



# Maintaining Employee Involvement

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Jay Joyce  
2024



## Overview of Eastern Municipal Water District



ESTABLISHED IN  
**1950**



SERVES:



WATER / WASTEWATER / RECYCLED



WHOLESALE

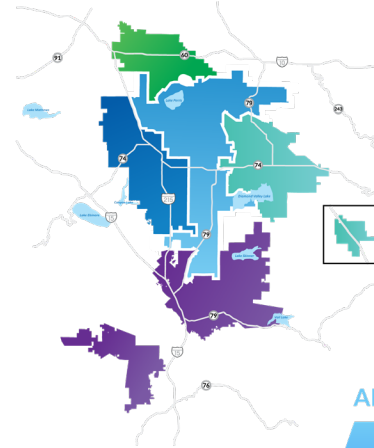
&

RETAIL



POPULATION NEARLY:

**1,000,000**



**601**

SQUARE MILE  
SERVICE AREA

APPROXIMATELY



**43%**

CURRENTLY  
BUILT OUT

ONE  
OF THE



member agencies  
of The Metropolitan  
Water District of  
Southern California



## Public Agency, Workforce of approx. 625 Employees, Union representation

### DRINKING WATER

- Operation & Maintenance of:
  - 2 water filtration plants
  - 3 groundwater desalination plants
  - 2,635 miles of pipelines
  - 94 pump stations
  - 79 storage tanks
  - 15 potable wells
  - 14 brackish wells



### WASTEWATER

- Operation & Maintenance of:
- 4 Regional Water Reclamation Facilities
  - Moreno Valley
  - Perris Valley
  - San Jacinto Valley
  - Temecula Valley
  - 51 lift stations
  - 1,990 miles of sewer pipeline



### RECYCLED WATER

- Nationally recognized as an industry leader
- Operation & Maintenance of:
- 250 miles of recycled water pipeline
- Nearly 7,700 AF of seasonal storage
  - Mandatory use requirement in new development



## What is Employee Involvement?

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- What is our standard approach, understanding, or definition of Employee Involvement?
- Are employees involved by association? If they are on site working and an active employee, are they involved in our safety culture?
- How do we gauge the involvement of our employees in our safety programs or safety culture?
- Has Management and EH&S staff become accustomed to gauging our organization's safety culture from a top-down perspective? Are we making assumptions on our employee's opinions and willingness to be involved? Is safety a choice made by the individual or a mandate?
- Have we asked employees to provide feedback?
- What has our messaging been?
- Have we verified the effectiveness of our attempts to engage employees and encourage involvement?

## Maintaining Employee Involvement through a Safety Stand-down

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- Late 2022 – As Covid-19 distancing requirements and protocol began to relax, employees returned to work as work from home days were reduced. EMWD decided to take the opportunity to engage the entire organization in a conversation regarding safety.
- The challenge was simple, how do we promote safety, encourage employee involvement, and develop individual ownership of safety on the job, everyday?
- Expected Stand-down outcomes and benefits:
  - Engage management and develop a mindset within management staff to show a personal commitment to safety, encouraging employee involvement and feedback on safety at EMWD.
  - Employee involvement and a boost in moral as employees are given an opportunity to provide personal thoughts, feelings, and feedback on our safety culture and practices.
  - Receive an EMWD “report card” for EH&S department and Executive/Senior Management to understand employee perspective of our safety culture.
  - Compile a list of opportunities for improvement (Continual Improvement Cycle).

## Safety Stand-down

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### The approach:

Schedule time for the entire organization to pause and concentrate on safety. Management will lead the conversation and document feedback. Feedback will be provided to EH&S department and Executive staff.

### Stand-down preparation:


- EH&S department developed stand-down guidance documents for both field and office management.
- Documents included guidance on how to approach the stand-down, meeting with staff, setting the tone, ownership of the topics encouraging management staff to speak of personal goals, experiences, or stories about safety.
- EH&S developed material used to educate management employees about “Active Listening” techniques promoting a calm and inviting atmosphere when soliciting feedback from employees.
- Office employees stopped work for 2-hours to talk about safety within their department.
- Field employees stopped work for 4-hours to talk about safety within their department, and audited their facilities, equipment, vehicles, and tools.


