

## Some Symptoms Of A Poor Safety Culture

Is a bad safety culture bringing your organization down and leading to increased accidents? Here's how to tell if your company has a bad safety culture, and what you can do to fix it.

Here are 7 indicators that your organizations safety culture is dysfunctional:

### **1. Safety doesn't start at the top.**

People emulate what they see. If you want your organization to have a successful safety program, the top leadership at your company are the ones that will have to be the ambassadors. Get your executive staff 100% onboard and the rest of the company will follow. However, one weak link and it will bring down your entire safety culture across the board. Make sure all your executives, as well as managers and supervisors are supporting your safety plan.

### **2. Poor communication between departments or branches.**

Ambiguity breeds weakness in your safety plan. For success, make sure you have a clear plan in place, with concrete responsibilities for each department and members of your team. Make sure you re-iterate these plans constantly, and ensure that each department is aware of every part of the plan. It is also wise to select a point-person or designated communication officer that will be the liaison between different groups in your organization, with the end goal of unifying all of the plans together for the success of the entire safety project.

### **3. Under-reporting of accidents and incidents.**

In a study published in the National Safety Council's *Journal of Safety Research* (Vol. 45), young workers indicated that a sense of powerlessness kept them from telling their supervisor about safety concerns. The best way for your safety culture to thrive is to empower your workers and have them fix safety hazards before they happen. Unfortunately, many times hazards are mitigated only after they are reported or a near-miss occurs. For this reason, your organization should accurately report all accidents, incidents, and near-misses to help improve your safety plan and strengthen your culture of safety.

#### **4. Placing the blame.**

When injuries occur, many times individuals are blame, and it is believed that responsibility for accidents belongs to those directly involved. Safety should be very one's job. Furthermore, some known reasons for not reporting an injury are:

- The injury was small
- Accepting pain as part of the job
- Not wanting to be labeled a "complainer"
- Believing home treatment would be sufficient
- Not being sure if the injury was work-related
- Fearing the loss of future or current jobs
- Not being able to afford time off without pay to see a doctor
- Not wanting to lose out on the safety incentive for no lost work time.

You should emphasize that safety is everyone's job, but also stress that no retaliation will happen for someone who reports an injury.

#### **5. Cost-cutting and exclusive focus on profitability.**

Sometimes, there is a culture that profitability is the only concern in an organization. Safety and health are seen as an added cost. Symptoms of this include workers rushing and working too quickly, companies not wanting to purchase the correct PPE and other equipment, over-working employees, and focusing exclusively on the bottom line.

#### **6. No follow-up or improvement after an accident.**

The reality is that accidents can happen anytime, even with proper training and protection. If an accident happens on your job site, you should use the opportunity to evaluate your safety procedures and mitigate the hazards so they won't happen again. The data you collect will ultimately improve your company. Many times, companies simply record the accident and file it away. You should always investigate, follow-up, and take concrete steps to improve your safety plan after an accident or incident occurs. Make sure you also have a good record keeping system and save all documents relating to an injury.

#### **7. Not valuing employees.**

Your employees are the life blood of your business. Increased morale leads to increased efficiency, productivity, and profitability. Let your workers know that they have a voice. Give them a channel to communicate safety hazards. Listen to their comments and suggestions, and make sure you follow up on serious hazards that are reported. Not only will you build trust with your team, but you will make your company safer at the same time.

If you notice any of these issues in your organization, it's not too late! By focusing on fixing these weak spots, you will be able to [lay the groundwork to build a great safety culture in your company.](#)

**Readers may please note that D. L. Shah Trust brings out two e-journals on a fortnightly basis. These are mailed to those persons or institutions who are desirous of receiving them:**

**These two e-journals are:**

- 1. Safety Info**
- 2. Quality Info**

**If you or your friends or colleagues wish to receive these journals, you may send us an email requesting for the same. There is no charge for these journals. Our e-mail address is:**

**dlshahtrust@yahoo.co.in**

**or**

**haritaneja@hotmail.com**

**or**

**dlshahtrust@gmail.com**

**You can also access these journals on our website: [www.dlshahtrust.org](http://www.dlshahtrust.org)**

**Published by : D. L. Shah Trust,  
Room No. 16, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Gool Mansion,  
Homji Street, Mumbai 400 001  
email: [dlshahtrust@yahoo.co.in](mailto:dlshahtrust@yahoo.co.in)  
Ph: 022-22672041  
Subscription: Free on request  
(soft copy only)**

**Edited by : Hari K Taneja, Trustee,  
D. L. Shah Trust  
email: [dlshahtrust@gmail.com](mailto:dlshahtrust@gmail.com)  
Phone: 022-2309 6529  
Subscription: Free on request  
(soft copy only)**