

A strong safety culture lays the foundation to address the construction industry's hardest challenges

■ How creating an atmosphere of trust and support helps address complex issues like mental health, substance use and opioid overdose.

By **BRIAN SORENSEN**
Exxel Pacific

Safety is key to Exxel Pacific's culture and is integrated into our daily project activities. Since joining the AGC Safety Team in 1992, Exxel Pacific has consistently demonstrated leadership in safety practices.



Sorensen

This dedication was recognized at the Build Washington Awards, where Exxel Pacific received the prestigious Grand Award for Safety Excellence. This accolade highlights the company's continuous efforts to maintain exemplary safety standards within the construction industry.

MAKING SAFETY EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

Exxel Pacific seeks to empower our workforce by instilling the belief that safety is everyone's responsibility. This mindset transforms safety from being perceived as an obstacle to a shared goal, ingrained in every aspect of their operations. By fostering this culture, Exxel Pacific ensures that safety is not just a box to tick but an integral part of the construction process.

In 2017, Exxel Pacific transitioned to a 100% employee-owned company. This shift has further reinforced the importance of safety, as all employees now share in the company's successes and challenges. As owners, they are acutely aware of the consequences of safety-related incidents and are motivated to proactively identify and eliminate hazards. This collective ownership creates a powerful incentive to maintain a safe working environment, benefiting both individual employees and the company as a whole.

A COMMITMENT TO MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

Beyond addressing physical safety hazards, it is essential to focus on the mental health and well-being of all employees. Driven by our core value of "taking care of each other like family," Exxel Pacific actively promotes a culture where mental health conversations are encouraged and normalized. This commitment is a testament to the understanding that mental well-being is just as crucial as physical safety in creating a supportive and productive work environment.

Supporting mental health is an ongoing process that requires continuous effort and adaptation. By actively promoting discussions around mental health, companies can remove stigma and ensure employees feel comfortable seeking help and sup-

port. For us, a focus on treating each other like family creates an atmosphere of trust and support, essential for addressing mental health issues.

ADDRESSING THE OPIOID EPIDEMIC PROACTIVELY

One focus for Exxel Pacific has been the growing opioid epidemic and overdoses in the construction industry. Statistics indicate that overdoses in construction are a predominant cause of death in Washington State, highlighting the urgent need for intervention. This is a grave issue, and it's essential to take proactive steps to safeguard construction workers from this growing threat.

As part of this effort, I organized company-wide sessions featuring guest speakers such as Mandi Kime, the Director of Safety at the Associated General Contractors (AGC), and Cal Beyer from the National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention. These experts provide valuable insights into the importance of suicide prevention and the opioid epidemic, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive approach to worker safety. These discussions aim to educate construction workers about the risks associated with opioid use and the importance of mental health support.

These sessions not only focus on raising awareness but also advocate for a holistic approach to safety that integrates mental health resources, substance abuse support, and physical safety measures. By addressing these topics, Exxel Pacific aims to create a robust safety net for all employees.

EQUIPPING EMPLOYEES FOR OVERDOSES

We also partnered with The Alliance for Naloxone Safety in the Workplace (ANSW.org) and introduced Naloxone response to our first aid standard, providing much-needed help to opioid overdose in the construction industry and enabling employees to have the best possible resources to react quickly to accidental overdoses and save lives. Naloxone, a medication designed to rapidly reverse opioid overdoses, is now a critical part of Exxel's safety toolkit.

By introducing Naloxone response measures, Exxel has equipped its employees with the necessary resources to respond effectively to accidental overdoses. This initiative not only enhances the safety of workers but also underscores the company's commitment to saving lives and fostering a supportive work environment.

REMAINING VIGILANT AND ALWAYS ADAPTING

Safety success is not static; it requires ongoing effort and



Exxel Pacific's safety team (Sorensen at center left).

Photo courtesy of Exxel Pacific



Exxel Pacific's team at the 2025 AGC Build Washington Awards in January.

Photo by Shelly Oberman Photography

(Soenseadaptation. Our safety team must remain vigilant in identifying potential risks and improving safety protocols. They have revamped their safety training program and developed an

interactive "living" safety manual on an electronic platform.

The safety manual is built with the end-user in mind - it is easily digestible, with activity-specific safety standards laid out to follow

the hierarchy of controls. Each safety standard has hyperlinked resources to WAC and OSHA codes as well as company forms associated with the standard. This allows employees to under-

stand how to properly manage risk by eliminating it first, having access to codes a click away and having the most up-to-date resources.

