



## What Does a Zero-Injury Safety Program Look Like?

**Key Concept:** There are many *reasons* injuries occur, but only one *cause*: engaging in some form of “at-risk behavior,” either by leaders or by crafts. The key to zero Injury outcomes is the complete commitment by all employees and all management to avoid any form of at-risk behavior.

A good way to think of your zero-injury safety program is to consider three recommended parts:

1. **Content**
2. **Process**
3. **Culture**

Your CONTENT is administered by your PROCESS, which yields your CULTURE. In other words, your CULTURE results from *what and HOW* behavior you model/teach, *when and HOW* you model/teach it, and finally *why and HOW* your supervision (top leaders through foremen) and informal craft leadership interact with your craft personnel during and after CONTENT implementation. It is easy to see your *HOW* is critical throughout.

### CONTENT

Successful owners and contractors have safety programs that yield zero injury outcomes because the content goes well beyond OSHA rule compliance to include multiple “people factors.” To protect your safety program’s integrity in the eyes of employees, you must be 100 percent in compliance with all pertinent OSHA and internal requirements. To not be in-compliance is a form of at-risk behavior and undermines your employees’ confidence in the possibility of zero injury outcomes.

Achieving zero injury outcomes requires your content and process (audit, training, reinforcement) be populated with the safety best practices Leading Indicators (LIs), which are found in the zero-injury research of the Construction Industry Institute (CII). The CII family of LIs are primarily people focused. They can be described as “elements that leadership implements” for themselves and for employees.

CII research has identified over 100 Leading Indicators, ranging from CEO commitment to clean restrooms. These implemented LIs form a bedrock of “working conditions” that create a workplace “atmosphere” that employees and supervision welcome and embrace, an atmosphere that they can look forward to working in each day. Research has determined that these people-focused LIs, when administered properly, can predict and can ensure the absence of at-risk behaviors by both leaders and crafts.

### PROCESS

The zero injury culture-building process begins in the Boardroom and continues through an employee’s hiring and employment. At the new employee “screening and qualifying” point, you should begin information sharing on the subject of safety, for example, by emphasizing the avoidance of at-risk behaviors and by convincing supervisory and nonsupervisory craft personnel that everyone must “sincerely care” about their safety and well-being. *Caring for employees* is a condition of employment and is your key focus on the journey to zero injury outcomes.

## PROCESS (cont.)

Nothing is more important than ensuring the highest quality experience during the hiring and training interface. This begins the creation of a safety culture wherein all employees are successfully enlisted to become co-creators and thus co-owners of “their” safety program.

Following the hiring experience, the “safety orientation and training” content begins. This must include introduction to and training on selected CII Leading Indicators in a manner where the employees are asked to participate and share the various participating roles they will be assuming as the Leading Indicators are implemented. By having these roles include craft involvement, safety co-ownership is strengthened.

Seven essential supervisory safety culture-building concepts to implement are:

1. To *always* treat the crafts with complete “dignity and respect.”
2. To further promote this essential co-ownership, all supervisory interface with the crafts must enlist craft cooperation in the following ways:
  - a. Enlist craft involvement in being co-implementers of the CII Leading Indicators.
  - b. Allow crafts to be co-evaluators of LI effectiveness.
  - c. Include crafts as members of safety inspection teams.
  - d. Create an independent “craft only” safety committee.
  - e. Ensure crafts receive formal recognition in ways that create a project-wide comradery (no monetary incentives).

These seven people-focused process elements, along with assessment for learning, become the foundation of a successful safety culture.

## CULTURE

At the point where implementation of content is complete using the above process, your culture is in place. However, culture work is “never done.” Culture changes everyday, getting better or worse, depending on how well the content and process is followed during that day. The resulting zero injury safety culture will be the product of these foregoing elements. Utilizing the CII LIs and the seven concepts listed above as you execute your safety program process will result in employees beginning to “feel” the work environment in favorable and impressive ways. They will, one by one, become convinced that their supervision really does care about their health and well-being. This “feeling” is the cement that binds the entire project team into a zero-injury-yielding safety program.

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