



THE COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE OF SAFETY

TURNING OHS INTO A STRATEGIC ADVANTAGE

THE SAFETY SPEND ADVANTAGE

Every employer wants workers, contractors and the public to be safe on the jobsite — but at what cost? Safety can have many costs and often the choice must be made where the money will be spent.

Typical spending on safety includes:

- Better safety engineered tools and equipment
- Safety training
- Safety professionals (in house or third-party consulting)
- Safety registry compliance and maintenance

These expenditures can add up. But keeping your workers safe is crucial. It not only gives your company a competitive advantage in the prequalification stage of a project, leading to being awarded the NEXT contract, but a company's reputation for safety travels fast – and the safest companies get the best workers and the best contracts.

Most companies try, at least, to do the minimum requirements to meet legislation. Workers are trained, personal protective equipment is worn, equipment is maintained.

Companies with this approach tend to be reactive: How could that incident have been prevented? How can we get an injured worker back at work quicker? How can we keep our insurance/WCB costs down after an accident?



So, knowing this, let's talk about ways safety pays. If we take the human aspect out of an injury (because every employer wants to make sure workers are happy and uninjured) then it makes financial sense to reduce the worksite potential for injury. The saying 'a penny saved is a penny earned' holds true here. An incident/accident that does not occur has a large and direct financial impact, including lower insurance and Workers Compensation rates. And that is not all, it is very costly to train a new worker to replace an injured worker.

THE PREQUALIFICATION SAFETY ADVANTAGE

To grow your company and get new clients, it is critical to focus on the prequalification stage. Hiring Clients set safety standards for the contractors they want to hire. These standards often include the following:

- A current, well-written Safety Program. Hiring clients review the company safety manual against the specific hazards workers may be exposed to on the jobsite. Additionally, COR / SECOR may also be required to work for certain Clients.
- Insurance must meet minimum requirements for coverage type and amount. In recent years insurance prices have risen substantially, and a single incident could cause an additional increase in your premiums. These incidents can impact your insurance premiums for 3-6 years and increase your premium by 20-40%.
- Workers Compensation coverage (clearance) in applicable provinces. Many Hiring Clients also want to assess your WCB Rates to determine if they are below industry averages. If your company has higher WCB costs than other companies that offer the same services that you do, this will be looked upon negatively (not to mention costing you more each year). These incidents can impact your WCB Rate for up to 5 years.
- A summary of your company statistics. This includes fatalities, lost-time cases (and days), modified work cases (and days), medical aids, first aids, near misses, and vehicle accidents. A calculation for TRIF (Total Recordable Incident Frequency) is done by using the hours your company works and any incidents your company workers have had to determine how your company measures up overall. For smaller companies one incident can put your company over the TRIF threshold, not meeting Hiring Clients standards.

Once a contractor is awarded a project, Hiring Clients often perform spot safety checks. Workers should be instructed on how to work while being observed; it is important that workers understand that this is not to determine fault but to showcase abilities. If the observer has questions, the worker should safely stop the process before engaging in a conversation that would distract them. Safety is important at each stage of a project; these Hiring Client observations are often used to determine whether your company is awarded the next project.





BECOME PROACTIVE WITH WORKPLACE SAFETY

With the facts above looming over how successful your company can be, let's set out the ways to be proactive. The commitment company owners and managers show for their health & safety standards sets the stage for how your company will operate. When an owner shows up on-site wearing the correct PPE and following the jobsite safety rules, it's leading by example and shows the workers that the company is committed to safety. Beyond this, the company's financial commitment to safety must also extend to listening to workers' needs when they ask for equipment to make the tasks safer, or requests for training where the workers perceive a need to improve site or personal safety.

SAFETY PROGRAM ROAD MAP

This road map is a company's guide to create a strong safety program and achieve their competitive advantage.

Management Commitment

- Owners and managers must be safety leaders and model the behaviors they want to see.
- Financial investment in safety backs up this commitment.

Safety Program Creation and Usage

- Have management sign and approve the Safety Program.
- Ensure all levels of your company participate equally (owner, managers, supervisors, workers). Ensure all other parties are informed as required (contractors, regulators, public).

