

Safety Training

Protecting Employees
and Organizations



Sponsored by



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Survey Overview

Target Survey Population

The target survey population for this research was talent development, safety, and human resources professionals from various organizations and industries. Overall, 330 unique participants completed the survey.

Survey Instrument

The survey was composed of 25 questions, including those related to the demographics of the respondents.

Procedure

ATD Research distributed a link to an online survey to the target population in September 2019. The survey closed in October 2019. In-depth interviews with subject matter experts were also conducted by phone in Fall 2019.

About the Sponsor



A Note From SafetySkills

When people think of completing safety training, they likely think of sitting in a meeting room with their co-workers and a presenter who covers various safety topics, potentially for hours at a time. Regardless of employees' feelings toward it, safety training is incredibly important in any industry, not only to protect each worker, but also to help keep companies from receiving fines or other legal sanctions.

One of the biggest challenges for any employer is how to easily—and effectively—get employees trained. Many organizations are turning to online safety training as a means of providing consistent training to their entire workforce, which may be dispersed across many locations, in a way that does not require multiple hours spent in a classroom (and therefore not actively working).

Additionally, employers that provide training regularly and, when possible, beyond regulatory standards, tend to find themselves performing better from a safety perspective. Retraining is sometimes required by OSHA, the EPA, or the DOT, but because employees are key in carrying out safe practices, it makes sense to offer training at regular intervals, even when it's not required.

Safety training is often seen as a burden, but it is an extremely important investment. SafetySkills is pleased to sponsor this report from ATD Research because it resonates well with our passion for creating safe working environments. We hope it enables you to gain insight into how safety training can have direct, positive outcomes for any business.

About SafetySkills

SafetySkills provides award-winning online safety training solutions to organizations around the globe. Our passion for creating safe working environments drives our commitment to quality and integrity in all that we do.

By working with regulatory and industry experts to ensure full content accuracy, SafetySkills offers training on a variety of OSHA, EHS, and HR courses so you can be sure your entire workforce receives consistent training. Partnering with SafetySkills can help you reduce employee training costs, improve your workplace safety record, and maintain regulatory compliance.

SafetySkills is proud to be a fully U.S.-based company, with subject matter experts, instructional systems designers, content developers, and customer care all in one location. After more than 20 years spent training employees in more than 80 countries, SafetySkills has the expertise to help any company in any industry.

Executive Summary

To protect their employees, customers, and themselves, organizations must remain vigilant of safety risks. The U.S. Bureau of Labor statistics reports that the country experienced 5,250 fatal work injuries in 2018.¹ The year prior, preventable work injuries cost the U.S. economy \$161.5 billion, according to an estimate by the National Safety Council.² These estimates may only partially illustrate the toll of safety incidents, because they only account for reported incidents and physical safety. As the amount of customer and employee data that organizations manage continues to grow, so do risks pertaining to digital and information safety.

In this report, ATD Research found that safety training can help organizations mitigate safety risks. Study participants cited a reduction in safety incidents as the top benefit of safety training (88 percent), followed by reduced legal liability, fines, and sanctions that occur as a result of such incidents (56 percent).

What constitutes effective safety training? What specific practices should organizations apply to safety training itself? And what complementary practices should they implement alongside safety training to build cultures of safety? To find out, *Safety Training: Protecting Employees and Organizations* examined the practices of organizations that are considered safety leaders.

Defining Safety Leaders

This report compares the practices of highly safe organizations with those of all other organizations surveyed. Highly safe organizations, referred to as safety leaders, are those that meet two criteria:

- They perform better relative to other organizations in their industry for all safety categories applicable to their operations.
- Their organizational cultures encourage safe behavior to a high or very high extent.

1 Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Census of Fatal Occupational Injuries Summary, 2018," news release, December 19, 2019, www.bls.gov/news.release/cfoi.nr0.htm.

2 National Safety Council, "Work Injury Costs," Injury Facts, www.injuryfacts.nsc.org/work/costs/work-injury-costs.

This report found that 90 percent of organizations offered safety training. This includes training required by law and training organizations offer without being legally required to do so. Among these, the report looked at the provision of safety training across four categories:

- **employee safety**—related to the performance of jobs and use of facilities and equipment
- **workplace safety**—related to emergencies in the workplace, such as disasters or crime
- **customer safety**—related to the physical safety of customers
- **digital and information safety**—related to employee or customer data and cybersecurity.

Safety training practices were compared across categories to allow for a better understanding of how organizations design, develop, and deliver content for different types of hazards and threats. For example, consider whether an organization's safety training exceeds legal requirements—about four in five organizations offered more training than the law requires in all four categories. However, slightly more exceeded requirements for customer safety and digital and information safety, while slightly fewer did so for workplace safety.

This report covers many other topics, such as what training organizations provide managers on safety-related topics, who determines safety training needs, and who designs safety training programs or chooses supplier content. It also discusses whether organizations hold regular safety meetings, when safety training is provided, how and by whom safety training is delivered, the measurement of safety training, how organizations define and incentivize safety for individual employees, and barriers to and benefits of effective safety training.

ATD Research also reached out to experienced subject matter experts for their insights. These experts provide guidance for overcoming common barriers to effective safety training and shed light on how to implement the best practices identified in the data.

Introduction

To minimize the risk of incidents that inflict physical or digital harm to employees and customers, organizations must ensure that employees adhere to policies and procedures that minimize the likelihood of these incidents occurring. Safety training is a crucial part of this effort.

This report found that 90 percent of organizations provided safety training. Of those, 95 percent provided training for employee safety, 96 percent for workplace safety, 48 percent for customer safety, and 84 percent for digital and information safety.

