



# Foundations for Safety Leadership

## What folks are saying about the FSL

The Foundations for Safety Leadership (FSL) training program was completed in the spring of 2016 and on January 1, 2017, OSHA's Directorate of Training and Education (DTE) approved it as an official elective in their construction 30-hour course. As of April 2019, over 60,000 individuals have taken the FSL either as part of a company/union training or as an elective in the OSHA 30-hour course.

The FSL teaches frontline leaders learn about the costs of ineffective and benefits of effective safety leadership plus how to use these 5 critical leadership skills on the job site:

- Lead by example
- Engage and empower team members
- Actively listen and practice 3-way communication
- Develop team members by teaching, coaching & giving feedback
- Recognize team members for a job well-done

We were pleased to hear from OSHA's DTE that they "have been hearing great things about the FSL from the Ed Centers," so we decided to follow-up with our other target audiences. We asked trainers who had used the FSL for feedback on their classroom experiences and asked construction company safety and health directors/managers and trained foremen if they had seen any changes in the field they thought was due, at least in part, to the training.

This document provides the reader sample quotes from those interviews to illustrate the types of feedback we have received. If you are inspired by what you read, simply click on these links to download the FSL materials and resources (all free of charge):

[\*\*Primary Training Materials\*\* - PowerPoint, Instructor Guide and more!](#)

[\*\*Train the Trainer Materials and Resources\*\*](#)

[\*\*Additional Resources\*\* - Toolbox Talks, FSL Handbook, and more...!](#)

[\*\*Spanish Resources\*\*](#)

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## Management's overall view of the FSL training

"When I first saw the FSL training a couple years ago I felt that it was an effective way to train construction supervisors and personnel. I think it's really on target; how you show scenarios and what you shouldn't do and what you should do. I think the key to keeping people safe is having good safety leadership out there not only with our supervisors but with our own employees, you know the carpenters and the laborers. We want them to step up." **Safety Director, Warfel Construction**

"The Foundations for Safety Leadership course came at the right time for us as a company. We were looking for a topic for our annual supervisory training program for our foremen. The first FSL course class we taught was just testing the waters. I thought the content was pertinent and well received, but we needed more perspective to make it flow better. We felt more comfortable with the course content and flow with the second class. It was easier to deliver the message having learned something before and gauging our audience. I feel this course gives our supervisors a solid baseline for planning and safely executing their work. I also like the piece on leadership that deals with setting a positive example for your employees." **Director of Operations, The George D. Alan Company**

"In order to be an effective supervisor, skills must be in place to lead the workforce. We are committed to providing those leadership skills to our supervisory staff. This Foundations of Safety Leadership Program is an excellent method to do just that. The FSL Program will be made a requirement for all supervision to attend." **Environmental Safety and Health Director, Roy Anderson Corp**

"Overall, feedback has been positive. This course and the vernacular used (empowerment, safety climate, etc.) align well with training and messages we have been pushing out to our foremen over the past year or two. Active participation by the attendees was easy to get. We will likely continue the use of this program in our foreman development." **Manager of Health and Safety, Mortenson Construction**

"I think the FSL is great as either a standalone training for supervisors or as a section in the OSHA 30 class. I have put about 30 employees through the class to date and would recommend the training for all foremen and above." **HS Director, Western Allied Mechanical, Inc.**

"My thoughts are still that it is a great training program. We continue to work to find ways to embed the skills. Our two main ways are: 1. We send out a weekly text to all foreman with a helpful reminder that changes weekly 2. We send out a Tool Box Talk specific to our company that we've written every 2 weeks to engage our team." **Executive VP & COO, Bruce & Merrilees Electric Co.**

"Well received. We really appreciate the new Spanish version. ...The FSL is required training for leaders in Latin America and part of continuing education." **Director OSH, Thyssenkrupp Elevator Americas**

"Dimeo Construction Company and I will continue to use the FSL training on projects to increase awareness for crew leaders." **Safety Manager, Dimeo Construction**

"We have used the training in our First Line Supervisor/Foreman Leadership Training for all contract personnel providing O&M services at our fossil plants. We have had 3,225 people run through the training as of May 14, 2019. Based on the feedback received thus far, the participants really enjoyed the video simulations of safety situations. We appreciate all of the hard work you all have put in to provide this product and making it available for our use." **Training Analyst, The Southern Company**

## **Management's observations of foremen using the 5 safety leadership skills**

### **1. Lead by example**

"The training has great content. We implemented a Ladder's Last Policy for our group of companies that same day. One of our field employees who took this course notified us of a ladder issue on a job and removed the hazard. He felt empowered by this leadership training and took swift action to correct it." *Director of Operations, The George D. Alan Company*

"One of our foremen wears prescription glasses, and has resisted using safety eyewear. And he's not resisting anymore. The message hit home..." "I have to lead by example. I want my guys to do it, and I guess I'll need to lead." I think that came through for him." *Corporate Safety & Health Manager, Tezak Heavy Equipment*