Our electronic platform is an efficient and effective way for employees to complete safety-related documents via the app on their phone, tablet, or desktop. These analytics provide Exxel's team live statistics relating to items like nature of injury, frequent body part affected, incident severity, reporting times, and frequency of inspection, which assists us in determining themes and trends to aid the project team in planning, training, toolbox talks, etc.

By continuously updating safety measures and encouraging employee feedback, we can ensure that safety practices evolve to meet new challenges and standards. Exxel Pacific's dedication to safety, coupled with our commitment to mental health and well-being, underscores a holistic approach to employee care. This commitment not only enhances its organizational culture and productivity but also sets a benchmark for safety excellence in the construction industry. Prioritizing safety, mental health, and continuous improvement paves the way for a safer and more supportive work environment.

Brian Sorensen is Exxel Pacific's Director of Safety, and was named the AGC Build Washington's Safety Professional of the Year in 2025.



BNB 25 YEARS
BN Builders

Your partner since 2000

COMMUNITY

DIVERSITY

INNOVATION

KNOWLEDGE

SAFETY

SUSTAINABILITY

BNBUILDERS.COM

AT BNBUILDERS, SAFETY STARTS WITH US.

EVERY PERSON.
EVERY PROJECT.
EVERY DAY.

#CONSTRUCTIONSAFETYWEEK | ALL IN TOGETHER



Printed on recycled paper

It's time for the construction industry to embrace Type 2 safety helmets

■ The modern construction jobsite presents dynamic hazards that exceed the scope of protection Type 1 helmets were designed to handle — and a helmet that comes off mid-fall offers no protection at all.

By MARIA INLOW
Skanska

Construction work forms a lot of core memories for those in the industry. For many, a vivid one is putting on your dad's hard hat when you're a little kid, the big thing flopping around on your head, way too big. There's also the memory of getting your first helmet and putting on a sticker that holds special meaning. Our helmets are a reminder of who we are and where we've been.



Inlow

But helmets today aren't what they once were — they're no longer the "Hard Boiled Hats" made of canvas and leather, painted black and coated with shellac that Edward Bullard first invented in 1919. All personal protective equipment (PPE) — like the move from wearing body belts to full-body harnesses, and the adoption of high-visibility vests — has evolved over time and what was once optional has become standard.

Now, it's time to make the next safety evolution industrywide: the adoption of ANSI Type 2 safety helmets.

At Skanska, this change is already underway. Beginning June 1, all workers on Skanska USA Building jobsites in Seattle will be required to wear ANSI Z89.1 Type 2 helmets with chin straps securely fastened, joining our Skanska USA Civil colleagues, who have already implemented this change. Traditional hard hats will be transitioned to more modern versions. Skanska USA Building offices are implementing this change nationwide, though changeover dates will vary.

This isn't a minor tweak. It's a substantial step forward in injury prevention. And the rest of the industry should follow suit.

FROM OPTIONAL TO ESSENTIAL

It's easy to forget that many pieces of now-mandatory PPE were once seen as optional — or even excessive. Safety harnesses weren't widely adopted until the 1990s, despite decades of preventable fall-related fatalities. High-visibility vests were only made mandatory on federal highway construction projects in 2008. And jobsite gloves? Many seasoned workers will recall a time when hand protection was



Type 2 helmets include a retention system — a chin strap — which helps keep the helmet in place during falls or unexpected impacts.



Type 2 safety helmets are designed to protect against impacts from the sides, front and back of the head — not just the top. Photos courtesy of Skanska USA

considered a matter of personal preference, not policy.

Each of these advancements came after years of data collection, injury analysis, and hard conversations across the industry. Today, they're a given. You wouldn't send a worker into a trench without a harness, nor would you overlook high-vis gear near heavy machinery. These standards didn't emerge overnight — they were earned. And Type 2 helmets are now following that same arc.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

The distinction between ANSI Type 1 and Type 2 helmets is more than technical — it's a matter of comprehensive head protection.

Type 1 helmets are designed to protect against impacts to the top of the head — typically from falling objects. This has been the traditional focus of construction PPE for decades.

Type 2 helmets, on the other hand, protect against impacts to the top, sides, front, and back of the head. They are built with an inner foam liner and a more secure, full-coverage design that is essential in preventing injuries from lateral and rotational impacts.

Perhaps most importantly, Type 2 helmets include a retention system — a chin strap — which helps keep the helmet in place during falls or unexpected impacts. This is especially critical in real-world conditions where slips, trips and uneven surfaces are common, and where a helmet that comes off mid-fall offers no protection at all.

The modern construction jobsite presents dynamic hazards that exceed the scope of protec-



Several Type 2 options are available for workers to choose from.

tion Type 1 helmets were ever designed to handle. That includes everything from scaffolding mishaps to slips on wet surfaces, vehicle-related impacts, and tools or materials dropped from height. Type 2 helmets were built to address these very risks.

