

TOOLBOX TALK #1

SAFETY CLIMATE VS. SAFETY CULTURE

“Safety climate” is not the same as “safety culture” and is an important measurement for determining a construction project’s state of safety, according to a report from NIOSH and the Center for Construction Research and Training (also known as CPWR).

Recently released, the report details a workshop, which took place in June of 2013 and explored how to better understand safety culture and its effect on construction worker safety and health. Workshop participants determined that “safety culture”, which is inherent to an organization, needed a separate definition from “safety climate”, which is time- and project-specific.

Several factors were identified by the workgroup as the “most critical” indicators of a safety climate. Among them:

- Supervisory leadership
- Safety as a value/safety alignment
- Management commitment
- Worker empowerment/involvement
- Accountability
- Communication
- Training
- Owner/client involvement

The report lists interventions that could improve safety climate factors, including leading by example, adequate safety budgets and mentoring. However, it warned that these interventions could be hindered by barriers such as scheduling problems, lack of time and project delivery constraints.

