

Owner & Client Involvement

Idea #1 – Project owner/client presence on-site demonstrates safety buy-in and provides the foundation for a strong safety climate:

1a. Participate and lead employee orientation

Site orientations help familiarize employees with potential hazards they may face on the jobsite. Orientation also helps establish a foundation for two-way communication between project owners/clients, contractors, and employees about safety issues. When employees see project owners demonstrate that they value safety, they are more confident that participating in safety efforts is important.



1b. Devote adequate resources to implementing safety programs and enforcing policies

To show a true commitment to protecting employees, project owner/client must make available adequate resources to those managing the safety program. Safety policies and programs are meaningless unless they are effectively implemented, enforced, reviewed, and if necessary, modified.



1c. Create mechanisms for contractors to voice safety concerns

Create a climate where contractor concerns are heard and those who identify hazards are recognized. It may be important to offer contractors alternative ways to communicate with owners about potential hazards including suggestion boxes placed in multiple locations, surveys, and informal non-threatening interviews.



1d. Join daily planning meetings and safety walk-arounds, and ALWAYS wear appropriate PPE

As often as possible, project owner/client should participate in daily pre-task planning meetings (or huddles) and joint site safety walk-arounds with contractors' management and employees. Asking field personnel for solutions to safety-related issues clearly demonstrates "walking the talk"; that is, as long as feasible suggestions are considered and acted upon. Project owner's participation in safety activities and following safety rules helps employees trust management's espoused safety values. Nothing sours a relationship like "Do as I say, not as I do."



Idea #2 - Incorporate safety throughout the design and planning phases of the project:

2a. Take safety into account when selecting and evaluating contractors

Carefully review contractors' safety program and policies, as well as their safety performance, when pre-qualifying and selecting them for a project. Review bids for reasonable PPE, safety supplies, and training. Data on lagging indicators (e.g., injuries) may reflect underreporting rather than a strong commitment to safety. Responsibilities, expectations, and evaluation metrics based on safety climate indicators (like the ones in this workbook) should be specified in the contract, and selected contractors should be held accountable for meeting those expectations.



2b. Use Prevention through Design (PtD) methods

Provide PtD training for in-house and contracted architects and engineers to educate them on strategies they can use to design hazards out of equipment, structures, materials, and processes that may negatively affect employees and end-users. Consider value added engineering of PtD in costs and schedule.



Idea #3 - Make the project owner/client accountable for safety

Project owner/client should participate in regular safety committee meetings that have a rotating chair so that the project owner/client is periodically the safety committee chair. Project owner/client should have an open door policy for contractors to discuss safety issues and ensure that their representatives in the field follow all safety rules.

