

# 3 Keys to BECOMING A SAFETY-SMART ORGANIZATION



If your company's idea of a safety "program" is a weekly toolbox talk taken from outdated training materials or having employees sign-off on a safety policy that spends the rest of its life in a drawer in the jobsite trailer, there's some work ahead as you reframe safety within your company and set it as a top priority. Even if your company has some meaningful safety practices in place, such as site hazard training or regular checks to ensure the safe operation of tools and equipment, it's likely not as **safety-smart** as it could be.

**Safety is essential to protecting a contractor's biggest asset – its workforce. Furthermore, safety doesn't just happen, it requires buy-in from the top executives all the way down the management chain, as well as investment in leading safety tools and training.**

And although every week should be safety week, there is no better time to take stock of how your company is meeting its safety obligations than Construction Safety Week, an annual industry event which works across competitive boundaries to emphasize the importance of every individual's role in promoting safe choices.

There is no time like the present to step up and take a look at how – or if – your company has taken advantage of industry innovations like sensors and wearables that can provide real-time data on employee behavior and actions during the workday. Rugged, wireless, sophisticated solutions like these can become a lifeline if there is a serious health or safety incident, if an emergency that requires evacuation arises, or simply if a hazard/unsafe condition is identified that needs to be corrected.

**The following are best practices for making safety a priority at your organization.**

# 1

## Rally the company and get employees excited about their commitment to safety.

Construction is full of safety challenges and hazards; A typical day on the jobsite will see workers performing their trades atop scaffolds at sometimes dizzying heights sending crews into an excavation pit or confined space. But working in the industry is a choice, from the CEO all the way down to skilled laborers, and the same goes for ensuring a strong culture of safety. **Safety is a choice that must be exercised each and every day, from the very top of the organization all the way through laborers in the field and even service providers that stop by the jobsite.**

This choice manifests itself in different ways, depending on roles within the company, but each is impactful in its own way.

For top-level management, the commitment to safety can be gauged in a few ways, including how much money the company budgets for safety-related training and education, equipment, and new technology and tools. OSHA certification courses; hiring safety professionals full-time or on a consultancy basis; regularly shelling out cash for new hardhats, fall protection equipment and respirators – safety is not cheap, but the alternative is unthinkable. Just one fall protection harness can cost \$100, for example, and safety consultants are roughly [\\$40 an hour](#), but a jobsite accident or death can devastate the worker and his or her family, not to mention cost the company money in lost time and productivity. And although it may seem small, construction workers who are presented with ragged personal protective equipment (PPE) are subtly told where management's priorities lie.

In the field, project managers and superintendents are the company's representatives, and skilled workers, subcontractors and laborers take their safety cues from these individuals. **Safety on the jobsite is a combination of what management says, what workers see practiced and enforced on the jobsite, and the tools and training they have to take ownership over their own safety.** No one can be too busy to skip over or ignore safety rules or procedures, and project leaders must be aware that their choices can demoralize the ranks below. Supervisors should also be champions on behalf of jobsite employees and use their positions to advocate for more safety resources with leadership in the corporate office.

Of course, skilled trade workers and laborers also have a part to play in safety. It is their actions every day that will likely make a project safer or more dangerous. It's important to remember that employees can be invaluable ambassadors of safety as long as they understand how critical a safe jobsite is to the success of the company and that those in positions above them will support decisions and actions made in the interest of safety. Supervisors given the responsibility of overseeing field safety must understand their roles as partners in the process and avoid fostering a "gotcha" culture that will prevent those who want to report accidents or unsafe situations from coming forward.



