



## How to Address Employee Complacency with Safety Processes

Every safety manager is faced with the challenge of complacency at some point in his or her career. Other business priorities (i.e. increased productivity, improved quality, and profitability) can distract managers and employees from their safety mission. This distraction causes employees to stop paying attention to their surroundings, resulting in increased risk to the organization and a rise in the number of near misses and incidents. The importance of safety in the organization becomes a “nice to do” rather than an integral component of the job.

So, how do you keep employees motivated, engaged, and even passionate about safety? It starts with you. We have all heard the phrase “talk is cheap”. This is especially true when it comes to safety. To keep the message alive, it takes more than a presentation or posters on the wall. Managers need to put actions behind the words to demonstrate their commitment to safety.

### 3 TIPS FOR ENGAGING YOUR EMPLOYEES IN THE SAFETY PROCESS

#### 1. Show that You Care About Workplace Safety

Nothing is more debilitating to the safety effort than managers who do not engage with safety initiatives or worse, do not follow the rules (practice what they preach). Ways you can show you care:

- Take time to walk through all workplaces and talk to employees: Visit employees in their workplaces and let them know that you are invested in keeping them safe. Listen to their concerns and take action to correct unsafe situations. Circle back to the employee later to let them know what you did to fix the problem.

- Attend Safety Meetings: By making time in your schedule to attend, you are sending the message that this is an important activity.
- Make a point to personally review all reports of near misses and injuries: When managers take time to review reports of injuries and near misses, it shows employees that the information is important. Be sure to follow up on the reports to ensure that appropriate actions are taken to eliminate the cause of the issue. Take care to ensure that your follow up is a positive action rather than one that seeks to place blame.
- Follow all safety rules and insist that all other leaders do the same: Model safe behaviors by having you and your fellow leaders demonstrate that everyone needs to follow the rules.

#### 2. Integrate Safety into Your Business Objectives

Most companies communicate strategic goals and objectives to their employees. Safety goals and objectives should be included in this process and presented as an integral part of doing business. Ensure that:

- Safety goals and objectives are part of the strategic planning process and will integrate into your management system.
- Metrics are implemented to measure progress towards the safety targets.
- Specific line items are added to the budget for safety improvement initiatives.
- Safety performance is periodically communicated to your employees.



### 3. Empower Employees to Contribute to Safety Initiatives

Employees who feel that their ideas and involvement are valued will become powerful advocates for safety initiatives. Create opportunities for employees to contribute ideas and information such as:

#### Implementing a safety team/committee

- Ensure that representatives include employees from all areas of your organization.
- Conduct regular safety meetings and periodically rotate employees on the safety team to allow new, fresh views.
- Develop members into Safety Champions who will actively advocate for safe practices.
- Recognize employees for their commitment to safety
- Implement a Safety Suggestion program that responds to all suggestions.
- Allow employees to participate in investigations and facility walk-throughs.

To create a culture in your organization where injuries are a thing of the past, send the message that continued diligence is absolutely critical to workplace safety. This will create an environment where everyone at every level in the organization will be aligned and focused on safety.

Visit [nsc.org/members](https://nsc.org/members) for more safety tips

**members get more<sup>®</sup>**



*Proud Member*