INJURY STATS: WHY WE CAN'T WAIT

The case for industrywide

adoption of Type 2 helmets isn't anecdotal—it's sobering and motivating.

In 2023, the construction industry recorded 1,075 worker fatalities—the highest number since 2011, per the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. Nearly 40% were caused by falls, slips, and trips, often involving head trauma.

According to the CDC and CPWR (Center for Construction Research and Training), nearly

8,000 construction workers suffer head injuries annually, and 230 deaths were attributed specifically to traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) from these incidents.

One study published in Heliyon found that only a quarter to a third of impacts occur on the helmet crown, the area covered by Type 1 helmets, while 52%–62% of impacts occur to the helmet front and sides, which, in addition to the back of the head, is where Type 2 helmets have added

protection. If these workers had been equipped with Type 2 helmets — designed specifically to address these impacts — many injuries and fatalities could potentially have been prevented.

SAFETY AS A CORE VALUE

Safety is central to Skanska's culture. That's why this change is companywide. It aligns with our core value: Care for Life. The health and safety of people lies at the very heart of what we do. In situations that are physically or psychologically unsafe we refuse to be bystanders. We are change-makers and action takers.

Workers and subcontractors are being given clear guidance and access to pre-approved helmet models — such as the Studson SHK-1, KASK Zenith X2, and, if you like the traditional look, the Studson Full Brim—all of which meet the rigorous standards of Type 2 protection. Additionally, Skanska is emphasizing proper usage, including the consistent fastening of chin straps.

It's not just about compliance — it's about building a culture where safety isn't negotiated. Where every worker from apprentice to superintendent has the right equipment to go home safely.

PREVENTION NOT REACTION

Workplace safety should never be reactive. It's about designing systems and equipment that anticipate risk, not just respond to it. Much like how steel-toed boots protect against crush injuries or harnesses protect against falls, Type 2 helmets offer next-level head protection that reflects the real conditions of today's jobsites.

And with more companies incorporating robotics, drones, and multi-level construction, the types of hazards workers face are only growing in complexity and

WE'RE ON YOUR TEAM!

When you work with Star Rentals, you add powerful players to your project team—pros that are skilled, knowledgeable, and easy to work with.

Star Rentals employees are the most experienced in the industry. From our extensive training and safety programs to our equipment expertise, you can count on us to deliver the goods. We make sure you get fast, responsive service, and headache-free billing.

Do we think it's important to be a team player? Absolutely.

100+ Years of Outstanding Service.

Star Rentals is the oldest, largest and most reliable independent rental company in the Pacific Northwest.



www.starrentals.com

Bellevue • Bremerton • Eugene • Everett • Ferndale • Hillsboro • Kent • Longview • Olympia
Pasco • Portland • Salem • Seattle • Spokane • Tacoma • Vancouver • Wenatchee • Yakima

The strongest safety programs are rooted in accountability, culture and leadership

■ *Accountability, as opposed to pointing fingers, and finding facts, not fault, are the real keys to workplace safety.*

By **DUSTIN SMITH**
Mortenson

The concept of construction safety has undergone a profound transformation over the decades. In the early 20th century, the jobsite was an inherently dangerous place — where injury was common and formal protections were scarce. But as the industry matured, so too did its sense of responsibility. By the mid-20th century, a combination of federal legislation and forward-thinking builders began to lay the foundation for a new era — one where worker protection became not just a legal requirement, but a moral imperative. These early pioneers set the stage for the safety standards and training programs we continue to build on today.



Smith

Today, leading general contractors and their executives recognize that prioritizing safety is both a moral obligation and a strategic advantage. Protecting lives and preventing accidents remains the highest priority — a reflection of our industry's deep respect for the people who build our world. But beyond that, companies with strong safety cultures often see measurable benefits: improved project performance, increased client trust and a distinct edge in a competitive marketplace. Safety, once seen as a cost, is now understood as a cornerstone of excellence.

Projects that run smoothly, and without incident, have a better chance of finishing on schedule and on budget. This limits the need for change orders, work stoppage, or other costly delays, providing safety-related outcomes every owner can readily embrace.

When builders are spared the common injuries that have long been accepted as part of the job — from minor bumps and bruises to more serious harm — the entire team thrives. Fewer incidents lead to greater productivity, smoother project execution and a stronger bottom line. But perhaps even more importantly, it creates a workplace where individuals can grow in their craft, advance their careers and take pride in being part of something safer, smarter and more sustainable.

