

Demonstrating Management Commitment

Construction management, in partnership with their employees, is responsible for ensuring that jobsite hazards are eliminated, or at least minimized. These partnerships are most effective when they exist within a positive safety climate.

The **safety climate** on a construction jobsite refers to managements' and employees' shared perceptions about the extent to which safety is rewarded, expected, valued and reinforced. It may be influenced by things such as project scheduling and planning methods and norms of the trades working on-site.

Management's commitment to keeping employees safe is demonstrated through their words and actions and is critical for establishing and maintaining a positive safety climate. Just saying "safety is #1!" does not automatically translate into a positive safety climate. Which of the following best describes your company?

INATTENTIVE	→	REACTIVE	→	COMPLIANT	→	PROACTIVE	→	EXEMPLARY
Management rarely comes to the actual jobsite. When present, they often are poor safety role models because they break company safety policies and procedures. When employees bring concerns to management they are not acted upon and the employees are labeled troublemakers.		Management gets involved only after an injury occurs. They often blame employees for injuries, leading to suspension or even termination. Safety rules are enforced only after an incident or when safety audit results are negative. Their focus is on injuries and violations.		Management conforms to OSHA regulations, never more or less. Safety compliance is based on owner, general contractor, or regulatory directives. Managers sometimes participate in safety audits but corrective actions are focused on employee rather than program deficiencies.		Management initiates and actively participates in safety audits. Managers ask employees for advice and feedback regarding hazard identification and reduction. Management conducts spontaneous site visits and recognizes employees for identifying hazards, working safely, and keeping co-workers safe. Management participates in safety program development and provides adequate resources to ensure a positive safety climate. Safety programs and policies are reviewed annually to ensure effectiveness and relevance.		Management integrates safety into every meeting and engages in continuous improvement regarding safety conditions and hazard reduction. External audits are used to evaluate the safety performance of top management. Managers are held accountable for safety expectations in annual performance evaluations. Safety trends are analyzed. A formal process for corrective action exists.

How to become exemplary

Review the ideas below and check the short-term , mid-term , or long-term  circle to indicate which you will commit to adopt and by when. *Congratulations, if you've already adopted the idea!*

Idea #1 - Develop safety policies, procedures, and guidelines that are aligned with other company priorities and values

Safety is relevant to many company policies and procedures. By incorporating and integrating appropriate safety language into applicable policies and procedures, employees will trust that the company truly values them and their safety. Examples include 1. Review critical operating plans for safety implications, and 2. Bid review requirements for safety supplies.

-  — Already Adopted
-  — Short-term
-  — Mid-term
-  — Long-term

Idea #2 - Be visible to employees and use correct safety behaviors

On some jobsites, employees never see senior management. Employees are more likely to appreciate, value, and internalize safety messages when they are occasionally (at least) delivered by higher-level management rather than sent down the "chain of command." Also, when senior management is on the jobsite, it is important that they act as ideal safety role models by wearing proper PPE (e.g., gloves, glasses, boots, hearing protection, etc.) and obeying all safety rules (e.g. walking in designated walkways, refraining from using cell phones while driving, etc.).

-  — Already Adopted
-  — Short-term
-  — Mid-term
-  — Long-term

Idea #3 - Allocate adequate resources to effectively implement safety activities

While written safety policies and procedures are necessary, it is critical that management provides sufficient resources for effective implementation and maintenance of safety-related activities. Financial resources should be allocated for OSHA 10 and 30 training for everyone in the company and also for purchasing and providing appropriate PPE for everyone on jobsites. Investing in systems for collecting and analyzing information on incidents and near miss data and reporting changes also clearly demonstrates management’s commitment to prevention and continuous improvement of the jobsite safety climate.

-  Already Adopted
-  Short-term
-  Mid-term
-  Long-term

Idea #4 - Actively participate in meetings

Management should actively participate in meetings where hazards are reviewed and initiate discussion on safety in other meetings. These types of behaviors ensure or provide an opportunity for direct communication between employees and management and help demonstrate to all employees that the company values and understands safety.

-  Already Adopted
-  Short-term
-  Mid-term
-  Long-term

Idea #5 - Strive for Zero Hazard as well as Zero Injury jobsites

Companies should conduct job hazard analyses using safety audits or other tools. These safety audits provide guidance on where changes to processes and products might be needed to help achieve zero injuries on jobsites. Reward structures should be designed to encourage employees to proactively identify hazards (good catch) and report close calls and injuries.

-  Already Adopted
-  Short-term
-  Mid-term
-  Long-term

Idea #6 - Create formalized process for corrective action

Management should take all employee safety concerns seriously and promptly address them. When concerns are ignored, or if there is retaliation, employees may be less likely to report hazards in the future. Establishing a formal process for reporting and responding to safety concerns and for conducting blame-free investigations reflects a strong commitment to safety. Management should review all incident reports, determine contributing factors, and communicate their findings to all employees. Consider creating an “action list” to show how issues raised are being addressed and placing the list in a prominent location. This reinforces the message that employee contributions to creating a positive safety climate are valued and helps keep them involved. Keeping track of hazards and injuries over time provides a directed approach to identifying systematic problems in safety operations.

-  Already Adopted
-  Short-term
-  Mid-term
-  Long-term