When asked about their performance in each category relevant to their operations, a majority of respondents said their organizations were performing better than other companies in their industry (Figure 1). Seven in 10 (71 percent) said their organizational culture encouraged safe behaviors to a high or very high extent (Figure 2).

FIGURE 1
Safety Performance

In terms of frequency and severity of incidents, how do you think your organization is performing on safety relative to other companies in its industry?

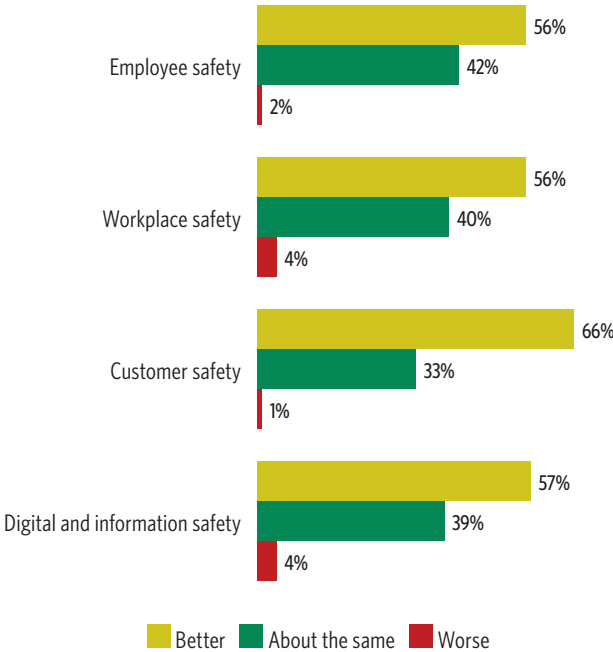
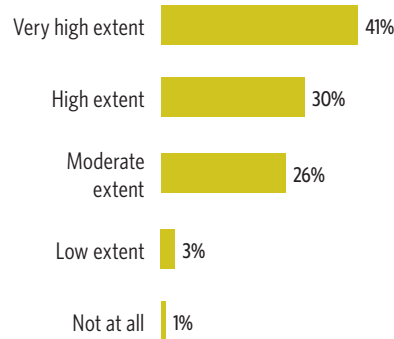


FIGURE 2

Safety Culture

To what extent does your organizational culture encourage safe behaviors?



Participant and Organization Demographics

ATD Research surveyed 330 talent development, human resources, and safety professionals for this report. Slightly more than half of respondents were managers or above.

Nine in 10 respondents (89 percent) worked at organizations headquartered in North America. Three in 10 worked at organizations with workforces of 10,000 or more employees, about half worked at organizations with workforces of 500 to 9,999 employees, and about two in 10 worked at organizations with 499 or fewer employees.

Key Findings

Some key findings of this report are:

- Reducing safety incidents was considered the top benefit of providing effective safety training, followed by reduced legal liability, fines, and sanctions. Time restraints and having a geographically dispersed workforce were considered the top barriers to effective safety training.
- Providing more safety training than the law requires was associated with better safety performance. Organizations that exceeded legal requirements for any category of safety training were significantly more likely to be safety leaders than those that did not ($p < 0.01$).
- Training all managers, rather than some or no managers, on safety-related tasks was associated with better safety performance. Organizations were significantly more likely to be safety leaders when they trained all managers on coaching and training employees on safe behaviors or identifying, correcting, or documenting and reporting unsafe conditions and behaviors ($p < 0.01$).

- Holding daily safety meetings was associated with better safety performance. Organizations that held daily meetings to discuss safety were significantly more likely to be safety leaders than those that did not ($p < 0.01$).
- Embracing technology in safety training was associated with better safety performance. Mobile learning had the strongest association with being a safety leader of any training delivery method ($p < 0.01$). Incorporating computer-based simulations or augmented and virtual reality simulations into safety training was also associated with better safety performance ($p < 0.01$).

Identifying Statistically Significant Differences

This report often notes whether the difference between two groups is significant at a level of $p < 0.05$ or $p < 0.01$. A significance of $p < 0.05$ implies a less than 5 percent probability that the difference is a result of chance, and one can be 95 percent confident that the results represent a statistically significant relationship. A significance of $p < 0.01$ implies a less than 1 percent probability that the difference is a result of chance.

SECTION 1

Safety Training Content

This section discusses whether organizations provided more safety training than required by law, whether they used in-house or supplier content for safety training, and whether they trained managers on safety-related tasks. It also examines who in organizations was accountable for determining safety needs and who was accountable for developing in-house content or choosing supplier content for safety training.

Exceeding Legal Requirements

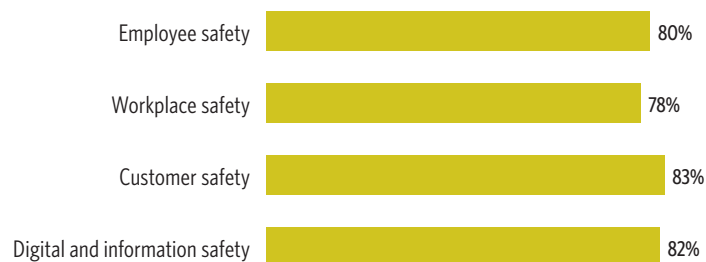
For each category of safety training, the majority of organizations offered more content than the law dictates (Figure 3). About four in five organizations delivered more content than required for each category, with the highest proportion doing so for customer safety (83 percent) and the lowest proportion for workplace safety (78 percent).