Above all, when injuries are prevented, or even meaningfully reduced, we uphold the most sacred promise in our industry: ensuring every worker returns home safely to their family and loved ones at the end of the day. It's a commitment that transcends policy or protocol. It speaks to the heart of who we are as builders — people entrusted not only with structures, but with lives.

Over the years, countless approaches have been tested in the pursuit of safer, healthier worksites. For too long, however, many safety programs relied

heavily on fault-finding and punitive responses — believing that discipline alone could prevent repeat mistakes. But this approach missed the mark. Not only is it largely ineffective, it undermines trust and growth. Blame doesn't inspire people to improve; it discourages them. True progress comes from understanding, accountability and a culture that sees safety as a shared responsibility, not a punishment.

That's why Mortenson practices the Human and Organizational Performance (HOP) method of safety programming. It's an approach we implemented years ago as a structural overlay to our long-time belief that accountability, as opposed to pointing fingers, and finding facts, not fault, are the real keys to workplace safety.

BRINGING DEFINITION TO THE SAFETY FRAMEWORK

The National Safety Council defines HOP as "a risk-based operating philosophy that recognizes that human error is part of the human condition, and that an organization's processes and systems greatly influence employee actions and choices."

While this framework extends beyond construction safety, we appreciate that HOP uses real scientific principles that help our employees learn from their mistakes, with the goal of addressing accidents in a collaborative, blame-free environment.

What makes HOP especially impactful is how closely it aligns with the core values that have come to define our company over time. Safety, in this context, isn't treated as a short-term objective or shifting priority — it's recognized as a lasting obligation. While priorities may change from project to project or year to year, values are enduring. HOP reflects a deeper commitment: one that sees people not as problems to be fixed, but as partners in building a safer, stronger future.

HOP works well at Mortenson because it ties seamlessly to our "Common Sense Leadership" principles — putting the organization first; showing dignity and respect, no matter our differences; acting with integrity and trust; and establishing a collaborative work environment; among other cultural virtues. Those ideals play out daily, helping to support our deep commitment to safe, healthy job sites.

A CULTURE OF WALKING THE SAFETY TALK

We are deeply committed to our Zero Injury Program, which underscores the responsibility we all share: to protect ourselves and each other, both on and off the job.

For the past 20 years in Seattle, every Friday morning is reserved for our leadership team to review all recordable job site injuries and near-misses. This dedicated time allows us to identify root

causes, implement corrective actions and communicate these lessons across every level of the organization — from C-suite executives to job-site laborers.

Our safety strategy includes tailored safety plans for every project, whether it's a 40-story tower or a tenant improvement. This careful planning is central to our vibrant safety culture, driving accountability across the board — from superintendents to apprentices and trade partners.

Finally, understanding that most jobsite injuries happen to workers new to a project, we've developed a multi-phase onboarding process. This ensures new craft workers are equipped with the knowledge and tools they need to perform their work safely, with structured engagement opportunities to support their growth.

REAL-WORLD SCENARIOS FOR HOP

These corporate values and day-to-day culture initiatives work hand-in-glove with every HOP element on every project. First, HOP assumes that human error is normal, and given our fallible nature, people will always make mistakes. While all GCs strive for an error-free work environment, messing up is simply a fact of life.

Moreover, the most effective systems are those that make it easier to do the right thing. We are all just one step away from disaster, and acknowledging this reality is the first step in preventing accidents and minimizing the impact of those that do occur.

The second guiding principle of HOP is that blame fixes nothing. In fact, mistakes are opportunities to improve a system of doing things, including running safe construction sites. You have to address the true cause of failure, and pointing fingers is counterproductive to that goal.

