

A strong safety culture has an impact on the entire organization, but it needs to be led from the top-down so everyone values doing things the safe way.

A strong safety culture within an organization promotes more than safety; it benefits worker confidence and retention, organizational behaviour, productivity and accountability. A strong safety culture has the single greatest impact on incident reduction in the workplace.

Knowing that, developing a safety culture should be a top priority for any company and it starts from the top down. It's not that those in upper-level positions police the actions of everyone else in the organization per se; it is that the leadership within the organization embraces safety as a way of doing things. Operating in a safe manner is the standard operating procedure within the organization. When others see this, safety becomes part of the organizational culture.

How do we define culture?

Culture can be defined as a common set of values, traditions, beliefs, interactions, behaviours, and attitudes shared by an organization.

SAFE Work Manitoba says a positive safety culture *"exists when a set of shared values and beliefs about workplace safety and health influences and drives practices for preventing workplace injuries and illnesses."* A positive safety workplace culture attracts talent, drives engagement, impacts happiness and satisfaction, and affects performance.

What can we do as leaders?

As a leader, you spend a lot of time with your team. When working with them, make sure you exhibit the following behaviours to underscore that the safe way is the only way things are done at your organization:

- Lead by example
 - Your influence on how things get done probably goes further than you think. If you want your team to work safely, then you work safely.
- Listen and learn
 - If members of your team have safety concerns, address them together: assess the risk and find a safer way.
- Communicate clearly
 - If you have seen something done in an unsafe manner, make it clear what was unsafe and show how that procedure must be done moving forward.
- Take responsibility
 - If there's a concern, don't just pass it off to another person or department. Safety is everyone's responsibility, and by addressing the concern (even if it's not your department), you are making it clear that safety is a priority.

- Include everyone
 - Safety culture is inclusive. It isn't just for one department or working group; it is for everyone within the organization. Therefore, make sure everyone on the team is included.
- Strive for authenticity
 - Like leading by example, avoid "do as I say, not as I do" and make sure you choose the safe way.

Resources are available to assess the safety culture at your organization. Some survey tools include

- [Safety Culture Assessment](#) (SAFE Work Manitoba),
- [Culture Check: Best Practices to Improve Your Workplace Safety Culture](#) (SAFE Work Manitoba)

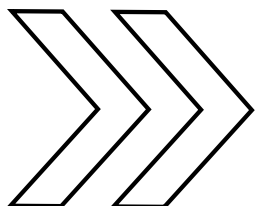
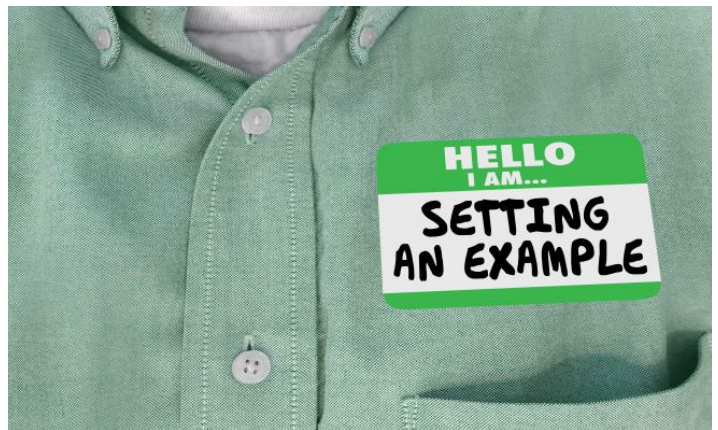
Further Reading

- [Safety Culture and Safety Climate: What's the Difference?](#) (Jobsite)
- [Why PPE built for women means safer working conditions](#) (OHS Canada)

Do you need more information? RPM can help!

Safety culture can be ingrained and accomplished by employers and management in leading by example. Some courses offered by RPM relating to leadership include Principles of Safety & Health Management, Safety and Health Leadership, Safety for Supervisors, and Train the Trainer - Theory.

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Phone: 204-632-6600 | Email: info@rpmsafety.ca | Web: www.rpmsafety.ca

Address: 25 Bunting Street Winnipeg, MB R2X 2P5