

## **TOOLBOX TALK #2**

### **DEVELOPING YOUR SAFETY CULTURE**

Developing a safety culture for your whole company takes more than just reciting mantras like “Safety First”. You can take specific steps to build an extraordinary safety culture and eliminate at-risk behaviors.

Your safety culture is the atmosphere established upon the beliefs, attitudes, values and practices of your organization, crew or team, and shapes their collective behavior. When someone new is hired, they will start doing as the rest of the people on your site do. People adjust their behavior to match the behavior of those around them.



If your organization has a strong safety culture, then everyone on your team feels responsible for safety 24/7 – for themselves, their coworkers and their families. Team members will identify unsafe conditions or actions and act to correct those risks. They will have the courage to speak out when they see something unsafe and feel empowered to stop unsafe work. The courage to act is a powerful part of a safety culture. For many of us, it is uncomfortable, difficult and requires courage to ask someone you don’t know to change their behavior.

But speaking out when it’s difficult really matters. I want all of my employees to return home safe at the end of the day. I want them to carry safety values and processes home with them to keep their families safe too.

Injuries and accidents can be expensive as well. When someone gets hurt, costs include:

- Their initial treatment and lost productivity time
- Administrative costs to investigate and report the incident
- Higher insurance rates
- Possible OSHA involvement
- Media attention
- Negative impacts to the organization’s reputation leading to loss of future work and contracts
- Decreased employee morale

Building a strong safety culture starts at the top. The team’s culture is being built each and every day, like it or not. Is that culture going to be poor, ordinary or extraordinary? It’s up to every one of us. Take action and go the extra mile to lead the team to an extraordinary safety culture.