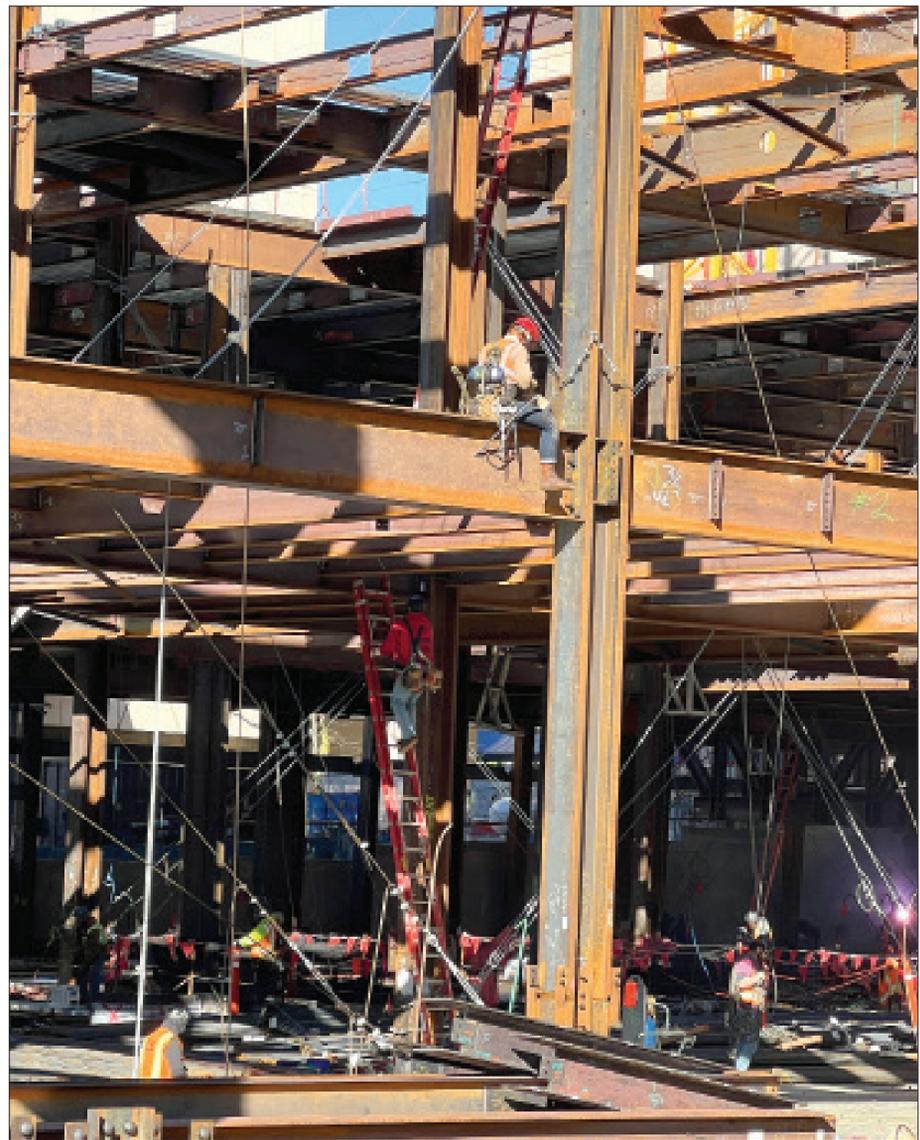
What it requires is a measured, cooperative fact-finding mission, across the entire job site, with no regard to titles and job responsibilities. This is part of HOP's learning and improving are vital principle for success. Everyone is accountable, and the only way to achieve these improvements is through a thorough analysis of what happened, and why.

Next, HOP reinforces the idea that context drives behavior, particularly in a safety-focused environment. How we respond to failure is often more important than the incident itself. The way leaders engage and support their teams plays a critical role in shaping overall performance and safety outcomes.

TRADE PARTNER ADOPTION MEANS EVERYTHING

Finally, every successful safety program relies heavily on shared participation from clients and trade partners. We work diligently to ensure every project employee is intimately involved in both the planning and implementation of HOP safety measures.

For instance, Apex Steel's chairman Kevin Koester provides more than 300 iron workers on projects throughout the West coast. Apex is erecting steel for Mortenson on the 750,000-square-foot North



Apex is erecting steel for Mortenson on the 750,000-square-foot North Tower project on Providence-Swedish's First Hill Campus Expansion.

Photos courtesy of Mortenson



North Tower is the region's largest steel structure project since the Seattle Convention Center expansion.

Tower project, designed by the local office of Perkins & Will, on Providence-Swedish's First Hill Campus Expansion. Some of the project's steel pieces are 20 tons each, being coordinated by two overlapping, dual-operating tower cranes, so working safely requires a great deal of pre-planning and on-site engineering.

"We share Mortenson's commitment to a safe job site, especially on a project with so many moving parts," said Koester, referring to North Tower's status as the region's largest steel structure project since the Seattle Convention Center expansion. "HOP is the ideal program given its unique approach to fact-finding, avoiding blame and establishing an environment of full accountability," he added.

Marc Paulsen, owner of locally based Corona Steel, agrees. The steel-erection firm has a long history of integrating safety strategies into its projects, one of the reasons Corona has been a Mortenson trade partner since 1992, when the companies collaborated on a Seattle-area government office building. Today, Paulsen and his firm erect steel on data centers, car-manufacturing facilities, and other large commercial projects around the U.S.

"Like Mortenson, safety is fully integrated into our work culture. It's not only the right thing to do; job site safety makes sense from a business efficiency and profitability standpoint. That's why we map out a comprehensive safety plan before each project begins, every single time," said Paulsen.