## Preparation Guidance form Management Employees


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1. Preparation Guidance for Discussion based Safety Conversation with ALL Employees
  - Set tone that this is their opportunity to speak up and be heard  
Call on individuals that are not participating (involve them)
  - Discussion Questions - General questions have been provided to guide the conversation (see Agenda Item 3); feel free to elaborate on, expand, or use your own words
  - Practice Active Listening and do NOT become defensive or dismissive – every voice matters!
  - Write down the responses, concerns, suggestions; you will need to share these with your Manager and Sr. Exec Team later
  - Let the conversation flow



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2. Discuss EMWD's Commitment to Safety and Your Personal Commitment to the Safety and Health of your employees – Discuss “STOP – FOR YOUR SAFETY” Poster and Handout – Consider Discussing Ergonomics and EMWD Vehicle Safety
- Communicate the importance of employee engagement and active participation in the meeting – stop work, cellphones stowed away – full undivided attention
  - Set tone that this is a serious topic, and their safety and participation is important to you
  - Let them know that you want to hear from them, open conversation, free from fear of repercussions

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3. Questions for Discussion Based Safety Conversation with ALL Employees
1. How does safety apply to the office environment?
  2. When EMWD talks about safety as a priority, how does this statement apply to you and your job?
  3. Are you a part of the safety culture because of your contributions or by association? What are ways you can contribute to safety in your current role?
  4. Suggest a few ways EMWD can make safety more applicable to office staff.
  5. As a member of the Management team, do I communicate safety expectations properly?

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4. Perform an audit of the facility, equipment, vehicles, and tools.
  5. THANK STAFF FOR PARTICIPATING – Let them know that you can always be approached with concerns, questions, or suggestions.
  6. Write Down or Transcribe the Feedback from staff and be prepared to share the information when it is requested. ALL FEEDBACK IS IMPORTANT!

Following this exercise, feedback was compiled, analyzed and trending was used to determine important topics, concerns and areas for improvement. This “report card” was provided to the Executive Management Team.



## Safety First Week Development and Plan



## Safety First Week – Plan Development

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- Core Team Developed a Communication Plan
  - Direct Response to Safety Stand-down Analysis
- Aligned with EMWD Guiding Principle
  - **Safety:** We will ensure the safety of our employees and the public, without compromise





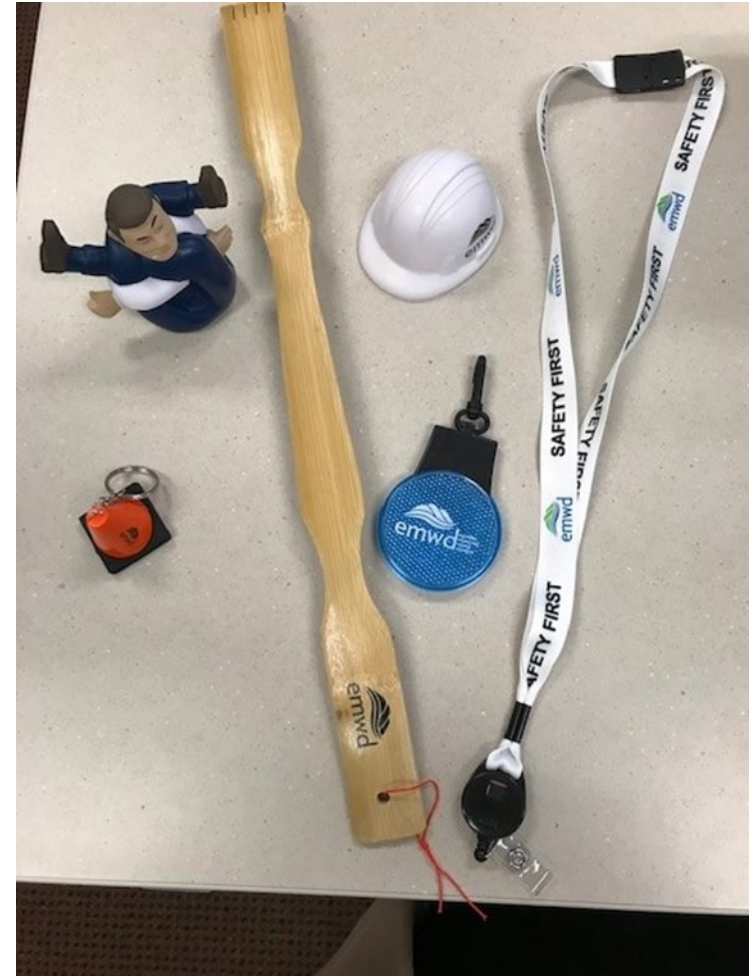
## Safety First Week - Goals

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- Maintain Employee Involvement
- Promote health and wellness of EMWD employees
- Reaffirm EMWD's commitment to safety
- Provide resources to employees as requested in feedback from the Safety Stand-down
- Kick-off the year with an emphasis on safety in 2023
  - Communication
  - Training
  - Tools
  - Resources

