

MAKING THE CASE FOR SAFETY



You probably already know that safety pays. But it is not always easy to persuade those in charge of your school district. Health and safety may not even be on their “radar screen.” When making your case for safety, think about who is making the decisions in your workplace. What are their top concerns? Think about how you can communicate your own concerns most effectively to them. Below are some points you can use to “sell safety” and some tips for preparing your case.

Points That Make the Case for Safety

Reducing workplace injuries and illnesses can...

Prevent human suffering

- Save lives
- Reduce workers’ pain and disability
- Reduce the impact of workers’ injuries on their families and communities
- Protect co-workers from the stress of filling in for people who are off the job.

“I couldn’t care less about the fines. It was losing one of our own. We were all devastated.

I will never get over it.” —Employer of a worker killed on the job

“It wasn’t just the pain after the accident, or that I couldn’t support my family on the limited benefits.

It affected every part of my life—my ability to participate in sports, church activities, volunteering in my kids’ school—I lost it all.” —Injured worker

Save Money

- Reduce workers’ compensation costs
- Reduce lost work time and production delays
- Avoid losing the skills of valuable people
- Eliminate costs of hiring and training others to replace injured workers



Save Money (continued from previous page)

- Avoid overtime costs when other workers must fill in
- Avoid fines for violating regulations
- Improve attendance
- Minimize damage to materials, tools, and equipment
- Create a more productive work environment.

“Every \$1 invested in workplace safety results in \$3 or more in savings. Safety is an investment, not a cost.” —Insurance industry studyⁱ

Promote a Positive Image

- Increase worker morale—show that workers’ well-being comes first
- Decrease turnover
- Attract top employees
- Help the school district stand out in the community as a caring employer
- Avoid bad publicity from fines, accidents, and incidents.

“A big accident or fine may be a rare event, but it can cost a great deal in terms of public image. We had a disastrous experience with OSHA and paid dearly for it. We never want to be embarrassed like that again!” —Safety manager

ⁱ McDonald, Caroline. Workplace safety pays, survey shows. National Underwriter; Sep 17, 2001; 105, 38; ABI/INFORM Global pg. 26.



How to Communicate Your Case Effectively

Here are some things you can do to communicate effectively about the need to invest in safety and health:

- Summarize the problem and how it may impact workers, the school district, students, and others. Lay out the benefits of taking action to solve it. Point out the risks of doing nothing.
- Prepare what you want to say in advance. Who is authorized to make a decision? What are their top concerns? Pick the facts that will be most convincing to them.
- List the different options and review the benefits of taking the most protective approach.
- Personalize the situation. For example, share a story about how people are being affected, or could be affected.
- Get support from others.
- Write down and practice your key points so you feel comfortable with what you are going to say.
- Stay focused on common goals. Safety is good for everyone.
- Don't get frustrated. If you don't succeed at first, rethink your approach and try again.



Adapted from materials developed for The Worker Occupational Safety and Health Training and Education Program (WOSHTEP).