Job site safety has always been a top priority for commercial contractors and their project partners. However, unlike in the past, today's most successful initiatives are built on principles of shared accountability, rather than focus-



Some of the project's steel pieces are 20 tons each, being coordinated by two overlapping, dual-operating tower cranes, requiring a great deal of pre-planning and on-site engineering.

ing on blame or retribution. When contractors align their safety programs with core corporate values and the unique cultures of their teams, they unlock long-term, sustainable success — ensuring the program's impact is felt for decades to come.

Dustin Smith oversees the Mortenson Seattle office as safety director, responsible for establishing an optimal safety culture through the proper implementation of its Zero Injury Safety Program.

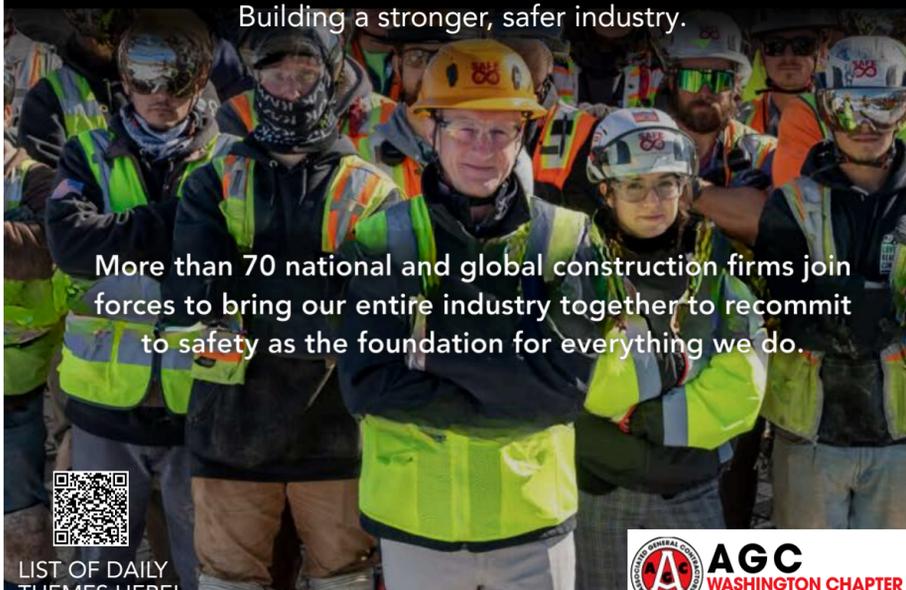


CONSTRUCTION SAFETY WEEK

May 5 - 9, 2025

ALL IN TOGETHER

Building a stronger, safer industry.



More than 70 national and global construction firms join forces to bring our entire industry together to recommit to safety as the foundation for everything we do.



LIST OF DAILY THEMES HERE!



Learn more at [constructionsafetyweek.com](https://www.constructionsafetyweek.com)

Worker wellbeing is key to safety (and organizational) success

■ Addressing more complex and abstract safety hazards like incivility, harassment and stress can be challenging, but the positive benefits are far-reaching – for employee health, and success overall.

By **JUSTIN MOLOCZNIK**
JTM Construction

It is morally and ethically responsible to support a healthy work environment. But in an extremely competitive market, this approach transcends virtue, and has become an avenue for competitive edge. Organizations that embrace positive cultures have 72% higher engagement ratings than those with weak cultures, according to a 2021 Forbes article.



Molocznik

I wrote an article in November for Professional Safety that found that positive work cultures create an employee sense of “psychological safety,” or being comfortable and willing to express themselves authentically without fear of judgment or retaliation, which in turn not only bolsters safety culture, but has shown an increase in productivity, reduced absenteeism, and improved engagement.

Furthermore, overcoming the mental health crisis in construction is urgent. Stress, burnout, and, in extreme outcomes, suicide are all impacting bottom line, and much like safety can all be addressed in the workplace. You spend one-third of your adult life in the workplace. So much like economic status and individual community, the workplace is a social determinant of health. And with such an influential component to overall health and well-being, why would an organization not want to establish controls to mediate it?

NOT ALL SAFETY THREATS ARE PHYSICAL

Occupational safety has long been the vehicle in which other cultural and organizational policy messages have been communicated. The application of safety is fluid, and much like the evolving hazards it addresses, it tends to be “all encompassing.” That is, where health and wellness meets safety, in this expansion of risk in the workplace. Threats that are physical or environmental

are traditionally where the focus of occupational safety has been focused.