## Safety First Week - Communication Plan

- Plan and Key Messaging Distribution
  - Executive Management support and involvement
  - Executive staff updates
  - Manager and supervisor involvement
- Promotional Items
  - Tangible
  - Ties back to messaging
- Visual Reminders
  - Large banners with key messaging at all work sites
  - Hallway TV dashboards
  - Intranet – Pipeline banners and announcements
- Centralized and Frequent Communication
  - Save the Date
  - Webpage created to house all material
  - Daily distribution
  - Thank you and follow up



# Safety First Week - Key Messaging 2023

- Safety is a State of Mind
  - Think About It.
- Emergency Management
  - Arrive safe. Work safe. Leave safe.
- Safety and Security
  - Safety and Security is everyone's responsibility.  
See Something. Say Something.
- Safety Meetings
  - Safety today is another form of retirement planning.
- Ergonomics
  - Good Form. Good Function. Good Health.

**emwd** EASTERN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

**DAILY EVENT SCHEDULE**

**SAFETY STATE OF MIND 9TH**  
Safety is a state of mind.  
Think about it.

**EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT 10TH**  
Arrive safe. Work safe. Leave safe.  
Your family is depending on it.

**SAFETY AND SECURITY 11TH**  
Safety and security is everyone's responsibility.  
See something, say something.

**SAFETY MEETINGS 12TH**  
Safety today is another form of retirement planning.

**ERGONOMICS 13TH**  
Ergonomic safety:  
Good form, good function, good health.

**JANUARY 9-13, 2023**  
**SAFETY, RISK AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT**

**SAFETY FIRST WEEK**

**emwd** CAL/OSHA



## Safety First Week Plan – Execution 2023

- Preview Email (entire organization)- Safety First Week is coming!
- Supervisor/Manager Instructions
- Department Support staff distribution of promotional items
- Hang Banner Graphics/Posters



## Banners



## Banners (continued)



# Safety First Week Plan – Execution 2023 (continued)



## Safety First Week January 9 – 13, 2023 Distribution Schedule

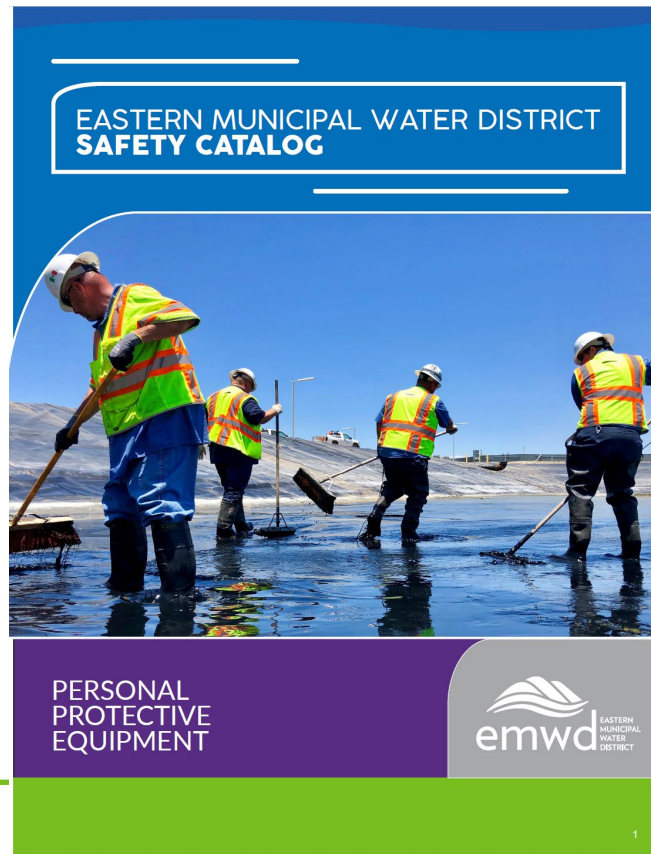
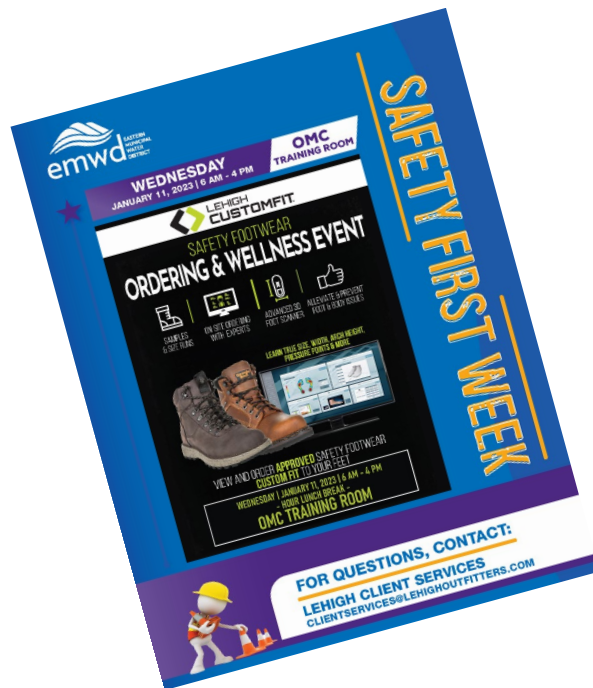
	Monday 1/9/2023 Safety State of Mind	Tuesday 1/10/2023 Emergency Management	Wednesday 1/11/2023 Safety and Security	Thursday 1/12/2023 Safety Meetings	Friday 1/13/2023 Ergonomics
Executive Intro Video	Joe Mouawad	Lanaya Alexander	Nick Kanetis	Matt Melendrez	Laura Nomura
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>EAP Flyer</li> <li>Wellness Committee</li> <li>Gym</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evacuation Maps</li> <li>Backof Badges (Disaster Service Worker)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PPE Catalog</li> <li>Security Info</li> <li>Ext. 4444</li> <li>Photos of Pipeline</li> <li>Badges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Safety Meeting Form</li> <li>Office 12 meetings</li> <li>Field 52 meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RSI Guard Info</li> <li>Stretching/Exercise Guide</li> </ul>
Giveaways: Distribute to Each Department Staff Member	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hard Hat Stress Ball</li> <li>Back scratcher</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Make a Plan" book</li> <li>Flashing Personal Safety Clip Light</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Safety-first" Lanyards</li> <li>Cone Key Chain</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cal/VPP Star note pads</li> <li>EMWD Pens</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Twisted Pretzel Stress Reliever guy</li> </ol>