Analyses showed that when organizations offered safety training beyond the legal requirement for any single category of safety training, they were significantly more likely to be safety leaders ($p < 0.01$). Further, organizations that exceeded legal requirements for all categories relevant to their operations were significantly more likely to be safety leaders than those that only exceeded legal requirements for some of the categories relevant to their operations.

FIGURE 3

Providing More Safety Training Than Required

Does your organization offer any safety training content beyond what is required by law?



According to Elizabeth Beckham, a learning and development manager and former safety training manager at Turner Industries (a heavy industrial construction company with more than 10,000 employees), companies should regard legally required safety training as the “bare minimum.” She advises that “once you start doing more training than the minimum, you’re really doing more to protect your workforce and have employees buy into the culture of safety you’re building within your organization.”

For organizations that don’t currently offer more safety training than the law requires but want to begin doing so, Beckham recommends starting with two areas: life-critical safety and foundational safety. “Life-critical safety is anything where a mistake could cost someone their life,” she explains. Foundational safety, on the other hand, is making sure everyone at the organization receives a primer on safety culture and language.

“At Turner, we have a foundational training that everyone goes through, our safety and health orientation, which introduces the common factors of all our job sites,” she says. “Then they go through secondary training that talks about specific hazards at specific job sites.”

In-House Versus Supplier Content

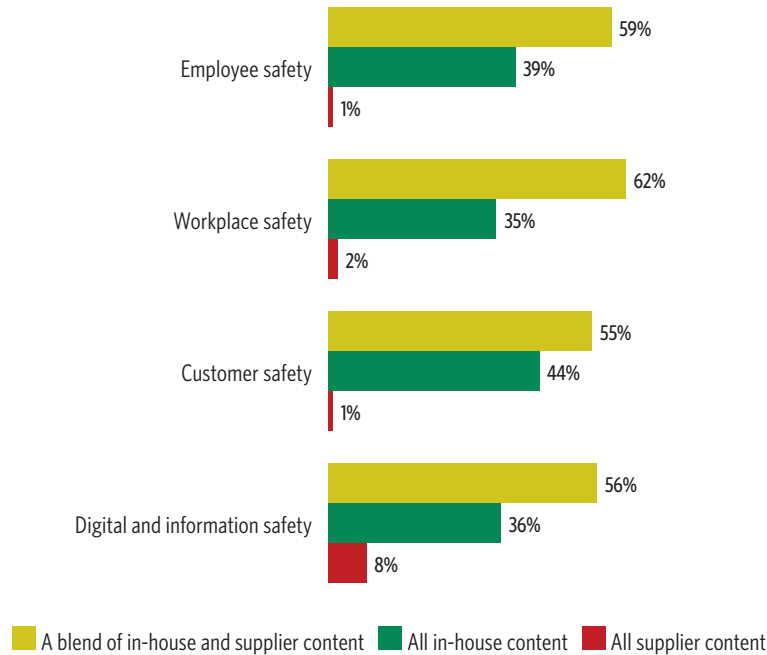
For all categories of safety training, a majority of organizations used a blend of in-house and supplier-provided content (Figure 4). In each category, between 35 and 45 percent of organizations used all in-house content. No more than 8 percent of organizations in any category exclusively used supplier content.

Organizations were most likely to use all in-house content for customer safety training (44 percent). They were most likely to use all supplier content for digital and information safety (8 percent).

FIGURE 4

Content Sources

Does your organization use in-house or supplier content for safety training?



Decisions on when to use in-house or supplier content should be highly situational, according to Scott Nutter, general manager for pilot learning and development at Delta Air Lines, a major U.S. and international airline with more than 85,000 employees. “It depends on the modality you’re planning to use and whether you have the internal expertise and resources,” he says. To him, leading companies frequently have employees who “are the most expert people in the world” on certain safety topics, which means that in these cases “you’re not going to find off-the-shelf content that is as good as what you can create in-house.”

However, even companies with strong internal safety expertise can benefit from supplier help in certain situations. “When you want to use a new technology that you don’t have in-house experience with, you have to partner with someone,” Nutter advises. He adds that suppliers can also help organizations stay abreast of technological change.

“Silicon Valley will always outpace our ability to keep up, so why not let suppliers do that?” he asks. “It’s what they’re experts at.”

Training Managers on Safety-Related Tasks

The majority of organizations trained their managers to perform tasks that promote safety. Three-quarters (74 percent) trained all managers on how to coach or train employees on safe behaviors, while between 60 and 65 percent trained all managers on how to identify, correct, or document unsafe behaviors and conditions. Between 17 and 26 percent trained at least some managers to perform each of those tasks (Table 1).

Analyses showed that training all managers within an organization on safety-related tasks was associated with better safety performance. Organizations that trained all managers on any of the safety-related tasks studied in this report were significantly more likely to be safety leaders than those that did not ($p < 0.01$). Providing training on more tasks also had a relationship to better safety performance. Organizations that trained all managers on every safety-related task studied in this report were significantly more likely to be safety leaders ($p < 0.01$).

Training all managers on safety related tasks, according to Beckham, is important because it gets everyone in the organization on the same page. “You want to make sure that everyone is speaking the same language because safety can affect everyone in the same way, and it contributes to your safety culture,” she says. “If you discuss a close call or something that happened at a debrief meeting, you need everyone to have the same understanding.”

TABLE 1

Training Managers on Safety-Related Tasks

Do you train managers on any of the following safety-related tasks?

