

Culture Shift

Helping your factory partners develop and sustain a culture of safety





Creating a safe, secure factory environment in Bangladesh goes beyond safety measures and technical standards; it requires culture of workplace safety.

To realize our mission – an industry where worker and workplace safety are integral parts of doing business – we need to help Nirapon partner factories see and realize the benefits of creating and maintaining effective safety cultures.

Business Benefits of a Safety Culture

A culture of safety elevates the work environment for everyone. It also safeguards workers, equipment, and the organization as a whole. As a result, factories with an established culture of safety tend to realize business benefits that help them attract better workers and more customers – and deliver greater profit.

These benefits include:

Higher Worker Satisfaction: A safety culture prioritizes worker health, safety, and well-being, which enhances worker satisfaction and creates stronger relationships between management and workers. This promotes worker engagement and retention which improves factory performance.

Improved Productivity: A factory with a strong safety culture educates workers about safety standards and protocols and sets clear expectations around safe work practices, which helps employees work more safely and efficiently and leads to greater productivity.

A Better Reputation: A safety culture demonstrates social responsibility and corporate integrity. This helps factories

build a positive reputation and build stakeholder confidence, which attracts top talent and customers.

Fewer Accidents and Legal Concerns:

A factory with a positive safety culture follows regulatory requirements. Workers experience fewer incidents, injuries, and occupational health issues, as well. This minimizes legal issues, medical costs, and production disruptions and protects the factory's reputation.



Key Components of a Safety Culture

Every factory is different, and there is no “one size fits all” approach to building a culture of safety. However, factories with a robust safety culture share the key components outlined below.

As a Nirapon member, you can work with your factories to cultivate these best practices and strive for continuous improvement.

Leadership Commitment: Strong leadership support is essential for establishing and maintaining safety as a top priority and core value within the organization.

EXAMPLES

- ✔ Safety is an integral part of the organization’s mission, broader goals, and daily operations.
- ✔ Leaders actively demonstrate their commitment to safety through their words and actions, and through resource allocation.

Management Responsibility: Managers play a pivotal role in integrating safety into the organizational culture and core values.

EXAMPLES

- ✔ Managers and safety supervisors receive support in developing and sustaining a safety culture, including education, visits and trainings with safety experts, and opportunities for manager-to-manager knowledge sharing.
- ✔ Safety performance is integrated into manager performance reviews.

Employee Involvement: Engaging employees in safety initiatives fosters a sense of ownership and responsibility.

EXAMPLES

- ✔ Each person in the organization – from the owner or CEO to the newest recruited worker – has an important role in creating, communicating, and upholding safety standards, policies, and procedures.

- ✔ The entire workforce has the tools, knowledge, and authority to identify and address emerging hazards and help avoid incidents and accidents.
- ✔ Workers are encouraged to participate in safety committees and working groups.



TIP

Empower workers to help develop safety procedures – particularly those that directly effect them or their work area – in order to help them “own” their safety.

Clear Policies and Procedures:

Establishing comprehensive safety policies and procedures provides clarity on expected behaviors and actions.

EXAMPLES

- ✔ Safety policies and procedure documents are readily accessible, regularly reviewed, and updated as needed to reflect changes in regulations or best practices.
- ✔ Learnings from incidents and accidents are incorporated into policies and procedures to prevent future issues.

TIP 

Consider creating multiple copies of important safety documents and keeping them where employees can easily access them.

Training and Education: Providing thorough training and ongoing education for all employees during work hours ensures they have the knowledge and skills to perform their jobs safely.

EXAMPLES

- ✔ Training covers topics such as identifying hazards, safely operating equipment, emergency response, and ergonomics and is updated to reflect emerging trends and new regulations.
- ✔ Workers in higher-risk jobs – handling chemicals, managing heavy loads, operating heavy machinery – are trained to identify and manage role-specific risks.
- ✔ Education about the reasons for safety protocols cultivates a sense of shared understanding and responsibility, and helps workers make informed decisions that keep themselves and the workplace safe.

TIP 

Schedule things like training, policy reviews, and regular equipment maintenance into production schedules, to be sure safety is part of the job, not an afterthought.

Education is key to culture.

