US Survey: One-Third of Workers Say Employers Put Productivity Before Safety

Do you think your employer prioritizes productivity over workplace safety'

The National Safety Council asked this question to 2,000 employees in an employer perception survey. It recently released the results, which found that 33% of the employees surveyed across the US believe safety takes a back seat to productivity at their organizations.

More disturbing is the fact that this percentage was even higher among employees in high-risk industries: 60% of respondents in the construction industry and 52% of those working in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting felt safety was less of a priority than finishing tasks. And those industries are first and second when it comes to the number of occupational deaths each year in the US.

Other key survey findings include:

- 49% of temporary and contract workers, and 41% of employees working in healthcare settings said they were afraid to report safety issues
- 62% of construction workers and those in agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting believe management does only the minimum required by law to keep employees safe
- 61% of employees in the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industry say there's resistance to working safely among employees.

On a more encouraging note, 70% of employees did say that safety training is part of their orientation, and that employee health and well-being is promoted at work. (The full survey results and methodology are available here,)

If management in your company *does* prioritize productivity over safety, that approach is counterproductive as studies have found that putting productivity ahead of safety actually hurts the bottom line. And another study found that a strong safety culture actually improves a company's financial performance.