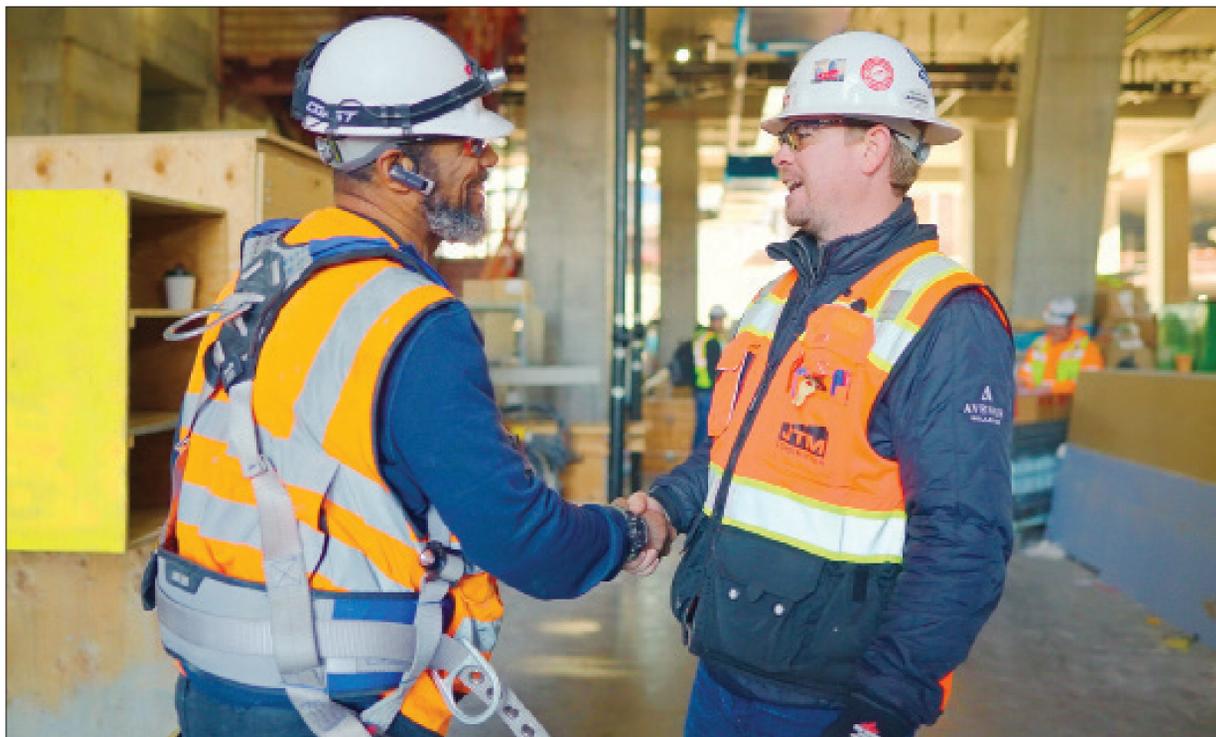
But workplace conditions also create organizational and psychosocial hazards, those that are much more complex and abstract. Workplace incivility, harassment and job stress are all examples of non-traditional threats in the workplace. Recognition of these hazards parallels mental health in the workplace, and when you statistically compare the existence of chronic pain with these types of hazards, their relationship is evident. Compound the existence of coping mechanisms through substances like alcohol and opioids, and like we have seen in the construction industry, tragic results like a high rate of suicide are actualized, as reported by OSHA on April 6.

The umbrella under which to address these issues is Total Worker Health®. This approach to overall worker success and well-being was born through research and design at the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). As of this writing, the future of this program’s continued development and evolution through the federal government is uncertain, however the application and value will continue to hold a high value for employers and their employees in all industries.

COMMITMENT, ACCESS AND COMMUNICATION

Fully understanding and addressing employee risks starts at the top of the organization, with leadership commitment and buy-in. This happens through support and participation in program initiatives, creating access to resources like investment in training and time, and overall clear communication to employees about the integration of this approach.

With an environment of leadership support, work in the organization can be evaluated and designed/redesigned for hazards and risk within a hierarchy of controls to either: eliminate, substitute, redesign, educate, or support and encourage personal change. For example, in this model if you were trying to address overtime and over work



Safety starts with connection — collaboration and communication.

Photo by Hero Creative

to avoid burnout, eliminating the problem might be addressed through managing offices and project hours and adapting closed hours, while substitution in the hierarchy might include having enough staff to supplement overtime or unforeseen issues with additional headcount.

THE IMPORTANCE OF EMPLOYEE BUY-IN

It can be daunting to look at an organization to try and evaluate its collective health, especially when this is done in addition to normal operations. But in the process of integrating the health, safety and wellness of the workforce, let’s not forget the greatest and most readily available resource to information; the employees themselves.