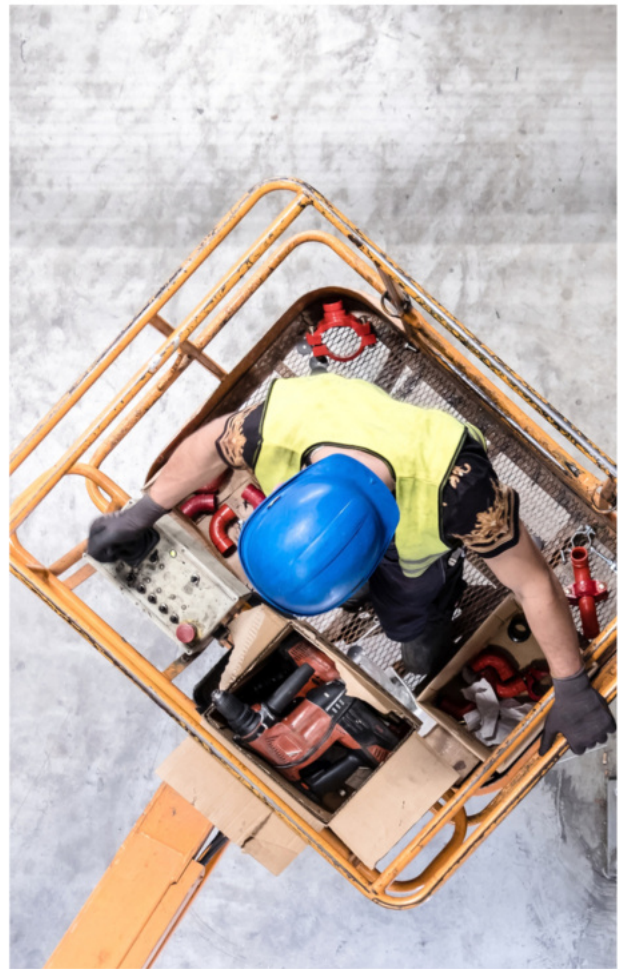
- Ensure your safety forms are representative of your worksite(s), and complete them on the prescribed schedule. Make sure forms are completed fully, signed, dated, and reviewed (and actions followed up on).
 - Workers are trained.
 - Ensure a full review of company and workers hazards is completed and reviewed regularly.
 - Complete inspections regularly.
 - Follow emergency response plans and have drills to test the plans regularly.
 - Communicate with workers and clients through safety meetings, work permits, and signage.
 - Complete investigations for all incident, accidents, and near misses.
- Achieve COR/SECOR, ISO 4500, or the equivalent certification.
- Creation of Safety Committee (a requirement in many provinces)
 - Based on the number of workers within the company and on project sites, provincial legislation may have set requirements for a Safety Committee or a Safety Representative. These roles encourage communication between workers and owner/managers.
 - Ensure committee members/representatives are trained.
 - Document all meetings and inspections.

SAFETY PROGRAM ROAD MAP CONTINUED...

- Workers Compensation
 - Review all claims.
 - Have workers back to work with modified duties as soon as is reasonable. This helps workers stay connected and reduces claim costs.
 - Dispute any claims that did not occur at work.
 - Reviewing Actions and Create a Plan for Success (this is the real part)
- Review and act on any actions noted on inspections, hazard assessments, incident reports, safety meetings, emergency drills, etc. Act immediately on actions when able. Prioritize and schedule other actions. Communicate these decisions with all affected personnel.
- Create a mentorship program where newer workers have an experienced person to go to with any questions or concerns.
- Observe workers behavior and actions and give feedback.

Has your company had accidents/incidents in the past? Know that there are ways to improve and still get back on track. Create mitigation plans and determine what needs to be done to make improvements before speaking openly with Hiring Clients who are concerned about past performance.

Set goals and work toward meeting those goals, and document your process to show due diligence. Ensure risks are identified and mitigated; use previous incidents, formal hazard reviews, inspections, and daily hazard assessments to aid in this process.



A POSITIVE SAFETY CULTURE HAS MANY BENEFITS

A positive, proactive safety culture creates a sustainable competitive advantage by reducing operation costs (WCB, Insurance, replacement workers), enhancing brand reputation (hiring clients want to work with safe contractors), attracting safety-minded employees and retaining them (keeping the training dollars working for your company), and increasing regulatory compliance. If companies view safety compliance as more than just meeting regulation, they will see the benefit that a strong safety program and management commitment reduces uncertainty and improves predictability in overall business performance.

ABOUT US

Workforce Compliance Safety Ltd. is an industry leader in administrative safety consultation. We understand your needs and offer flexible, cost-effective safety consultants to assist your safety needs. In operation since 2007, our offices are based in **Calgary, Alberta** and **Ottawa, Ontario**.

As professional safety consultants, we've provided our expertise throughout Canada, from British Columbia to Newfoundland performing safety and environmental work. Each Provinces' and Territories' Occupational Health & Safety legislation has been dissected to determine regulatory requirements for all contractors.

We are true experts in our field, with employees holding:

- Canadian Registered Safety Professional (CRSP)[®] professional credentials
- OHS Certifications

We have a firm understanding of Canadian and Provincial OHS Safety Acts and Regulations, and OSHA regulations in the United States.