	Yes, for all managers	Yes, for some managers	No
Coaching or training employees on safe behaviors	74%	17%	8%
Identifying safe or unsafe conditions or behaviors	65%	21%	14%
Correcting unsafe conditions or behaviors	62%	24%	14%
Documenting or reporting unsafe conditions or behaviors	60%	26%	14%

Two Approaches to Safety Coaching

In the guide *Better Safety Conversations*, the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) describes coaching as a “helpful form of feedback, especially when the person is motivated, cares about safety, and is willing to work on your safety and health programs.”³ The guide describes two methods of coaching to use in safety programs: the COIN method and the “Ask, Tell, Ask” method.

The COIN Method

COIN stands for connect, observations, impact, and next steps. To coach employees using the COIN method, managers should start by trying to connect with the employee they’re coaching and asking questions to establish that everyone in the conversation cares about the topic at hand.

Next, managers should share their observations, specifically and accurately describing the unsafe behaviors they have observed. For example, they might point out that they saw a worker improperly operate a piece of equipment. Then, they would describe the potential impact of that behavior. In our example, this might be discussing how misuse of the machine might lead to an injury.

Finally, managers should partner with the employee to develop an action plan to change the behavior. By clarifying why the unsafe behavior occurred, managers can better guide the employee to the appropriate behavior.

The “Ask, Tell, Ask” Method

To coach employees using the “Ask, Tell, Ask” method, managers should start a conversation by asking a worker for observations. For example, they might ask whether the employee was able to follow a new safety procedure.

Next, managers should react to what the worker shared and provide feedback on both the situation and the employee’s assessment. In this example, they might agree that the employee’s team followed the first two parts in the procedure, but then point out that the team didn’t follow the last part properly.

Finally, managers should bring the focus back to the employee by asking about the employee’s understanding, then discussing any changes that need to be made. For the procedure in the example, the manager might exchange ideas with the employee regarding how to make the last step more feasible.

³ Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), “Better Safety Conversations,” Safe and Sound campaign, December 10, 2018, www.osha.gov/safeandsound/docs/SHP_Better-Safety-Conversations.pdf.

Who Determines Safety Needs

For most categories of safety training, organizations often held a dedicated safety department accountable for determining safety training needs (Table 2)—this occurred at 52 percent of responding organizations for workplace safety, 46 percent for employee safety, and 40 percent for customer safety. Organizations most often entrusted their IT departments to determine training needs for digital and information safety (66 percent).

Errick Currie is a logistics transportation manager for Domino's, a multinational pizza restaurant chain with more than 16,000 locations. He oversees safety for the truck drivers who deliver supplies to the company's stores in the United States and Canada. According to him, "ensuring that every employee has a voice" on safety needs matters more than which department gets to make the final call. "Every organization is different," he explains, "but what's important is that you put the onus on individuals to bring any issues forward."

Another important factor to consider when determining safety needs, regardless of who makes the final call, is a company's experience with safety issues. According to Nutter, Delta has an internal incident tracking system that makes the organization aware of challenges that come "from across the whole operation, national and international." He says the company uses this system to help determine its safety needs and make scenario-based content that is compelling for employees. "You take different situations that could be relevant to people and show them what happened to their co-workers, which hooks them in," he explains.

Who Develops Safety Training

As with determining safety needs, organizations were most likely to hold a dedicated safety department primarily accountable for developing in-house content or choosing supplier content for most categories of safety training. A dedicated safety department developed or selected content at 42 percent of organizations for workplace safety, 40 percent for employee safety, and 38 percent for customer safety. Organizations were most likely to entrust their IT departments with developing and selecting training content for digital and information safety (Table 3).

Regardless of who has final accountability for the development of safety training, talent development professionals' knowledge of best practices in adult learning and familiarity with content tools can be a useful asset, according to Currie: "They know all the different practices other companies use and the different tools that transfer to the field."

TABLE 2

Who Determines Safety Needs

Who is accountable for determining safety needs?

	Dedicated Safety Department	General HR	Individual Managers	IT	Legal, Governance, Risk Management, or Compliance Department	Talent Development	Other
Employee safety	46%	21%	4%	0%	20%	5%	4%
Workplace safety	52%	17%	4%	0%	20%	4%	4%
Customer safety	40%	7%	6%	1%	33%	4%	10%
Digital and information safety	8%	4%	1%	66%	18%	2%	1%

TABLE 3

Who Develops Safety Content

Who is accountable for developing safety training or choosing supplier content?

	Dedicated Safety Department	General HR	Individual Managers	IT	Legal, Governance, Risk Management, or Compliance Department	Talent Development	Other
Employee safety	40%	17%	3%	0%	11%	23%	6%
Workplace safety	42%	14%	3%	0%	13%	24%	5%
Customer safety	38%	7%	2%	0%	20%	22%	10%
Digital and information safety	6%	8%	1%	57%	10%	16%	3%

SECTION 2

Delivering Safety Training

This section discusses the provision of safety training. It examines whether organizations hold regularly scheduled meetings to discuss safety, when employees receive safety training, which delivery methods organizations use for safety training, and who delivers safety training. It also explores the use of simulations in safety training.