All resources can be found on the Website at: <https://www.emwd.org/safety-first-week> (final published items to be posted by COB 1/6/2023).

and on The Pipeline at: [Home >Documents Library > Safety, Risk & Emergency Management](#). In addition, daily Pipeline announcements will be distributed throughout the week of January 9<sup>th</sup> to include fliers and resource links.

# Safety First Week Plan – Reference Material 2023

- Interactive Examples
  - Daily Introduction Videos – [Executive Support](#)
  - Personal Protective Equipment Catalog
  - Boot Fair Onsite
  - Daily Drawing



## Developing Safety First Week 2024

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- Planning for Safety First week began in June of 2023
- EH&S staff met to brainstorm topics, resources, giveaways, games, and swag
- Topics were chosen by relevance, lagging indicators, and employee feedback through safety suggestions
- The theme and phase chosen for safety first week 2024 is taken from one of EMWD's Guiding Principals: "SAFETY WITHOUT COMPROMISE"
- A new idea for this year was the Safety without compromise contest. A voluntary contest where employees were asked to explain in writing:  
    "what does safety without compromise mean to you?"



# Safety First Week - Key Messaging 2024

- Focus
  - Safety starts with me
- Take Five
  - Plan Ahead
  - Analyze
  - JSA/SOP
  - Pre-job
  - Don't rush
- Communicate
  - Share
  - Coach
  - Mentor
- Get Involved
  - See something, say something, do something
- Continuous Improvement
  - Safety is a forward-thinking journey

The graphic is a vertical timeline for the 'SAFETY FIRST WEEK' from January 22 to 26, 2024. It features a green background with a blue vertical bar on the right containing the text 'SAFETY FIRST WEEK' in large, white, vertical letters. At the top left is the 'emwd' logo with 'EASTERN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT' written below it. A small cartoon character wearing a yellow hard hat and a red safety vest is positioned near the top right. The timeline consists of five horizontal bars, each representing a day's focus, with a star icon to the left of each bar. The bars are: 1. 'FOCUS' (blue bar) for 'JAN. 22' with the theme 'Safety starts with me'. 2. 'TAKE FIVE' (light blue bar) for 'JAN. 23' with the theme 'Plan ahead • Analyze • JSA/SOP • Pre-job • Don't rush'. 3. 'COMMUNICATE' (purple bar) for 'JAN. 24' with the theme 'Share • Coach • Mentor'. 4. 'GET INVOLVED' (teal bar) for 'JAN. 25' with the theme 'See something, say something, do something'. 5. 'CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT' (grey bar) for 'JAN. 26' with the theme 'Safety is a forward-thinking journey'. At the bottom, a blue bar contains the text 'SAFETY WITHOUT COMPROMISE' on the left, 'JANUARY 22-26, 2024' in the center, and 'SAFETY, RISK AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT' on the right. To the right of this bar is the 'CAL OSHA' logo.

