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### THE ROLE OF TRAINING IN REDUCING INJURIES

Recent market developments and research point to a need for more effective safety training for construction workers. Associated Builders and Contractors estimates that the construction industry will need to hire 650,000 new workers in 2022 to keep up with demand.

Meanwhile, new employees have high rates of workplace injuries and the lag between the hiring of an employee and workplace injuries has increased from 2011 and 2021.

Effective safety training is imperative given the hazards inherent in most construction sites. Here are recommendations for focused training, the main topics you should cover, and some approaches to imparting training that sticks.



According to one insurance company's research, 40% of construction workers have never received safety training. This lack of training is a leading cause of workplace injuries and claims.

Changes in the construction labor market predict that the



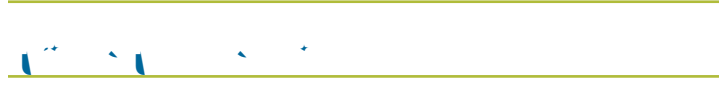
bi a VYf'cZbYk 'Ya d'cnYYg]b'h'Y' Y'X'k ]''cb'm[ fck "d'&\$%+z the National Center for Construction Education & Research estimated that 41% of the construction workforce will retire by 2031. The Great Resignation could very well accelerate this trend, and, if that is the case, newcomers will replace many of the retiring workers.

Further, the rollout of the bipartisan infrastructure bill will likely increase demand for labor, leading to more new entrants into the workforce.

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of providing robust risk and safety training to new workers  
To make your safety training more effective, include existing employees who recently moved to new positions in your organization.

These employees will likely be learning new procedures and handling different equipment and materials in their new roles. They will need to understand the new safety risks they face and should be trained as new employees.



The list of safety education topics can be long, but a few key areas require focus.

The three most common types of workers compensation claims are strains, falls/slips, and cuts/punctures/scrapes. To reduce these injuries, it's imperative to include topics like material handling, working at heights, and hand safety in your safety education.

Strains, the number one injury type in the research, fall into the category of injuries called musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs). Some of the most common MSDs are strains to the back, shoulder, and wrist muscles.

These strains can occur when a worker performs a task that requires consistent application of high levels of force, twisting their body into awkward positions, handling vibrating tools, or repeating the same motion for extended periods. Your training should address proper ways to execute such tasks safely.



Many people learn best by observing and doing. One of the most successful formats for educating employees about safety with new tasks, materials, and equipment is to tell them, show them, have them tell you, and have them show you.

Checklists of subjects included in the employee onboarding process. Initial training should be provided by a manager or work leader who can observe and coach the employee at the jobsite.

Each employee should be paired with a buddy or mentor who can reinforce their new learning on an ongoing basis. This continuous feedback helps turn good safety practices into habits that can be instantly recalled when needed.

Comprehensive reviews should follow onboarding after a

Questions like, "What do you wish I had trained you on?" and "What was unclear during the onboarding process?" can reveal opportunities to strengthen your safety training programs.

Input from employees during the reviews may give you fresh perspectives on how you can reduce or eliminate MSDs, the top source of workers compensation claims.

Stay abreast of trends in technology and its applicability for training employees and monitoring worksite safety. For example, wearables can track workers and help managers correct risky behavior, such as jumping into a trench instead



Documenting the risk and safety management training you have provided to employees is important for several reasons. Documentation enables you to spot gaps in employees' knowledge, determine schedules for refresher education and help employees with career development.

Additionally, it helps you respond to any inquiries from regulators about employee safety.

It is a good practice to ask employees to sign safety training documentation. Signing the documents validates that they received the training and makes them active participants in your safety systems.




Your onboarding process for new employees and job roles



should be part of a broader culture of safety that permeates every level of your organization.

Strive to create a culture where employees understand how comfortable asking questions and learning from managers and peers. Communicate the importance of safety consistently over the long term.

Better safety leads to greater productivity. Clients and bar high, and it will help you build a positive culture that will extend to every project and every site where your employees work. 



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### About the Article

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