

Improving Your Construction Safety Culture

By Deirdre Pearson

A construction safety culture is a shared set of beliefs, behaviors, and daily practices that make safe work the default on every jobsite from day one. It shows up in how leaders talk about safety, how training is delivered, how hazards get reported, and what happens when somebody calls a stop. A strong culture treats safety as a core operating value, not a poster in the breakroom. A weak one treats it as a compliance task.

The difference is measurable. Companies with strong safety cultures run fewer recordable injuries, lower workers' comp premiums, and lower turnover than peers, according to the business case for safety prepared by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The six practices below are how mature contractors get there.

1. Lead Safety from the Top to Set the Standard

A safety culture starts in the executive suite. Workers read leadership behavior fast. If the owner walks a site without a hard hat or the project

manager pushes a crew past a fatigue limit to hit a deadline, "safety first" becomes meaningless in a week.

Get safety on every executive agenda. Tie it to performance reviews for superintendents and project managers. Talk about it in client meetings. The Center for Construction Research and Training (CPWR) Safety Climate Assessment Tool measures owner and leadership involvement as one of eight leading indicators of a healthy jobsite climate, and it's the one that pulls the rest of the system into line.

- 2. Make Training Continuous, Not One-and-Done**
- Training a worker once at hire is not a safety program. Best-practice contractors run continuous training that covers new hazards as projects evolve and reinforces fundamentals throughout the year. A practical training cadence:
- Daily
 - 10-minute toolbox talk
 - Hazard specific to today's task
 - Weekly
 - 30-minute jobsite training
 - Focus Four refresher, recent near-miss review
 - Monthly
 - 1-2 hour formal training
 - New equipment, OSHA updates, role certs
 - Annually
 - Full-day refresher



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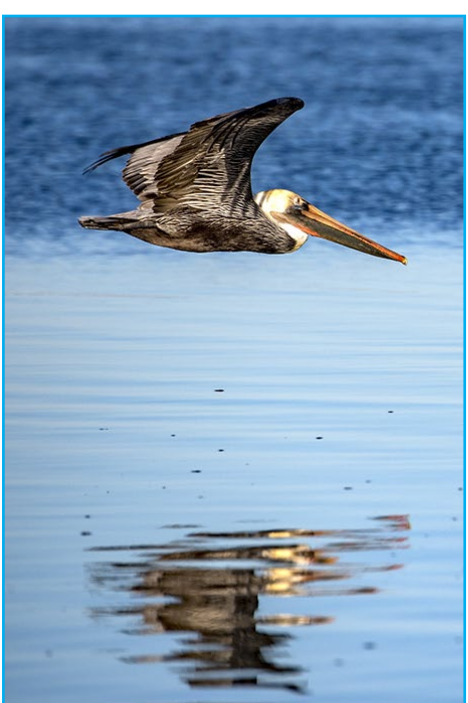
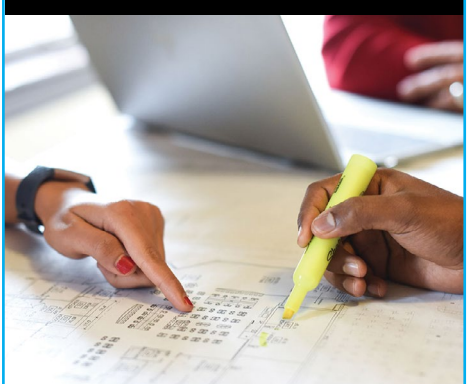
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Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration
Contact: Irene Gonzalez, 208-334-1673, irene.gonzalez@sba.gov
Fee: Free; registration required

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Federal Contracting: Woman-Owned Small Business (WOSB) Certification Program Webinar
Tuesday, November 17, 2026, 10:00 am–11:00 am CST Online
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration, Arkansas District Office
Contact: Suzanne Terrazas, 501-324-7379, Arkansas_DO@sba.gov
Fee: Free; registration required

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Understanding SBA Programs Webinar
Tuesday, November 17, 2026, 1:00 pm–2:00 pm CST Online
Main Sponsor(s): US Small Business Administration, Houston District Office
Contact: Elizabeth Charles, 713-773-6505, elizabeth.charles@sba.gov
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