**emwd** EASTERN MUNICIPAL WATER DISTRICT

**DAILY EVENT SCHEDULE**

**FOCUS** JAN. 22  
Safety starts with me

**TAKE FIVE** JAN. 23  
Plan ahead • Analyze • JSA/SOP • Pre-job • Don't rush

**COMMUNICATE** JAN. 24  
Share • Coach • Mentor

**GET INVOLVED** JAN. 25  
See something, say something, do something

**CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT** JAN. 26  
Safety is a forward-thinking journey

**SAFETY WITHOUT COMPROMISE** **JANUARY 22-26, 2024** **SAFETY, RISK AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT** **CAL OSHA**

# Safety First Week Plan – Execution 2024

- Preview Email(s) - What's Coming
- Supervisor/Manager Instructions
- Department Support staff distribution of promotional items
- Hanging Banner Graphics/Posters





# Safety First Week Plan – Execution 2024 (continued)

- Supervisor/Manager Instructions
- Department Support staff distribution of promotional items



Greetings and welcome to Safety First Week 2024. Last year our Safety First Week followed the 2022 Safety Stand Down and much of the information and resources provided were a direct result of feedback from that stand down. This year, we continue to provide information and resources to reinforce that safety is the priority at EMWD. The purpose of this document is to assist you with tips and tools to present the provided information, ways to encourage involvement and questions to solicit feedback. Please provide all feedback to Safety, Risk and Emergency Management (SREM) [riskmanagement@emwd.org](mailto:riskmanagement@emwd.org).



## DAILY

Lead with enthusiasm when communicating with staff about Safety First Week. Either through in-person meetings, via Teams or a combination of both, please review the following with your department as a group:

- Short introduction videos—Monday, the General Manager will introduce the theme and the purpose of the week, each day thereafter Safety Committee members will present information for the day
- Ensure everyone receives the daily giveaways
- Review the filer for the day
- If there are resources highlighted, review those with staff
- Go over the discussion items for each day (schedule on following pages)

[www.emwd.org/Safety-First-Week](http://www.emwd.org/Safety-First-Week)



## TOPIC, FOCUS AREA, DISCUSSION

### ★ MONDAY

#### FOCUS: Safety Starts with Me

- Highlight the contest and encourage them to participate. The winner gets a day of PTO added to their time bank.
- Roundtable as a group "What does Safety Starts with Me, mean to me personally?". Start by providing your personal answer to this question as an icebreaker and to provide context from a leadership perspective.
- Ask: Are there any areas where better committed to safety with

### ★ TUESDAY

#### TAKE FIVE: Plan Ahead • Analy

- Go over a few examples of pro has been used within your dep
- Ask: Are there ways to improve solutions can we look at Impl

### ★ WEDNESDAY

#### COMMUNICATE: Share • Coach

- Provide a personal story or exa had or have been to someone, the coaches or mentors others elsewhere and, how their guida safety.
- Ask: Are there opportunities no mentoring in the group? If so, c
- Encourage employees to work ways to improve communicat department and EMWD as a wi

[www.emwd.org/Safety-First-Week](http://www.emwd.org/Safety-First-Week)



### ★ THURSDAY

#### GET INVOLVED: See Something, Say Something, Do Something

- Encourage staff to attend the Safety Fair in the OMC Training Room between the hours of 8:00 am and 4:00 pm. The event includes the Lehigh boot vendor, an ergonomic booth with current ergonomic equipment, a photo booth and raffle prizes.
- Remind employees of their "Stop Work Authority" and that they should take action on the spot to correct the safety concern.
- Ask: Has anyone utilized their authority to stop unsafe work? Discuss these examples and encourage staff to take the initiative to not only say something, but do something to be a part of the solution!

### ★ FRIDAY

#### CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT: Safety is a Forward-Thinking Journey

- If employees have EMWD phones, show them the AirNow and Heat Index apps.
- Encourage employees to speak up about ideas to improve safety.
- Show them where to submit a safety suggestion and encourage them to submit ideas on the Pipeline.