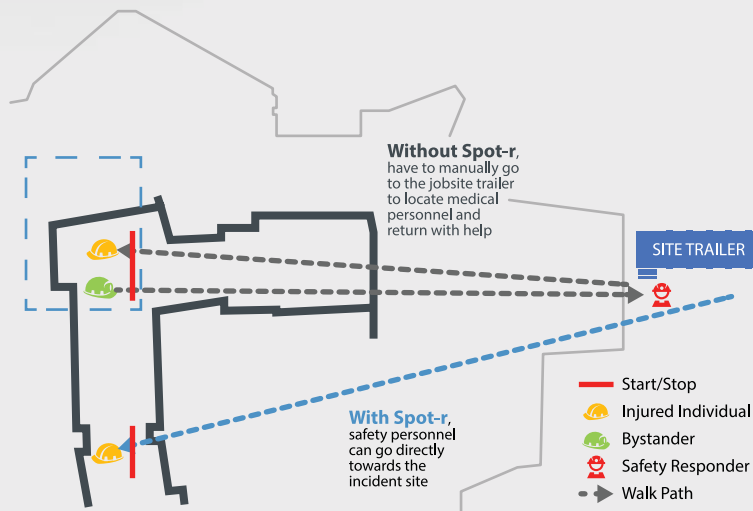
# 2

## Give employees the tools to be successful in their journey toward a safer jobsite.

Just like workers need drills, saws and other tools to do their jobs correctly, a construction company must provide – and utilize - the safety tools available to it. Luckily, today's safety directors are not limited to notebooks, clipboards and extra sets of eyes positioned around the jobsite.

**Augmented reality** is fast becoming a tool for safety training because the technology can simulate safety hazards, giving workers wearing an AR headset the chance to respond according to proper protocols. Similarly, drones can be used to monitor site conditions and hazards, before a job kicks off through completion, and can identify potentially dangerous scenarios (such as loose roofing) more efficiently than humans can. Even OSHA has started using drones to assist in some safety inspections!

With **wearable devices**, it's all about creating an unobtrusive but effective real-time connection between workers and those entrusted with their safety. For example, the **Spot-r Clip** is worn at the waist, and by using an alert button positioned at the bottom of the Clip, wearers can notify supervisors of a safety hazard or injury, and site leaders can trigger an alarm system-wide that will alert all Spot-r users that there is an emergency situation that requires evacuation.



**When it comes to safety, nothing can be left to chance.** The Spot-r Clip's push-button allows workers to easily report a hazard or signal distress from anywhere within the Spot-r network. On Fairfield University's sophomore dormitory project (completed Summer 2018), Gilbane safety personnel improved injury response times by 91% with Spot-r real-time notifications. By removing the manual, there-and-back process of leaving the scene to find medical personnel and bringing them back to the injured worker or hazard, **Gilbane gained remote visibility and streamlined communication.**



Alongside cutting-edge safety tech tools, supervisors should prioritize training “tools” that keep workers sharp when it comes to identifying hazards and contributing to a culture of safety.

Training is probably the most important safety tool. This includes everything from professional certifications like OSHA’s 10- or 30-hour courses to the training that takes place at every jobsite safety meeting.

Toolbox talks at the beginning of the workday can be an effective time to conduct pre-task hazard analysis, including a description of the task, what potential hazards could be involved and how to mitigate or remove the hazards, and also provide an opportunity to make sure everyone is wearing their PPE (hard hat, safety goggles, gloves, and Spot-r Clip.)

These are only worthwhile, however, if they are relevant and engaging. If the project is an interior renovation, for instance, a training session on the dangers involved in excavation and trenching is a waste of time, at least on that job. On the other hand, training on slips, trips and falls will provide useful information for workers on most projects. Address a hazard that employees are likely to come across and incorporate the surrounding jobsite to bring the best practices to life. Don’t just reinforce the practice of stopping work, but have workers go around in a circle and share an instance in which they would stop work and report a hazard.



# 3

## Keep employee motivated for the long haul.

Field supervisors, project managers and employees must take the tools they've been given and implement them in the field. The policies, training, and technology tools to detect safety incidents, communicate in the field and identify hazards won't make a site safer if they are not put into action. And these skills develop like any other – practice, repetition and attention to detail.

Complacency can sabotage even the most robust of safety programs, so the final piece of the puzzle is to stay engaged and practice it each and every day, across every activity. Reinforce learned skills, behaviors and procedures through refresher courses and continuing education opportunities. In addition to staying on top of safety-related news and regulations, take a personal, vested interest in your employees. Everyone has a reason for returning home safely at the end of the night, so find that common ground, and use it as an opportunity to slow down and make the safe choice.

Visit [www.triaxtec.com](http://www.triaxtec.com) to learn how the Spot-r connected jobsite solution can take your safety program to the next level.

Connect with us and tell us how you're **#SaferwithSpotr**



@TriaxSpotr



@TriaxTec