Association of America, The Association of Union Contractors and the National Insulation Association. Their efforts helped us to capture the insights across a broad range of contractors in the industry.

We also thank all the people who contributed their insights to our sidebar articles, interviews and case studies for generously sharing their expertise with us.

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