Safety Meetings

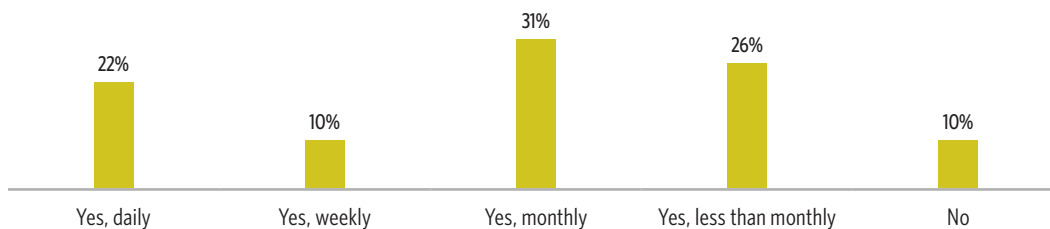
Most organizations (90 percent) held regularly scheduled meetings to discuss safety. These meetings occurred every day at 22 percent of organizations. They occurred weekly at 10 percent of organizations. Larger proportions of organizations held these meetings less frequently, with 31 percent holding them on a monthly basis and 26 percent holding them less than once a month (Figure 5).

Analyses showed that holding daily safety meetings was associated with better safety performance. Organizations that held such daily meetings were significantly more likely to be safety leaders than organizations that either held them less often or not at all ($p < 0.01$).

FIGURE 5

Regular Safety Meetings

Does your organization hold regularly scheduled meetings to discuss safety?



Conducting Daily Safety Meetings

According to Currie, a simple daily safety meeting can begin with a first-line supervisor discussing the conditions employees will experience that day at work: "If it's raining, for example, you might start by announcing that and then making sure everyone has the appropriate gear."

Next, Currie recommends getting workers involved. “You want to create a ‘see something, say something’ environment,” he explains, adding that giving employees a space to speak up can help them realize that “a manager may not see everything that’s going on.” Creating these opportunities “can be as simple as asking them if anything happened on the last shift that everyone should be aware of,” he says.

For a greater level of involvement, especially with small teams, Currie suggests having employees take turns leading at least part of the meeting. In his experience, rotating responsibility for leading at least part of the meeting through team members creates an environment where everyone takes greater ownership of safety.

When Employees Receive Safety Training

More organizations provided safety training to employees during onboarding than at any other time (92 percent). Substantial majorities also covered safety on a regular schedule for refresher training (82 percent), in response to new government regulations (73 percent), or in response to safety incidents (72 percent).

Analyses showed that starting safety training before employees start working had the strongest relationship to better safety performance of any individual situation. However, only 25 percent of organizations applied this practice.

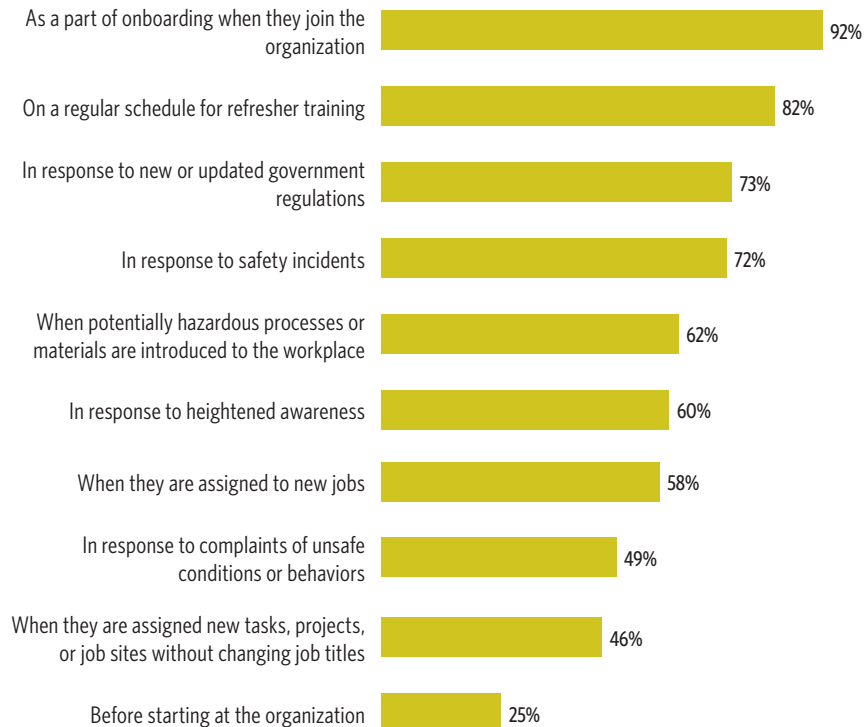
Many organizations face obstacles that prevent them from providing formal training before people start working. “Before their official start date, people have a limited level of access to your company,” Nutter explains, pointing to issues with requiring people to do work activities without pay and with granting them access to proprietary information before receiving company credentials. However, he does agree that organizations can start setting cultural expectations by beginning to communicate with employees about safety before they start. “At Delta, we begin to send messages about the importance of safety in our business, about what kind of organization people are joining,” he says.

Further analyses showed that providing safety training at every possible opportunity was associated with better safety performance (Figure 6). Organizations that provided safety training at all or almost all timings studied in this research were significantly more likely to be top performers than those that provided safety training at eight or fewer of the timings ($p < 0.01$).

FIGURE 6

Timing of Safety Training

When do employees receive safety training? (Select all that apply.)



Delivery Methods for Safety Training

Self-paced e-learning was the safety training delivery method used by the largest proportion of organizations (88 percent), followed by instructor-led face-to-face training (79 percent). A majority of organizations also used on-the-job or in-the-field training or coaching (74 percent).

Analyses showed that several delivery methods were associated with better safety performance (Figure 7). Organizations that used self-paced online training, on-the-job or in-the-field training or coaching, or learning designed specifically for mobile were significantly more likely to be safety leaders than those that did not ($p < 0.01$). Among those, learning content designed specifically for mobile had the strongest relationship to better safety performance.

