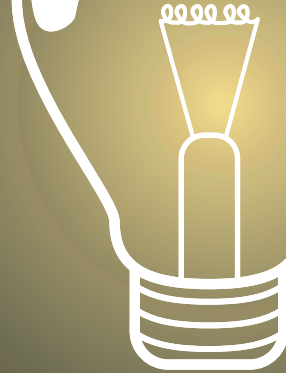


Georgia



CONSTRUCTION TODAY



Leading with Emotional Intelligence

Winner
AGC of America's
Chapter of the
Year

Maximizing Opportunities for Personal and Industry Leadership

- 2009 Legislative Outlook
- Best Practices in Construction Safety
- YLP: Platform to Develop Leadership Skills
- Developing Tomorrow's Skilled Workforce
- 2008 Convention Highlights
- Build Georgia Award Winners
- Plus...What's Happening in 2009

taking safety to the next level

Best Practices In Construction Safety

Developing Safety Leaders
Throughout Your Company

"I believe the following excerpts on best safety practices offer tremendous value to our members. The original article was published by QUOIN, an AGC chapter in Texas."

– Cherri Watson, Georgia Branch AGC's Director of Safety, Education & Workforce Development

Safety is everyone's job and not just the responsibility of the safety director. Making everyone responsible for their own safety and the safety of those around them requires more than just a "safety program," regardless of how effective it is. A big part of the solution has to do with a company's ethics and values and how it goes about treating people and conducting itself as a business enterprise. Thus, culture and leadership play a big part in transitioning to a higher level in safety.

Safety leadership can be cultivated throughout a company and it has to do with first holding ourselves accountable before we look to others. When one individual takes positive safety action, new leaders and safety champions are encouraged to come forward to help us achieve safety goals. Effective leaders in safety focus on communicating well, encouraging positive behavior, recognizing achievements, developing people, inspiring action, and most of all, setting an example for others to follow. This puts a new emphasis on becoming a "safety coach" and not a "safety cop."

Those of us in safety know that zero incidents 100 percent of the time is not an easy goal to achieve, especially when you have multiple people constantly changing from one jobsite to another. This is complicated further by accelerated project schedules and minimal time to train new workers or retrain our existing workforce. As much as we all would like one simple solution to improve safety, most safety professionals have come to grips with the fact that it will require a set of complex, interrelated strategies and solutions all working together to bring about real change.

What follows are some of the best-in-class industry practices designed to advance your company's effectiveness in being safe:

1. Demonstrated Management Commitment and Involvement

Company leaders need to play an active role in safety, whether it is communicating the safety message, visiting jobsites to observe safety behavior, singling out and recognizing an individual's "safe" behavior, or making sure adequate resources are available to support the desired safety goals. Clearly, management sets the tone for safety and their commitment to a safe workplace is the example others will follow. When a company safety policy requires jobsite personnel to wear a hardhat, safety glasses and vest, this applies to company leaders 100 percent of the time. Remember, safety starts at the top!

2. Zero Tolerance of Unsafe Behavior

When it comes to safety, a line in the sand has to be drawn on what you expect and what you are willing to tolerate. To truly achieve zero incidents and injuries, there is no middle ground. You are either behaving safely or you are not. Accepting or turning a blind eye to unsafe behavior only perpetuates an unsafe work-

place. Removing unsafe workers from a jobsite is a powerful way to get your message across that you are serious when it comes to safety. All it takes is one unsafe act to cause a fatality.

3. Ongoing Safety Education and Training

People can only be responsible for what they know and are trained to do. Safety knowledge is important for field personnel and everyone else in the company. Project managers, project engineers and even the president of a company who visit a jobsite require safety education in order to properly model and encourage the desired safe behavior. In addition to traditional classroom training, contractors are encouraged to find new ways of bringing safety education to their jobsites.

4. Observe and Document "Safe" and "Unsafe" Behaviors

Historically, the construction industry has focused solely on the observation, reporting and documentation of "unsafe" behaviors. Safety violations and the penalties associated with these violations have long been in the limelight. Now, to properly assess safety results, attention is turning to the thousands of "safe" practices going on every day at jobsites. This will help to properly contrast and compare "unsafe" practices to motivate those who are being safe so they continue to do so.

5. Reward and Recognition of Safe Practices

Basic psychology teaches that people behave in a way congruent with how they are rewarded and recognized. In other words, we get the behavior we reward and recognize. While it is still a good idea to celebrate company-wide safety achievements and recognize an entire construction team for safe behavior, it is also thought to be just as important to seek out and recognize individual safety performers who help make a difference to overall jobsite safety.

