



Health & Safety

FALL 2018

# NEWSLETTER

## Creating a Strong Safety Culture in your Organization

By Joe Stevens, Founder of Bridge Safety Consultants

The Safety Culture of an organization is determined by the attitudes, beliefs, and practices of the people in that organization. How high of a priority do you make safety? How important is it to you to follow safe practices and avoid risks and potential dangers?

There is nothing - NOTHING - as important as your safety.

### Getting Buy-In From Employees

One of the greatest challenges for any business concerned with safety is getting buy-in from the people most likely to suffer injuries. Excellent training and an environment free of hazards is no match for a workforce that doesn't subscribe to performing their jobs safely. No training can overcome risky behavior or a careless approach to the job.

For management, creating buy-in starts with acknowledging that safety cannot be imposed no matter how much they desire an injury-free workplace. Visible leadership at all levels establishes a foundation for safe behavior. Criticism, threats, and even discipline are reactions to bad behavior, but are not effective long-term motivators and they don't change the mentality. Always doing the right thing and demonstrating the importance of safety is a mandatory mindset for managers.

In order to have safe results, it is imperative that the workforce buy in to the notion that it is their behavior - the decisions that they make - that determines the outcome. For this to happen, workers must be participants. They must interact and understand that it's their safety program.

### Participation Leads to Ownership – Tips for Building your Safety Culture

1. Encourage safety suggestions, and don't let the suggestion box gather cobwebs. Reward meaningful suggestions. Acknowledge and give recognition for every reasonable suggestion. Inform the workforce when action is being taken, or why action is not necessary. Even when the suggestions are not helpful, making them a bigger part of your safety program gets workers thinking about ways they can do their jobs safely and more efficiently, and that helps build the foundation of a safety culture.

*Continued . . .*

## REMINDERS & QUICK HITS

### 24/7 Injury Reporting Hotline 855-850-2249

The Workers' Compensation Division's Injury Reporting/ Nurse Triage medical advice hotline is available to all departments. This service provides immediate medical triage advice, assistance with filing claims, and injury reporting. Email requests for posters and other reminders to:

[Carlos.Torrez@sfgov.org](mailto:Carlos.Torrez@sfgov.org)

## OSHA SAFETY COMPLIANCE

Safety Officials, Departmental Personnel Officers, and Human Resources representatives: Please click on and read the attached memos regarding electronic filing of the OSHA300A Summary.

  
Text-of-Amended-Regulation.pdf

  
OSHA ELECTRONIC FILING COMPLIANCE 2

300A summaries MUST be filed electronically before 12/31/18 for calendar year 2017 injuries if you haven't already filed. An instructional email will be sent when OSHA updates the reporting page. For questions please contact:  
[Carlos.Torrez@sfgov.org](mailto:Carlos.Torrez@sfgov.org)



## Health & Safety NEWSLETTER

FALL 2018

2. Encourage participation, and don't let safety meetings be a one-way communication. Find ways to involve workers in demonstrations of the proper way to do a job, point out a potential hazard, or to explain a near miss. Solicit suggestions and get input. Every time the workforce is together for a meeting is an opportunity to get greater involvement and greater involvement means greater buy-in.

3. Acknowledge, recognize, and show appreciation. For a workforce performing job tasks that are physically demanding and has some inherent risks, getting recognition and feeling appreciated for doing jobs the right way breaks down a barrier that sometimes exists between management and workers. That appreciation should be genuine because it takes dedication to always do the right thing. When a worker feels appreciated, she or he is far more likely to want to be a part of the team and the organization, and that's the essence of "buy-in".

4. Celebrate success! Set goals, and when they are achieved, celebrate. Every employee can be proud when safety goals are met and exceeded, and there is nothing wrong with tooting horns and congratulating everyone responsible for safety success. Elevate safety to a position where accountability is expected and achievement is important.

Your safety culture is a reflection of your values. You have lots of priorities in your jobs, but there are none as important as your safety. Think and take action to avoid risks, ask questions, make suggestions, or help a teammate in need. The stronger the safety culture, the more positive the environment, and a positive environment makes every job more enjoyable, and every person happier and more productive.

*Note: Safety consultation services are available through a DHR contract. Call us if you are interested in building your safety culture.*

### EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

When the building alarm goes off in your building, what do you do? What do you grab? Where do you go? Who do you tell? Who do you assist? Where do you meet? How does your department account for everyone? What about visitors?

If you can't answer these questions, you are unprepared for an emergency or disaster in the workplace.

