

AMID NEW TECH TRENDS, EMPLOYERS DOUBLE DOWN ON SAFETY CULTURE



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An effective safety culture is built from the top down. Leadership needs to empower its employees to become proactive and involved in safety.

—Joshua Joy, GSP
IPWW Consultant

Psychological safety is very important and should be encouraged. An effective safety culture depends on it.

—Tom Bochart, ASP, CWPC
IPWW Consultant

Staffing shortages have been the largest concern among smaller employers, especially in hospitality, health care and manufacturing.

—Patricia Coutu, CIH, CSP
IPWW Manager

IS YOUR COMPANY SAFETY-CENTRIC? HERE'S A 4-POINT CHECKLIST

In workers' compensation we see all levels of commitment to workplace safety among the employers we insure. With a wave of new technology coming in, we asked our Injury Prevention & Worksite Wellness team about trending safety priorities, particularly for small and mid-sized businesses in New England.

Surprisingly, culture—not wearables or AI—ranks squarely at the top, at least for smaller employers. A longtime staple of safety programs, a culture that “walks the talk” has never been more important. Injury Prevention & Worksite Wellness (IPWW) Consultants say there is now a deeper and wider understanding of its critical role in promoting a safe work environment.

Safety innovation is on the radar, to be sure. But smaller companies recognize they must build and sustain an internal framework first. As a practical matter, new safety technology—like using AI to analyze lifting techniques captured on video or simulators to train staff on avoiding slips and falls—isn't feasible yet for most small employers. Costs, privacy issues, and lack of awareness are chief obstacles, according to tech providers in a recent [NCCI report](#). And culture is the priority.

Is your company safety-centric? Refer to this four-point checklist for starters.

✓ #1 Leadership Involvement

- Are all levels of management, including senior leaders and the CEO, supporting workplace safety practices?
- Is safety part of your business strategy every year?
- Does your mission reflect the value the organization places on its people?

✓ #2 Employee Involvement

- Are employees speaking up about unsafe practices or behaviors without reprisal? Known as psychological safety, it cannot be overlooked.
- Do you welcome employee input on how to make processes safer vs. faster?



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I am seeing more ergonomic-related incidents such as strains from improperly set up workstations.

—Kristin Tenzin, CSP, CWPC
IPWW Consultant

Employers are looking to reduce the three most common loss sources: fall, sprains, and hand/finger injuries.

—Kimberly Walker, CSP, CWPC
IPWW Consultant

The best safety person for the workplace is the working employee.

—Jon Kokoszka, ASP, CWPC
IPWW Consultant

Our policyholders who have best in class safety cultures don't consider safety as a standalone program they occasionally need to focus on. Rather it's interwoven deep into the company culture as a critical component of their overall business strategy, with senior leaders and owners fully engaged.

—Wendy Rosati, CWPC
IPWW Supervisor

✓ #3 Staffing and Training

- Is your new hire training comprehensive? Is refresher training held often? To reduce injury risk and bring peace of mind, OHS reports [workplace training](#) is essential.
- Are you adequately staffed? A.I.M. Mutual policyholders are citing staff shortages as a top concern. If employees are taking on too much work due to vacant positions, injury risk escalates.
- Are you hiring temporary staff, and if so, are they being trained and closely supervised? Never assume the employment agency has trained the employee.
- Is your safety signage in multiple languages? Are you ensuring all employees understand direction?
- Are you giving remote/hybrid workers guidance on ergonomics?

✓ #4 Employee Safety & Health

- Are you addressing sleep deprivation in your wellness programming? Fatigue at work is a growing contributor to workplace accidents.
- Do you offer an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and communicate its benefits often? Do you have a robust wellness program? Increasingly employees need help with mental health and ways to cope with stressful situations in their lives and don't know where to turn.
- Do your employees know how to use Personal Protective Equipment properly?
- If you employ drivers, do you have procedures in place to limit distractions and encourage safety on the road?
- Are you being proactive to prevent slips and falls, still the leading cause of workplace injury

We Can Help

Put our expertise to work. Raising safety awareness in the workplace takes time, resources, and a steady commitment from employees, supervisors, and managers. Even when safety technology is introduced, whether it's cooling vests in construction or fitness monitors in healthcare, it is secondary to the workplace mindset.

OSHA's [Recommended Practices for Safety and Health Programs](#) offers a culture-building guide for employers, which includes leading by example and establishing safety and health as core values.

For more information on how we can help, contact Patricia Coutu at pcoutu@aimmutual.com today.