Development is dependent on buy-in and participation from employees; after all it is their experience that this approach is attempting to impact. Whether it is through surveying to determine areas of need for employees, or ideas on barriers for employees in their overall wellness, it is the employees who set the priorities. Only through confidentiality



Total Worker Health means supporting the whole person.

Photo by Hero Creative

and trust will buy-in be gained. For many, the blending of work life and personal life is uncomfortable. Historically, because the link of personal wellness

and mental health and worker experience was not established, individuals might be apprehensive to share information like biomedical indicators, stress levels, and external conditions and habits that impact them for fear of misuse or retaliation. But by creating an environment where this type of information is only used to improve their (employees) experience, the barriers can be overcome.

FAR-REACHING POSITIVE IMPACTS

The overlap of stakeholders (leadership/employees) and departments (executives/HR/Project Management/Safety) within an organization in the integration of Total Worker Health, shows that this is not an add-on program, but a way of doing business. What can be expected as the positive outcomes are far reaching.

By creating this culture, results have shown a decrease in worker injury and illness, which in-turn can have a financial impact through decreased workers compensation and insurance rates. A 2016 article in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental

Medicine found that a decrease in absenteeism, which would certainly impact production, as well as a decrease in presenteeism which may attribute to quality issues and rework can also be the result in addressing overall worker health.

In a competitive market, employee retention is incredibly important, and those organizations who show compassion and care for employee wellness are much more attractive, especially to a younger workforce that demands it.

And finally, increasing employee morale is a dynamic that eludes many organizations who try and positively impact it by creating “one-size-fits-all” approaches. By engaging employee health and well-being, as long as there is employee buy-in, an individualized connection is created and can be much more impactful to morale.

Occupational health and safety has evolved from hardhats, ergonomic chairs and fall protection. The causal factors that can create a negative or injurious work experience for employees (like

See WELLBEING — page 6



PH 425.646.8000 | abcwestwa.org

ABC'S THIRD ANNUAL SAFETY DAY

Friday, June 27th, 2025

Pioneer Park Pavilion
330 S Meridian
Puyallup, WA 98371

8:30 AM - 2:30 PM



SCAN ME

Elevate your leadership with a day focused on safety surrounded by other like-minded professionals.

- Accident Investigation
- Reducing Stigma by Promoting Recovery in Workplaces
- Vendor booths
- and more!



Guest Speaker: Cal Beyer

Senior Director of SAFE Workplaces for national nonprofit SAFE Project. SAFE stands for Stop the Addiction Fatality Epidemic. SAFE Project works with Veterans and caregivers, Communities, Campuses (college & K-12 schools), and Workplaces to teach substance use prevention and recovery strategies. Beyer has over 30 years of experience as a risk management and safety professional. He has been dedicated to construction and manufacturing since 1996. He helped launch the construction mental health and suicide prevention movement in the US construction industry while working as Risk Management Director for a contractor in the Pacific Northwest.

This event was created by safety professionals focused on providing education and networking.

\$30- ABC Members | \$40- Non-Members
Lunch included



Topping out is more than a milestone — it's a testament to teamwork, safety and the people who made it possible.

Photo by Tim Rice

Helmets

Continued from page 3

scope. Jobsite safety must evolve in tandem.

This isn't a matter of being first. It's about doing what's right, and about making decisions today that will save lives tomorrow. We've seen what happens when safety standards lag behind reality. We've also seen what's possible when the industry comes together to raise the bar.

THE FUTURE OF SAFETY IS NOW

Safety standards should never be defined by what was once "good enough."

We don't need to wait for more injuries or fatalities to make this decision industrywide. We already have the data. We already have the equipment. What we need now is a unified commitment to doing what's right.

Construction will always involve risk. But risk should never be an excuse for inaction. With smarter equipment, better data, and a relentless focus on worker safety, we can reduce injuries, prevent fatalities, and create a work environment that reflects the dignity and value of every person on the job.

Type 2 safety helmets represent the next leap forward in personal protection. Let's not wait until they're required — let's lead by making them standard and putting our first stickers on our new Type 2 helmets and making many more memories with our coworkers for years to come.

Maria Inlow serves as Environmental Health & Safety Director for Skanska USA Building, first joining the company 22 years ago as a craft worker and Journeyman Laborer with Local 242.

Wellbeing

Continued from page 5

bullying, workplace incivility, or stress) are factors that have historically been written off as "personal issues." But by addressing safety, health and wellness holistically, an organization can not only positively impact their employees lives, but can concurrently create a competitive edge.

Justin Moloczniak is the Director of Safety, Health, and Environment at JTM Construction, recently serving as the President of the Board representing Construction with the Washington State Governors Conference and is Region I vice president for the American Society of Safety Professionals.