### **2. Engage & Empower**

"I think they're more aware when they do their morning safety meetings, their morning huddle. I see them take a little more time when they're talking about the work that they also cover the safety implications of that work. I see them more likely to ask for input from their crew instead of just giving instructions." *(Former) Safety Director, Fiore & Sons*

"One of the changes that we instituted after the FSL training was that we decided as a group to do JHAs daily, every morning, instead of just weekly. Generally what the guys are now doing is somebody on the crew is leading the JHA every morning; somebody different every day. And I think that kind of came about as part of engaging team members." *Corporate Safety & Health Manager, Tezak Heavy Equipment*

### **3. Communicate (Active Listening and 3-way Communication)**

"The subject of the [FSL] training has come up with many superintendents throughout this season. I have noticed a difference in the way some of them approach problems with their employees such as taking a more diplomatic, professional approach to handling situations rather than yelling. Some attitudes have changed in regards to their responsibilities in the company's safety effort." *Safety Director, Small Paving Subcontractor*

"The three way communication has improved after the training. That communication is happening better where they get more participation from their crew members during those instruction times, or during those safety meetings that they have. Whereas before it was, this is what we're doing, this is how we're doing it, go to work. There is now some more communication during that time." *(Former) Project Safety Manager, Kraemer North America*

### **4. Develop, Teach, Coach, Give Feedback**

"Shortly after the training I saw a significant amount of them encouraging employees to learn and participate more. Not just following instructions but participating in the whole process and developing employees. Part of it too is there's been an overall emphasis in the company to develop employees as we get more demand for higher skill levels out of all level employees. It fit right in with our mission... Recently on a typical sewer line build, I witnessed foremen doing more to develop individual employees... And if a foreman has to leave the site, they encourage the lead guys to ask questions about the work so they can take over the crew and more safety responsibilities." *(Former) Safety Director, Fiore & Sons*

"First time supervisors have never been in that role and have no idea of what they're stepping into. Rather than them going into it blind and not knowing how to act, how to talk to people or how to coach people, this gives them a good head start. They're going to know how to talk to people, what's expected out them, how to lead, how to have a 3-way conversation, and how to coach." *Safety Director*

## 5. Recognize team members for a job well-done

"More employees are submitting pictures to us on job sites with hazards and safety concerns. We take that information back to our general contractors/customers to notify them that they have an issue on a job. It does not matter what the severity level of the hazard is, we report everything that we are aware of. This helps create awareness and makes for a safer job site." **Director of Operations, The George D. Alan Company**

"So, you know, I spent a lot of time with several crews lately, and I've seen the foreman communicate more and give that feedback and praise, and say thank you to the guys that are doing things the way they're supposed to be doing." **(Former) Project Safety Manager, Kraemer North America**

"A laborer came up with a great idea for protecting steel sheet pile, which can have sharp edges. And his superintendent made it a point to tell me about his idea, and asked "Hey, can you get some safety bucks for the guy and I said absolutely. That is very innovative. The guy had a great idea let's commend him for it." **Corporate Safety & Health Manager, Tezak Heavy Equipment**

## Superintendents, Foremen & Workers talk about benefits of the FSL

### General

"The leadership training has broadened my way of thinking, and my way of reacting to issues/problems. We have really gotten these guys into shape. I would say a lot of it has come from this program opening your eyes and how to deal with people... they're all buying into it. It took some of them a little bit of bucking but they're buying into it very well." **Foreman**

"Since I've gone through [the FSL] I have teamed up with the safety department which about three or four years ago you would get as far away from safety as you can. When they'd come up, you'd try to get your guys to stop working and just take it easy until they're gone. I've started going to the safety meetings... And when my Safety Manager leaves the site, we have two more safety guys, but he puts me in charge over his job because he knows it's going to get done. I look out for safety and I look out for the guys and I look out for him. But before this program, that wasn't me." **Foreman**

### Lead by Example, Recognize, & Empower

"I had a lead two days ago kick another trade off a boom lift because he wasn't wearing a harness... I said, "You might want to go talk to his lead." He said, "No, no. I'm going to go tell him to get off of that." So I said, "All right." I knew doing this was important because if you don't have a lead, then you won't have any followers and you have to set an example. I pulled everybody at lunch and told them that my lead pulled that that guy off the lift. That gave him reassurance that what he did was right and everybody else also recognized that. It only takes a couple of seconds but telling them thank you and good job and recognizing what they did, it makes them feel like they should do that more...my crew has been doing that more and more." **Foreman**

### Engage & Lead by example

"We've started doing a lot of things differently. A lot of it has to do with the leadership training that we went through. I've started pushing the supervisors to go for a quick five minute walks through the work area before their hands get there to see if things may have changed and add that to the JSA. I started carrying gloves with me which I didn't do before the training. I have a better understanding of how to relate to the guys instead of saying "you need to do this and that, you need to have this and that on", because I wasn't doing it myself. I was always a firm believer that earplugs hurt my hears and would always wear a bandana and kept it below my ears so no one could tell if I was wearing earplugs or not. I stopped that and now I carry my earplugs and wear them." **Superintendent**