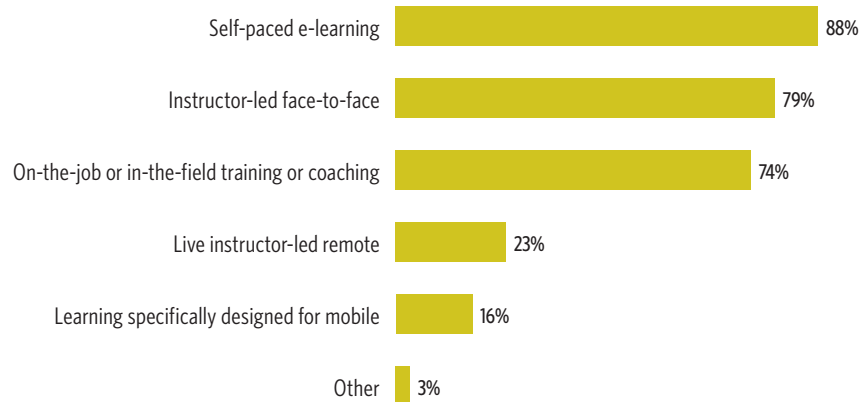
Nutter believes that mobile learning can be especially useful for safety training because of its convenience: “Using mobile learning to give people the control to do training when they’re ready is superior to putting them in front of a computer and saying they have to finish it in the next two hours.” He also sees mobile learning as valuable for performance support. “When someone wants to refresh themselves on a little nugget of content when they encounter a

specific situation, having it available on a mobile device makes it easy to access and use,” he explains. This use for mobile learning has changed how Delta designs its electronic safety training content. Their guiding approach, Nutter says, is “build once, use many.”

FIGURE 7

Delivery Methods

What delivery methods does your organization use for safety training? (Select all that apply.)



Simulations in Safety Training

Three in four organizations (75 percent) incorporated simulations, which can be used with any delivery method, into safety training. Of those, 73 percent used non-tech-based simulations (such as fire drills or role playing), 70 percent used computer-based simulations (for example, simulated phishing attacks), and 27 percent used virtual or augmented reality simulations.

Analyses showed that technology-based simulations were associated with better safety performance. Organizations that used computer-based simulations or virtual or augmented reality simulations were significantly more likely to be safety leaders than those that did not ($p < 0.01$). Of those, virtual and augmented reality simulations had the strongest effect.

One example of an organization that incorporates virtual reality simulations into its safety training is United Parcel Service (UPS), which uses proprietary virtual reality content to train its delivery drivers. According to press releases, drivers who participate in the simulations wear headsets and must verbally identify potential road hazards on digitally recreated streets.⁴ Drivers complete the simulations at UPS training centers before they begin more intensive on-road training.

⁴ United Parcel Service (UPS), “UPS Enhances Driver Safety Training With Virtual Reality,” press release, June 6, 2019, www.pressroom.ups.com/pressroom/ContentDetailsViewer.page?ConceptType=PressReleases&id=1560261872163-765.

Who Delivers Safety Training

For the delivery of live, instructor-led training for employee safety, workplace safety, and customer safety, organizations most often relied on trainers from a dedicated safety department, followed by talent development. Organizations were most likely to entrust the delivery of digital and information safety to their IT departments (Table 4).

According to Currie, having a specialized professional, such as someone from the talent development or safety department, deliver an organization’s live, instructor-led safety training makes the content more credible. To explain the difference between having one of these individuals versus a manager handle the delivery, he draws an analogy to parents cautioning their children: “As kids grow up, they often don’t take warnings from their parents very seriously,” he says. “When people grow comfortable with their managers, the same thing can happen.” To him, bringing in a safety expert to deliver safety training “shows that you’re willing to have another voice, another advocate come in to make the message resonate.” He also observes that managers and subject matter experts frequently lack the skills to deliver effective training. “Just because someone practices safe behavior in the workplace, it doesn’t mean they’ll be great at teaching those behaviors.”

TABLE 4

Who Delivers Safety Training

Who primarily delivers safety training in each category?

	Dedicated Safety Department	General HR	Individual Managers	IT	Learning Suppliers	Legal, Governance, Risk Management, or Compliance Department	Peers or Colleagues	Talent Development	No Instructor
Employee safety	28%	9%	9%	0%	6%	5%	3%	24%	16%
Workplace safety	28%	8%	11%	1%	5%	6%	4%	21%	17%
Customer safety	25%	5%	12%	1%	3%	8%	5%	21%	18%
Digital and information safety	6%	4%	3%	29%	8%	5%	2%	15%	29%

SECTION 3

Evaluating, Defining, and Incentivizing Safety

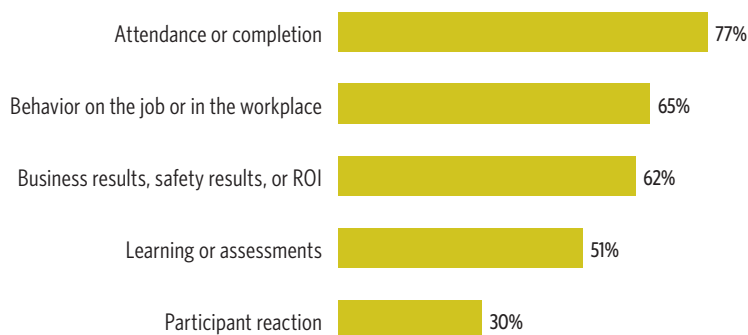
This section discusses how organizations measured the success of safety training. It also examines whether organizations defined safety behaviors and competencies for individual roles, evaluated safety behavior during performance reviews, and recognized or rewarded safe behaviors.