6. Worker Involvement and Participation

Safety is about the workforce and employees learning to take ownership for their own safe behavior as well as the safety of others around them. Individuals responsible for safety often have the best ideas or solutions on how to go about creating a safer work environment. The fastest way to get buy-in for anything including safety is to involve the people themselves in coming up with the safety measures they want to see at a particular jobsite. Get your people talking about safety and see to it that a safety dialogue continues.

7. Attract, Recruit and Retain Healthy and Safety-Minded Workers

Selection criteria and hiring practices have a lot to do with the workforce put in place on any given construction jobsite. In

addition to initial and random drug and alcohol testing, contractors are using other screening measures to assure workers being hired are individuals who value good health and safety for themselves as well as those around them. If safety and health is not coming up in job interviews, companies might be settling for "bodies" to fill job openings rather than workers who will help achieve your safety goals. The same is true when a general contractor qualifies a specialty contractor. Putting the right team together is key.

8. Safety Planning

Putting a written Safety Plan together for a company helps to get everyone on the same page about safety goals and the strategies being used to reach these goals. Input into this Plan from the field as well as the office is critical to its success. In addition to safety planning by the company, each construction project requires advance planning to address site-specific safety issues and build in safety measures on the front end of a job. As the landscape changes day to day on a project, up-front planning will help workers make adjustments in their safety behavior.

9. Measure Safety Progress

Once safety goals are established, it helps to measure progress against these goals. Historically, construction projects report how many days are worked injury-free, as well as the number of lost days due to accidents or injuries. Consider setting a zero recordable injury rate goal at the outset of a project or at the beginning of a company's fiscal year, and report progress against this goal. Consider setting a goal of working 365 days without any lost time and report lost days against

this number. Set positive, quantifiable, specific goals and make everyone aware of these goals and understand the part they play individually in helping to achieve these goals.

10. Build a High-Performing Jobsite Safety Team

Building a team around safety is just as important as building a team to deliver a project on time and within budget. Bringing team members on board who have a commitment to safety will help get the team off to a good start. Setting project safety goals, communicating and clarifying safety expectations for all team members, and creating opportunities for open feedback about safety performance will help the team perform stronger in safety. While the accountability for safety is ultimately demonstrated on the front line or in the field, it takes an entire company to deliver the proper training and put in place the processes, policies and procedures to insure a safe worksite.

11. Meet and Exceed OSHA Standards

A company's safety goals need to extend beyond a desire to just meet OSHA standards since OSHA guidelines represent the minimum acceptable level of safety performance. Helping your workforce set higher safety goals is key to moving safety to a much higher level.

Forward-thinking safety leaders believe being safe is morally the right thing to do. Taking steps to be as safe as possible makes as much common sense as it does business sense. Of course, the biggest cost of all in being unsafe is the loss of human life or a debilitating or life-long injury. In

addition to the impact on this person and their family, unsafe work conditions also affects workforce morale and the ability of the construction industry to attract and retain new workers. A reputation for unsafe work practices also affects the image of an entire industry, a region, a general contractor, a specialty contractor, or even a particular superintendent or foreman overseeing a jobsite. Add in higher costs of insurance and lost days of productivity and it is easy to make the case for a sense of urgency in taking new steps and embracing best practices to improve safety regardless of how well a company thinks it is doing now.

Safety pays in more ways than one! ■

Georgia Branch, AGC Safety Service Highlights

- Complimentary jobsite safety training for all member firms with **Site Safety Vans**
- **Annual Safety Day Conference**
- Participation in AGC of America's and Georgia Branch, AGC's **Safety Award Programs**
- Safety, health and environmental **classroom training**
- Complimentary jobsite safety consultations for member firms participating in Chapter's workers' compensation fund, **CompTrust AGC MCIC**
- Safety **training videos** in English and Spanish
- Participation on a highly active **Safety and Health Committee**

A
B
C

CUTTING CONTRACTORS

OF ATLANTA, INC.



4864 Clark Howell Hwy. • College Park, GA 30349

DENNIS STORM
Vice President

(404) 768-0965 ext. 102
(800) 882-9405
(404) 768-6832 fax

Visit our Website at: www.abccuttinginc.com



ELITE
STRUCTURES

Custom Metal Building Fabrication
Since 1988

elite-structures.com (229) 896-7569