Education a vital part of developing and sustaining a culture of safety in the workplace. More than just training workers what to do in an emergency, education helps them understand the “why” behind safety practices and protocols. It equips employees with the knowledge, skills, and understanding necessary to identify hazards and mitigate risks effectively, so they can make informed decisions and take proactive measures to prevent accidents and injuries.

Education also cultivates a sense of responsibility and accountability among employees that inspires them to contribute to and maintain a safe work environment for themselves and their peers. Ongoing education keeps workers up-to-date on emerging safety trends and regulations, and helps them adapt to evolving circumstances and effectively meet new challenges. It is an investment in a workplace culture that prioritizes and values safety, and a workforce that integrates safety into the daily routine.

Communication and Feedback: Open and honest conversations about safety, health, and well-being help integrate these topics into the workplace culture and keep them top-of-mind.

EXAMPLES

- ✔ Workers feel comfortable and empowered to report safety concerns, seek clarification on procedures, and provide feedback on safety initiatives.
- ✔ Factory managers offer opportunities for workers to share safety concerns and learn from incidents and each other.

Recognition and Accountability:

Recognizing and rewarding employees for contributing to a safe workplace encourages engagement, promotes positive behaviors, and shows the organization values safety – as does holding individuals accountable for not following safety practices and protocols.

EXAMPLES

- ✔ Workers are praised for contributing to a culture of safety by identifying risks, suggesting mitigations, and escalating safety issues.
- ✔ Employees who do not contribute to a culture of safety are held accountable and given resources and opportunities to refresh their safety education and training.

Proactive Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment:

Regularly assessing the workplace for hazards and evaluating associated risks is crucial to preventing accidents and injuries rather than reacting to them.

EXAMPLE

- ✔ Factory management conducts on-going activities like safety audits, job hazard analyses, and ergonomic assessments.



What's the difference between safety measures and a culture of safety?

Safety measures are protocols, guidelines, procedures, and equipment put in place to prevent accidents, injuries, and hazards within a workplace. These measures often include items such as wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), implementing emergency response plans, conducting safety inspections, providing safety training, and enforcing regulatory compliance.

A culture of safety extends beyond safety measures to encompass an organization's attitudes, beliefs, values, and behaviors around safety. A safety culture is ingrained in the organizational fabric, influencing how employees perceive and prioritize safety in their daily tasks and decisions. Every individual from top management to frontline workers is actively committed to promoting and maintaining a safe work environment. And employees feel empowered to voice safety concerns, report hazards, and participate in safety initiatives without fear of reprisal. Safety is a shared responsibility and core aspect of the organization's identity – and everyone strives for continuous improvement.

SAFETY MEASURES	SAFETY CULTURE
<p>Short-term outlook Offer immediate solutions to identified risks</p>	<p>Long-term outlook Provides a sustainable framework for ongoing safety improvement</p>
<p>Risk-based Actions and protocols to address identified risks</p>	<p>Commitment-based A comprehensive, collective commitment to safety across the organization</p>
<p>Reactive Put into place in response to hazards, incidents, and regulations</p>	<p>Proactive Constantly seeking to improve, evolve, and innovate</p>
<p>Compliance mindset Driven by enforcement, regulations, and standards</p>	<p>Ownership mindset Driven by a sense of personal and collective responsibility for safety</p>
<p>Individual responsibility Often focus on ensuring that each employee adheres to the rules</p>	<p>Collective responsibility Encourages a shared, cooperative approach that empowers all employees to take an active role in safety</p>
<p>Implementation Put into practice through policies and procedures</p>	<p>Integrated Part of the organizational ethos, influencing decision-making, communication, and workplace dynamics.</p>

Investing In a Safety Culture

Creating and sustaining a culture of safety can seem like a costly endeavor for factories. Things like training, education, and proactive maintenance might feel like non-essential expenses – especially if they cut into production time.

However, more progressive factories see these budget items as investments in the long-term success of their business rather than costs. And they believe the benefits of a safety culture outweigh the expenses.

For them, the question is:
What is the cost of not prioritizing a safety culture?
They understand that incidents and accidents, damage to brand reputation, and major production disruptions can be disastrous for factories, and incur much greater costs.

As Nirapon members, we can help our factory partners understand and realize the benefits of investing in a culture of workplace safety by supporting and championing their efforts through the Safety Management Program.

For real life examples of factories that are actively developing a culture of safety, visit our case study: [Why Factories Benefit from a Culture of Safety.](#)

