

Survey Validates Importance of Safety Culture



Obviously, certain occupations are more dangerous than others, but a new study suggests that a worker's perception of a positive safety climate and the work-life balance established by one's employer can decrease his or her odds of being injured by nearly one-third.

Dave DeJoy, a University of Georgia (UGA) professor of health promotion and behaviour, says over the past 20 years, there's been growing evidence that management and organizational factors play a critical role in worker injuries.

"That is, actions taken or not taken at the organizational level can either set the stage for injuries or help prevent them," says DeJoy, who, with Todd Smith, a recent graduate of the Health Promotion and Behavior doctoral program at UGA, assessed occupational injury risk among 1,525 survey respondents.

DeJoy and Smith examined US safety climate perceptions among a diverse sample of occupations and worker groups—from offices to factories—to highlight the factors linked to injury.

They found that a worker's perception of a positive safety climate can decrease injuries by 32%. The safety climate category assessed worker perceptions on the importance of their safety in their company.

The survey also determined that companies that run in a smooth and effective manner and have minimal constraints on worker performance can decrease injuries by 38% as worker opinions improve.

But in situations where work interferes with family life or family demands affect job performance, DeJoy and Smith found that the risk for injury jumped by 37%.

The take-away: Companies can design the best safety controls, but they must be maintained—and that responsibility falls on management. "Enacted policies and procedures—not formalized ones but those acted upon—define a climate of safety," says Smith. DeJoy agrees, adding "Injury is a failure of management. Organizations who blame individuals for injuries do not create a positive safety climate."

Read the UGA news release here:

<http://news.uga.edu/releases/article/perception-work-life-balance-key-factors-in-workplace-safety-says-uga-study/>