

Keys to Success and Safety for the CONSTRUCTION FOREMAN

An Ergonomic Approach to Cost Reduction

You can save company profits by:

- Increasing production and meeting deadlines
- Finishing the job within budget
- Reducing injuries
- Increasing worker morale and work quality



Increase Production, Reduce Injuries!

Unexpected production costs and missed deadlines can cut into your company's profits.

- Injured workers are not as productive as healthy workers.
- When you reduce injury rates, you automatically increase productivity.
- Healthy workers are more likely to meet job requirements and project deadlines.

Most Frequent Injuries in Construction Trades State Compensation Insurance Fund, 1998

Body Part	Percentage of Total Injuries	Average Direct Cost *
BACK	21%	\$33,874 per claim
FINGER(S)	10%	\$10,503 per claim
KNEE	7%	\$26,655 per claim
HAND(S)	5%	\$14,417 per claim

*Includes total incurred medical, total incurred compensation and total incurred loss expenses. Indirect costs can be 2 to 4 times this amount.

How much more work will you need to do to pay for the cost of just one injury?



1. Commitment to health and safety

To get workers to care about safety, management must show that they care about them:

- Let your workers know that **safety is not an option** or convenience. It is a **company value** and a **requirement**.
- Expect your workers to **use safe work practices**.
- Schedule regular weekly site safety meetings with all workers**.
- Invite Cal/OSHA Consultation Service to walk your site(s) for free safety advice (you will not get fined for safety violations from the Consultation Service).
- Walk your site(s) daily**. Correct any hazards you can. Report hazards you cannot correct to the superintendent.



2. Encourage employee attitudes toward safety

Workers with positive safety attitudes are the keys to the success of your company:

- Let your workers know that **safety policies** and procedures are **not just rules**, but are there to **protect them from losing work time and wages**.

3. Plan and organize jobs

Pre-planning and organizing each phase of a job can help in meeting schedules while making work safer and smoother:



- Evaluate jobs in advance so that the **hazards are identified**.
- Think ahead and plan for the next task.

- Arrange for materials and equipment to be at the job site on time.
- Teach your workers to rotate their heavy and light tasks to prevent overexertion.

4. Schedule enough workers to do the job

When the schedule is tight, workers tend to take shortcuts and get careless. Be careful not to overwork your crew:

- Schedule a full work crew**. When there are enough workers to help each other with heavy tasks, your chances of losing crew members to injuries will be reduced.
- Look for signs of fatigue**, especially in workers who work extended hours or unusual schedules.

5. Train workers in job processes and tool use

Although workers might have done the same job before, every work environment is somewhat different:

- Train new workers on your company's safety policies and procedures **before** they start work.



- Encourage the buddy system by having new workers learn from experienced workers.
- Train workers to**

select and use the right tool for the job, and correct them when necessary.

- Be sure that workers do not use broken or defective tools. **Replace and maintain tools.**
- **Alert workers** to changing working conditions, such as extreme heat, rain or slippery surfaces.



6. Consider your options

Work may involve heavy lifting, awkward

postures and repetition:

- **Provide mechanical equipment or co-worker assistance** when possible.
- **Rotate individual job tasks** among workers within the same job and skill level when machines,



tools or equipment are not available to do the work. By sharing jobs, workers are less likely to get injured.

7. Learn from your past accidents and near-misses

You can prevent future injuries if you understand what caused an accident or a near miss:

- **Investigate** accidents and near misses to find their causes.
- Brainstorm with your workers to **discuss how the job can be improved.**
- **Make changes and then follow-up** to make



sure they are effective.

- Shut down that part of the job where life-threatening conditions are present.
- **Recognize individual workers** who use safe work practices and serve as an example to other workers.

8. Encourage rest breaks and frequent hydration

Workers who feel healthy and energized tend to be more productive with better work quality, particularly in the afternoon hours:

- **Be aware of fast-paced schedules**, especially during the summer heat. Allow a few more rest breaks. This will reduce fatigue and may prevent costly re-work.
- Encourage your workers to take short walks to pick up tools. This provides a few minutes of rest.
- **Provide plenty of water** and encourage your workers to drink frequently.
- **Remember**, heat illness can kill in less than one hour of exposure to extreme heat and humidity.



9. Promote health and fitness

Workers who are fit are less likely to be injured. If they do get injured they heal faster:

- Working in a physical job is **not** a substitute for doing exercises that can help to increase strength and flexibility.
- **Encourage your workers** to incorporate personal fitness by working out, doing stretching exercises, eating a balanced diet, and getting plenty of sleep.

As a foreman, you are in a key position to help increase your company's work production while reducing on-the-job injuries.

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