

A Survey of Small to Medium Sized Construction Companies: Commitment to Safety and Health

Linda M. Goldenhar, Ph.D.

Beth Ann Witherow

Mona L. Ho, MS

Institute for Health Policy and

Health Services Research

University of Cincinnati

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WHY?

To give us a better understanding of the degree of commitment to health and safety training among small to medium-sized, general contractors across the country.

Why small to medium sized contractors?

**75% of the construction workforce
works for companies with fewer
than 100 employees**

AND

**Most of the health and safety
Information/data is from workers
working for large companies.**

Process

- **Conduct 3 focus groups with contractors to create best possible survey instrument.**
- **Revise survey (which had originally been developed with contractors)**
- **Develop Web-based survey**
- **Contact national AGC office to ask if they would help/participate in project**
- **Answer - YES!**

Process (cont.)

- **Survey was put on the AGC Website's health and safety section in mid-January**
- **In the beginning of February they mentioned the survey in their newsletter. (responses went from 16 to 109!)**
- **Data were collected directly into Access database at University of Cincinnati- IHP**
- **Survey was removed from the Website February 17th.**

Results

Only 4 people completed all sections. Most stopped at Q18. Luckily the most interesting information was collected prior to Q18!

No respondent said that s/he did not provide training to workers and/or to supervisors.

Results (cont.)

“Usable” Data collected from 89 respondents

Respondent Description	N
General Contractors	32
Safety and Health Personnel	25
Others (agent for owner, subcontractor, construction manager)	32

Results (cont.)

Respondent Description	N
Union Shop	40
Open or Merit Shop	49
Heavy Highway Contractor	25
Building Contractor	64

Results (cont.)

Respondent Description	N
OSHA Region – East (1+2+3)	18
OSHA Region- South/South East (4+6)	21
OSHA Region – Midwest (5+7)	32
OSHA Region – West (8+9+10)	18

Results (cont.)

# of Craftworkers Employed in an Average Year	% Responding
100 or fewer craftworkers	61%
Between 100 and 300 craftworkers	30%
Between 400 and 1000 craftworkers	9%

How do you hire or where do you find your employees?
(check all that apply)

Rank Order of All Responses Received:

- 1) References
- 2) Advertising
- 3) Union Hall
- 4) Apprenticeship Programs
- 5) Manpower/Temps
- 6) Recruit from Other Firms
- 7) Unemployment Offices
- 8) Job Banks

By type of contractor:

Building Contractors - Higher % from manpower

Open/Merit Shops – Higher % from manpower & unemployment

Midwest – Higher % from union halls

Do you ask workers whether or not they have had:

- a) Skills Training?**
 - b) Safety and Health Training?**
-

The majority of respondents said YES to both Qs.

However, some categories of respondents had a somewhat high % of NOs. Including:

- General Contractors**
- Heavy Highway Builders**
- Union Members**
- Located in the Western OSHA regions**
- Located in the Mid-West OSHA regions**

**Is safety a line item in the company's budget?
&
Is safety part of your project estimate?**

**Majority of Heavy Highway Contractors said NO to:
Line Item (No=52%)
Project Estimate (No= 61%)**

**More open/merit shops (44%) than union shops
(32%) said NO to Line Item question.**

On a scale from 1-10, with 10 being highest, please rate how management in your company regards/supports health and safety efforts.

The overall mean = 8.11

Heavy Highway Contractors = 5.71

vs.

Building Contractors = 8.60

Union = 8.38

vs.

Open/Merit = 7.89

Compared to other important issues your company deals with, how would you rate the importance given to safety? (scale = 1-5 with 5 being highest)

The overall mean = 3.10

Heavy Highway Contractors = 2.56

vs.

Building Contractors = 3.29

Union = 3.07

vs.

Open/Merit = 3.11

How is safety communicated to employees? (check all that apply)

**All 16 categories got checked by at least 5 people.
Those most cited:**

Written policies

Provision of safety equipment

Weekly toolbox talks

Formal programs

Designated safety supervisor

Knowledge that employee can be fired

Those least cited:

Task-specific training

Incentives

Give safety warnings

Limitations

Select sample: AGC members or people going to the AGC website and then going to the health and safety page on the website.

Brief window of time for possible response (1 month)

Limited advertising of survey availability.

Others?

Conclusions

Construction folks are not totally averse to completing web-based surveys. But, it can only have a limited number of continue buttons and pages to complete.

Management was rated fairly high in terms of their support for safety and safety was rated as important as other company issues.

Very few differences across categories, although heavy highway might, in some cases, exhibit less safety focus.

Employees are recruited from a number of sources including temp agencies – (these folks may not have s & h training).