## **Engage**

"Since the leadership training that we went through, we now have our five-minute meetings each morning...and we haven't always done that. It really helps everybody wake up and get on the same game plan... It gives us an opportunity to point out the dangers and things that are going on around us because it's ever changing...we get their feedback as well as what they think of what we're saying about how we want things done properly and explaining little things...like ladder safety to see if everybody's still familiar with tying off the ladders and using them properly." **Foreman**

## **Communicate & Engage**

"The biggest thing I took out of the training – and it's something that I've done but never took it as seriously as I do now - was 3-way communicating. Having people explain back to you what you told them. I mean, that really has helped a lot. Instead of just giving somebody some information, sending them off blindly to do the job, and then you know, getting mad 'cause they didn't do it right. That way, they can explain back to you exactly what you said to them and if they didn't get it the first time, you have an opportunity to talk about it and get it right. And it also makes them feel like they're part of the planning, so to speak, of the specific task. I think that is a great tool; something I've done a little bit but am really trying to do a lot more of because of the training." **Foreman**

## **Engage, Communicate, & Recognize**

"Now I try to get them involved and get their opinion. I'll ask them to do a task and everyone discusses it and has input rather than "I'm the foreman and you go do what I tell you to do and I don't want to hear anything else about it." I'll ask them if they understand what I'm saying. And I [say] "I'm not going to get on you if you do not understand," I'll take another step or see what else I need to do to make sure [they] understand. I want them to understand and not be lost or misled about what we're doing. And if they do a good job, I try to be sure to recognize them and not just in private but in front of the other guys. You can make note of this person that they're working safely, doing the task correctly, using the proper PPE, inspecting all their tools/equipment and try to make an example out of them. This is what we want everybody to do." **Foreman**

## **Communicate**

"We have some guys that when you tell them "this is the task you got, go ahead and get it done", a couple of foremen will take that and run with it because they have great listening skills. I do have a couple that's going to look a little cross eyed and I'll tell them again and ask them to tell me exactly what I just said. Sometimes, I'll have to draw pictures or write it down for them. We'll go over it a few more times and then it will sink in. One way or another, they will get the 3-way communication that never really played into effect with me until I sat through this training." **Superintendent**

## **Recognize**

"I like to praise them when I walk up to a crew. I don't hide anything. But when I can't find or don't see any infractions, or any safety violations, and housekeeping are kept up, I'll praise and stop everybody. I'll let them take a five or ten minute break and sit everybody down to tell them how great everything looks. By keeping all their areas clean and keeping their PPE on, it gets us more work, it keeps us out of trouble with safety, and it keeps them going home safely every night. All around, it all revolves around safety." **Superintendent**

"...they're patting you on the back for doing the right thing. This goes on more than what it did before. When you have somebody behind you saying "good job" or correcting you and making sure it's being done. It feels like they care about you; they want you to do a good job but they want you to do a safe job and they're not too worried about the time." **Worker**

## Experienced trainers talk about teaching the FSL

"FSL presents leadership training to frontline supervisors in a way that makes sense to them. Of the dozen classes I've instructed, I believe every participant has been impacted in one way or another. The training is set up to actively get participation from everyone in the room. [I was] skeptical at first, but the role play exercise is a hit every time. FSL material is easy for any instructor to use. I believe this program will have a positive impact for many years to come." **Authorized 30-hour construction trainer**

"I've been a safety and health trainer for over 33 years and I really enjoy teaching the FSL. I think the developers put together a well-designed curriculum including a complete power point presentation and an excellent and easy to follow instructor guide. Students I've had in FSL classes have reported enjoying and benefitting from the class and they say they are looking forward to using the skills when they get back to their jobsites." **OSHA master trainer**

"During my introduction I ask what is MISSING from the OSHA 30. Everyone's eyes light up when I say "How to communicate effectively", "How to lead." Everyone gets it. During yesterday's training we had a fantastic conversation about three-way communication, and how to make it natural and not offensive, and how to ask clarifying questions as a way to achieve the same goal. Everybody got something out of it, including this experienced trainer." **Experienced OHS trainer**

"The FSL covers important safety-related information that is not part of traditional safety programs that teach you about the focus 4 hazards. Rather it provides information to our union members about the costs of being an ineffective safety leader including how company's loss history affects them directly through their negotiated benefit package. It also covers specific communication methods like active listening and 3-way communication to help with conflict resolution. It gives our foremen and lead workers some valuable skills they can use to make the job site safer and more productive." **Health & Safety, Director, IUOE Local 478**

"I find the FSL power point presentation to be very well done and easy to work with. I find this topic opens up great conversation for use on the jobsite and in relationships in life with family, friends, teams, and community. I love that some of it is interactive. I use the paper airplane demo during the topic Active Listening and 3-way communication. I usually play two of the scenarios per class. Thank you for the program as I feel it is a great topic for our membership supervisors, foreman and EVERYONE." **New England Laborers Health and Safety Fund**