

How Do You Develop A Successful Safety Training?

By building credibility. Here's the story of a Washington State organization that partnered with a NIOSH-funded project to train workers to become safety leaders.

The Challenge

Getting buy-in for safe behavior can be tough. Varying attitudes from, "This is the way we've always done it" to "I'm invincible" can stymie even the most dedicated safety director. Engagement in safety begins with trust. Opinion leaders from the company ranks are in the position to foster changes that lead to injury prevention by increasing trust between management and workers.

The Response

Tom George, a Training Coordinator with Teamsters/Associated General Contractors (AGC) of Washington Training Center, recognized an opportunity to address this challenge. Seeing the value in prevention materials developed by the Trucking Injury Reduction Emphasis (TIRES)* project, he applied for and received a grant called *Safer Drivers – Workers Training Workers*** to provide free training using materials developed by TIRES.

Safer Drivers is based on the idea that a climate of cooperation and trust is easier to achieve when a well-respected worker and a safety manager attend the trainings together. The worker attendee is trained to spot and address hazards at the company and to engage other workers in weekly "toolbox" type trainings using TIRES materials, while the manager who is also a student is now perceived as a partner in safety. In short, the two have become the safety liaison for the company and living proof that the company values employees enough to want them to stay safe.

The Impact

A total of 172 students completed the full two-day training with over 500 more attending large group sessions conducted for individual employers. In all, 75 organizations committed to improving safety and preventing injuries at their companies during the two-year grant period. In a labor market that is rapidly shrinking, keeping workers safe is vital since "If you got it – a truck brought it."



"We firmly believe the key to injury reduction is worker buy-in. By engaging drivers to influence other drivers we stand the best chance of really helping them."

-Tom George, Training Coordinator
TEAMSTERS/AGC TRAINING CENTER

For more information or to get free safety training for your organization, visit www.KeepTruckingSafe.org.

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