Every floor of every city building has an evacuation plan. Please take 5 minutes to locate your plan and commit it to memory. You'll need to know how to find your way out even in chaotic situations.

Each department has its own Emergency Action plan or "EAP". This plan will include the location of your emergency exits, who are the assigned safety monitors (those likely to be wearing a bright orange vest) who ensure that everyone is off the floor, and where to meet



### Space Heaters

As the temperature starts to fall we tend to see an increase in requests to use individual space heaters at the workplace.

Note that as a general policy individual space heaters are **not** allowed at personal workspaces.

Please direct any questions on accommodations or requests for dispensation to management.



Above is the floor plan for DHR at 1 South Van Ness



## Health & Safety NEWSLETTER

FALL 2018

when you are safely out of the building.

When the alarms sound, there are a few things for you to do. First, listen closely for instructions. If told to evacuate, calmly secure your mobile phone, keys, wallet/purse, and laptop as applicable. You may also need a coat to keep warm and/or dry during bad weather because you do not know how long you may be required to stand outside waiting for further directions. In emergency situations where the building is damaged, you may not be allowed back in to building for several days so you want to be mobile, reachable, and have access to funds.

Also consider keeping a “go bag” at your workplace that includes water, comfortable shoes, and food items in case of an emergency event.

What happens if employees or visitors are physically unable to navigate stairs? In these situations, buildings are equipped with “stair chairs” or a Stryker chair. Proper training in the use of these chairs should be a part of every department’s emergency action plan. If you do not currently know who is trained on this equipment, or would like to know more about their function, contact your department personnel officer. Department personnel officers who would like more information are free to contact [Carlos.Torrez@sfgov.org](mailto:Carlos.Torrez@sfgov.org) with a picture/model number of the chair in question so that we can help with a plan to train several of your employees to help safely evacuate employees and visitors who are unable to use the stairs.

If you are unfamiliar with your EAP, contact your supervisor or safety officer for information.

### COLD & FLU SEASON



Keeping your hands clean is one of the most important steps you can take to avoid getting sick and spreading germs to others. It’s best to wash your hands with soap and clean running water for 20 seconds. If that’s not possible, use alcohol-based hand rubs.



### Office Ergonomics – How to Properly Set Up a Work Station

The most avoidable injuries are the ones we build slowly over time with incorrectly set-up workstations and bad habits. It’s not just the work you do but *how* you do it. The City has an obligation to provide a safe and healthy workplace. In this article, we provide information for office workers on how to adjust workstations.

Nearly all of the equipment we provide is adjustable. Chairs, tables, monitor arms, monitor settings, mouse and keyboard inputs etc. can all be changed to best fit you. And since no two people (twins aside) are exactly alike it is important to make these adjustments needed to have your workstation accommodate you.

The heart of your workstation is the chair and desk/table. How these two items are set up dictate most of your ergonomic health while at work.

*Continued . . .*





## Set Up an Ergonomic Workspace



The chair should be comfortable, with your lower back firmly pressed in to the back cushion, your knees bent at a 90-120 degree angle with your feet planted firmly and flatly on the ground or foot rest. Arms should rest comfortably at your side with the arms of your chair (if so equipped) not touching your elbows and certainly not forcing them up. If your chair arms put your arms in a slight shrug they are too high and place pressure on your shoulders and neck. The pan of your chair (the part of the chair you actually sit on), if adjustable, should be positioned forward or back -- enough to allow 2-4 inches between the front of the chair and the back of your knees.

The keyboard and mouse you use should be positioned directly in front of you, be parallel with your bellybutton, and should be able to be comfortably used without strain or stretching your forearms away from your body. If standard keyboards are too wide or if your usage of the number pad is a large part of your work, consider requesting a smaller keyboard and/or one with a separate number pad.

Your monitors should be positioned 19-24 inches away from your eyes with the top of it parallel with your eyebrows. This will ensure a proper viewing distance and allow your eyes to see more of the monitor without unnecessary scanning. When working with a monitor daily, please try to employ a 20-20-20 rule. That is, every 20 minutes, focus on something roughly 20 feet away for 20 seconds. This regimen gives your eyes a break from focusing on the glowing screen.

More resources, including an online learning module on office ergonomics, are coming in the near future.

## Safety Resources

**CCSF INJURY MEDICAL ADVICE HOTLINE 24 HOURS:** 855-850-2249

**POISON CONTROL 24 HOURS:** 800-222-1222

**NEEDLE STICK HOTLINE:** 415-469-4411

**WORKPLACE HAZARD REPORTING HOTLINE:** 415-557-4999

**DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES:** 415-557-4800