Evaluating Safety Training

Most organizations (94 percent) conducted at least one form of measurement to evaluate the success of safety training, and three-quarters (75 percent) used more than one (Figure 8). Among individual methods, tracking attendance and completion was most popular (77 percent), followed by measuring behavior on the job and in the workplace (65 percent) and measuring business results, actual safety results, and return on investment (62 percent).

FIGURE 8
Evaluation Methods

How does your organization measure the success of safety training? (Select all that apply.)



One tool that Beckham finds useful for organizations trying to improve their safety evaluation efforts is OSHA’s Safety Pays calculator, which employers can use to assess the impact of occupational injuries and illnesses on their profitability.⁵ “It uses a company’s profit margin and the average cost of injury or illness with an indirect cost multiplier to show the impact of an accident,” she explains. Along with using the calculator, Beckham recommends organizations track their incident rates, or “the number of incidents per hours worked.” By combining these pieces of information, along with other data such as close calls, job safety analyses, and information for specific shifts and job sites, she says that companies can create “an iterative feedback loop that supports fine tuning and drives results.”

Defining and Incentivizing Safety

Many organizations defined and incentivized safety for individual employees. A majority defined safety-related competencies and behavior expectations by role, formally recognized and rewarded safe behaviors, or evaluated safety-related behaviors during performance reviews. More than half of the organizations that applied each of these practices did so for all employees, rather than only for employees in safety-sensitive roles (Table 5).

TABLE 5

Defining and Incentivizing Safety

Does your organization use any of the following practices to promote safe behavior?

	Yes (for all employees)	Yes (but only for safety-sensitive roles)	No
Define safety-related competencies and behavior expectations by role	49%	32%	20%
Formally recognize and reward safe behaviors	39%	20%	41%
Evaluate safety-related behaviors during performance reviews	37%	33%	30%

Analyses showed that, when done for all employees, defining and incentivizing safety at the individual level was associated with better safety performance. Organizations that defined safety-related competencies and behavior expectations by role, formally recognized and rewarded safe behaviors, or evaluated safety related behaviors during performance evaluations for all employees were significantly more likely to be safety leaders than organizations that only followed these practices for some employees or did not follow them at all ($p < 0.01$). Among the three practices, recognizing and rewarding safe behavior for all employees had the strongest effect.

For Currie, whose business unit at Domino’s offers incentive programs for truck drivers who avoid preventable traffic accidents and moving violations or contribute ideas to

5 “OSHA’s Safety Pays Program,” OSHA, www.osha.gov/safetypays.

improve safety, it's easy to identify why recognizing and rewarding safe behavior works. "People like to be rewarded for doing a good job." Currie also suggests that incentivizing safe behavior can lead to better safety results because it clarifies expectations. "When you evaluate and reinforce good behaviors at an individual level," he explains, "you set a standard for how everyone should behave."

SECTION 4

Barriers and Benefits

This section examines the top barriers to effective safety training and what organizations can do to overcome them. It also explores the benefits organizations receive from providing safety training.

Barriers

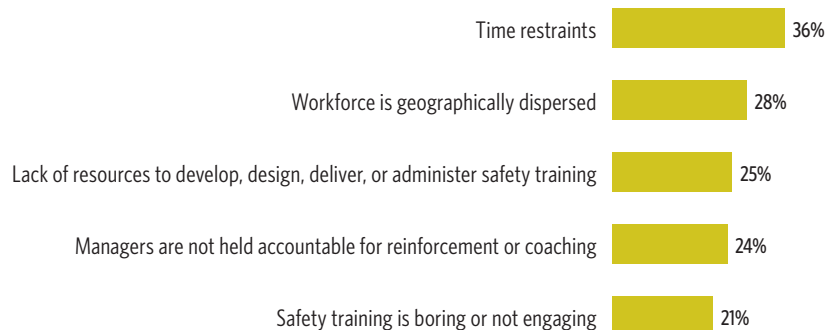
Although 88 percent of organizations experienced at least one barrier to effective safety training, no individual barrier was cited by a majority of participants (Figure 9). This suggests that, rather than being universal, safety training challenges are specific to individual organizations and can differ greatly according to an organization's circumstances.

Time restraints were the barrier most frequently cited by participants (36 percent), followed by a geographically dispersed workforce (25 percent), and a lack of resources to develop, design, deliver, or administer safety training. Other top barriers included not being able to hold managers accountable for reinforcing or coaching what was taught in safety training (24 percent) and having safety training that was boring or not engaging (21 percent).

FIGURE 9

Top Five Barriers

What are the biggest barriers to conducting effective safety training? (Select up to three.)



In Currie’s experience supporting Domino’s truck drivers, using a learning management system (LMS) to deliver online training in manageable portions is helpful for surmounting challenges with time restraints and geographic dispersion. “We break the five to 10 safety modules our established drivers are required to do on a yearly basis out over each quarter,” he says. This practice divides what would be one large commitment into several small, regular ones, which makes safety training more feasible and more memorable. “When you force people to sit and get everything done at one time, they become overwhelmed,” he explains. “You can watch their eyes glaze over as they start taking the course to pass the test rather than to learn.”