## END OF WEEK

Send any feedback, ideas for improvements to Safety First Week, areas employees would like to see clarified, topics for future Safety First Weeks, etc., to Safety, Risk and Emergency Management at [riskmanagement@emwd.org](mailto:riskmanagement@emwd.org).

All resources will be available by close of business on January 19, 2024, at [emwd.org/safety-first-week](http://emwd.org/safety-first-week). The materials will also be published daily to the Pipeline throughout the week.

Again—Thank you for your support in making Safety First Week a success! If you should have any questions regarding the distribution schedule, please contact us at ext. 7777.

## SAFETY, RISK AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

[www.emwd.org/Safety-First-Week](http://www.emwd.org/Safety-First-Week)

SAFETY FIRST WEEK



# Safety First Week Plan – Reference Material 2024

- Interactive Examples
  - Daily Introduction Videos – Safety Steering Committee

[Focus](#)

[Take Five](#)

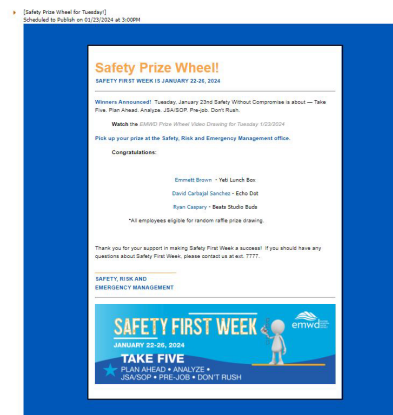
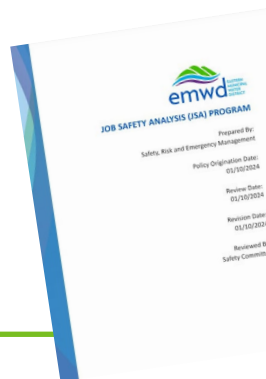
[Communicate](#)

[Get Involved](#)

[Continuous Improvement](#)

[Thank you](#)

- Safety Without Compromise Contest
- Boot and Ergonomics Fair Onsite
- Daily Drawing



## 2024 Gauge of Employee Involvement/Safety Culture

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Our “Safety Without Compromise” contest was an extraordinary gauge of what employees view of what safety is at EMWD.

Submissions showed a variety of understanding and were reflective of each individual’s personal viewpoint and learned knowledge of safety as an employee of EMWD, VPP, and our Safety Culture.

A few examples of employee submissions are:

“Safety without compromise to me means that you are not willing to put somebody in harm's way in order to complete a task. It means that we are prepared to assess any situation, identify potential hazards and make responsible decisions to keep employees safe. If a job can't be done safely, then it won't be done.”



## Contest submissions

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“Safety without compromise to me means if you see something say something, no matter how awkward or uncomfortable it may be to speak up. Sometimes we may not want to say something to put other people on the spot, but speaking up can sometimes be the difference of someone getting hurt or not. Or it may be the difference to be able to come to work the next day or make it back home safely.”

“Lastly it means to me to put it above all other priorities and tasks. It should be the main concern from when you wake up to when you go to sleep. Safety is required all the time not just at work but at home too so we can keep our family and ourselves safe.”

“It means that by leading by example, me and my team can perform our jobs safely and be able to go home to our families at the end of the day. It means knowing that if I see something unsafe, I have the power to stop it or get it changed without being questioned. It means that knowing that our safety concerns will be heard and addressed no matter how big or small.”

## Safety Without Compromise Contest Results

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On behalf of our entire EMWD leadership team, we would like to thank you for helping to make our Safety First Week a huge success. This is possible because of the commitment of each of our employees.

- We had an overwhelming response to our contest and received 99 employee submissions.
- Submissions were narrowed down to 24 semi-finalists. Our Executive Team selected the top 12 anonymous finalists and selected a winner.

### Winning Submission:

- Safety without compromise means never settling for anything less than safe and healthy practices. We approach every aspect of our work with safety for ourselves, our teammates, and the public at the forefront. We provide and utilize all the resources required to create a healthy work environment - training, documentation, tools, and protective equipment. We are proactive in identifying and mitigating risks and hazards in our surroundings. We give our undivided time and attention to planning and executing tasks and projects safely. Safety without compromise means we each hold ourselves accountable, we participate, and we never stop striving for perfection when it comes to our safety program!



Questions?





## Contact Information

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