Benefits

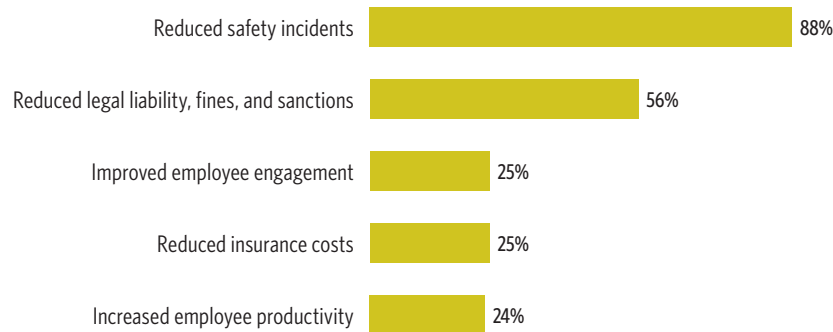
The top benefits of safety training were directly related to safety results. Almost nine in 10 respondents (88 percent) said that reduced safety incidents were a top benefit, while 56 percent cited reduced legal liability, fines, and sanctions (Figure 10).

Outside the top two choices, no other benefit was cited by more than 25 percent of respondents. The three next most-common responses, each cited by a quarter of respondents, were reduced insurance costs, improved employee engagement, and increased employee productivity.

FIGURE 10

Top Five Benefits

What are the biggest benefits of conducting safety training at your organization? (Select up to three.)



Conclusion and Recommendations

Participants in this research indicated that providing effective safety training can help organizations reduce safety incidents as well as the legal liability, fines, and sanctions that may result as consequences of such incidents. Therefore, organizations have strong incentives to implement best practices in safety training.

Recommendations for Talent Development

Based on the results of this research and insights gathered from subject matter experts, ATD Research offers the following recommendations.

Go Beyond the Legal Minimum

Organizations that exceeded legal requirements for any category of safety training were significantly more likely to be safety leaders than those that did not ($p < 0.01$). Further, organizations that exceeded legal requirements for all categories of safety that were applicable to their operations were significantly more likely to be top performers than organizations that only provided more training than the law required for some categories of safety ($p < 0.01$).

“When you look at the law and the general interpretation of what it requires, it’s the minimum of what you have to do,” says Beckham. For her, it’s clear that companies differentiate themselves by going beyond what’s required of everyone. “When you do that,” she says, “it becomes part of a thought process that makes workers safer.”

Train All Managers on Safety-Related Tasks

Organizations were significantly more likely to be safety leaders when they trained all their managers, rather than some or no managers, on any of the safety-related tasks for managers examined in this research ($p < 0.01$). Those safety-related tasks were coaching or training employees on safe behaviors and identifying, correcting, and documenting and reporting unsafe conditions and behaviors.

“You want everyone to understand that safety is the priority, to receive the same message about it,” notes Beckham. That’s why she believes training all managers on safety-related tasks, regardless of what type of work they do, is important. “If what you’re providing to one group versus another is different, it discounts the message of safety being the top priority,” she says.

Discuss Safety Daily

Organizations should hold meetings to discuss safety every day. Organizations that held daily safety meetings were significantly more likely to be safety leaders than organizations that held regular safety meetings less than daily or not at all ($p < 0.01$).

“From the CEO down to the lowest-ranking position within a company, everyone has to be cognitive of safety,” Currie says. He sees the back-and-forth communication that daily safety meetings facilitate as key to such cognition. “Managers don’t see everything that’s going on,” he explains. “That’s why you need to have safety conversations every day, so you immediately catch any safety concerns that arise and start addressing them.”

Share Your Safety Culture Early

Organizations should consider starting the safety training process before employees work at the company. Offering safety training before an employee’s first day on the job had a stronger association with being a safety leader than offering it at any other time or in any other situation.

Although most companies will have legal and logistical obstacles with sharing formal training content with people before they officially become employees, Nutter suggests that it’s possible to get started with the “messaging that comes as the first part of the training process.” To do this, he says that organizations “can include safety in promotional videos or mention it in ‘welcome to the company’ activities or interactions to help people understand the company’s culture.”

Embrace Technology

Many forms of technology use were associated with better safety performance. Organizations that used mobile learning to deliver safety training were significantly more likely to be safety leaders than those that did not ($p < 0.01$), giving it the strongest relationship to better safety performance of any learning delivery method. Incorporating computer-based simulations or AR/VR simulations into safety training, regardless of delivery method, was also associated with better safety performance ($p < 0.01$).

In Nutter’s experience, technology is most valuable in safety training when it is seen as a situational tool and not “the shiny new object that will fix all of your problems.” The key to unlocking technology’s value is adopting it within the context of your broader processes and goals. “It’s about getting people to perform better, to change their behavior,” Nutter explains. “If you look at the situation and follow the instructional design process to determine what solution works best, the good news is that you have more choices than ever.”

Define and Incentivize Safety for All Employees

Organizations should define safety-related competencies and behavior expectations, discuss safety during performance reviews, and recognize and reward safe behaviors for individual employees. Organizations that applied any of these practices for all employees, rather than only for some employees or not at all, were significantly more likely to be safety leaders than those that did not ($p < 0.01$).

Defining and incentivizing safety at an individual level “reinforces safe behaviors by setting standards that you can follow through on,” Currie says. This creates a carrot-and-stick dynamic: “You show employees that they’ll be rewarded if they follow through on what’s expected, and that they’ll face progressive disciplinary actions if they don’t.”

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atd The Association for Talent Development (ATD) is the world's largest professional membership organization supporting those who develop the knowledge and skills of employees, improve performance, and achieve results for the organizations they serve. Originally established in 1943, the association was previously known as the American Society for Training & Development (ASTD).

ATD's members come from more than 120 countries and work in public and private organizations in every industry sector. ATD supports talent development professionals who gather locally in volunteer-led U.S. chapters and international member networks, and with international strategic partners. For more information, visit td.org.

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