

# Case Study: Benefits for General Contractors Increasing Employee Knowledge of Jobsite Safety

**Joshua Salinas**

California Polytechnic State University  
San Luis Obispo, California

This case study examines the jobsite safety practices of multiple construction companies that have had Cal Poly student for employees. A student survey shows the different ways companies effectively or ineffectively taught their employees about jobsite safety. Since jobsite safety is the most important aspect of construction, companies should know the best ways to reach out to their employees and teach them proper safety on the jobsite. This case study consists of asking Cal Poly students questions about what they believed is the appropriate way to teach jobsite safety. According to the survey results, Cal Poly students believed that learning about jobsite safety was meaningful to their career. This shows that students moving into the workforce need the proper training to protect themselves in such a dangerous career.

**Key Words:** Safety, Training, Construction, Jobsite, Cal Poly, Management

## Introduction

With the construction industry being one of the most dangerous jobs, it is easy to see why jobsite safety is so important. Extensive learning of jobsite safety is required even before stepping foot on a jobsite, therefore employees need the proper training to protect themselves when stepping foot on a construction jobsite. (Cal/OSHA 2016) Increased education on jobsite safety would benefit a company and their employees dramatically. Teaching jobsite safety would benefit all employees by teaching them the proper ways to protect themselves on a construction jobsite. As well as, benefit the company they work for by reducing accidents on the jobsite that injure employees and stop or slow down construction. (HSCI 2016)

Working with a construction safety federal agency, such as Occupational Safety and Health Administration can dramatically increase the company's knowledge of safety. OSHA provides the construction workforce with many safety programs that can help teach their employees about jobsite safety. (USDL 2016) If a company were to participate in a single OSHA program they would be aware of all the safety measures that their employees have been taught.

Additionally, companies do not have to work with a federal agency, instead they can produce their own safety program to teach their employees about jobsite safety. (CST 2016) This is a very common practice for a company to create their own safety program in order to educate their employees about the safety and securities on the jobsite. The objective of this research paper is to establish that it would be beneficial to all entities of construction to learn the securities and safety precautions when on a construction jobsite.

## Research Objectives

Construction companies are starting to figure out that teaching their employees not only benefits the employee, however it also benefits the company. Construction injuries and fatalities are rapidly decreasing throughout the years because of the benefits that jobsite safety provides. OSHA records show that less fatalities and jobsite injuries are happening in the construction industry. (Cal/OSHA 2016) This is a result of construction companies understanding the benefits of jobsite safety, and finding productive ways to teach their employees about their safety, and the safety of others while on the jobsite. Even though reported injuries and fatalities are decreasing, they can decrease at a faster and more productive rate if companies take advantage of their resources that are provided.

## **Benefits to Employees**

On the jobsite it is important that workers understand the safety procedures in order to protect themselves. This includes the proper attire to protect themselves from all elemental dangers, and wearing the proper Personal Protective Equipment. This information needs to be taught to employees before they enter a construction jobsite in order to protect themselves. Adding additional resources to teaching employees the safety and securities of the jobsite will further educate and protect all workers, resulting in a safer construction environment. (CST 2016)

Through the production of this paper, a survey was conducted and sent out to forty future-employed students currently graduating into the construction field. When asked if your time spent learning about jobsite safety was meaningful to your career, an amazing ninety-five percent agreed that jobsite safety is useful knowledge that would help them with their career. Also when asked if jobsite safety is an important aspect of the construction industry, a perfect one hundred percent of students agreed that jobsite safety is one of the most important aspects in the world of construction.

The knowledge these future employees could gain from an increased learning curve for the safety of construction could potentially save their lives. (Updating OSHA 2016) Being safe on a jobsite not only can protect yourself, it can also protect your family when being injured for a long period of time. In addition, being safe on a construction jobsite makes one a more valuable employee because safety results in less interruptions for the project.

## **Benefits to Companies**

Companies focus on finding the right employee to benefit their company, and not be a risk when out on the jobsite. Finding the right employee is essential for the success of a company. Having an advanced knowledge of construction safety on the jobsite helps the resume, and is something companies look at because one will be less liable when out on the jobsite. This knowledge can also save the company money and time, two of the most important aspects of construction. (HSCI 2016) Even with a minimal understanding of general safety on the jobsite, a company risks drops dramatically because there is less liable workers on the jobsite.

Many large construction companies understand the importance of construction safety, and have started creating their own safety education methods to help teach their employees. These methods include Safety Meetings, Safety Handouts, Safety Emails, and Yearly OSHA training. However, there is still more efficient ways to teach employees jobsite safety, and decrease liability when working on the jobsite. Companies that teach their employees safety on the jobsite dramatically decrease risk and protect their workers. (USDL 2016)

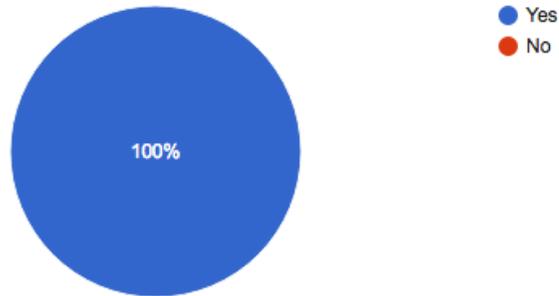
Companies benefit by having a successful safety system because it shows they care about the protection of their employees. Having a good safety record reflects the safety precaution a company takes when working on the jobsite. (HSCI 2016) A majority of large construction companies take pride in recording the amount of time the company has gone without having an injury that stops the construction process of a project. Employees want to work for a company that has a good safety record because this shows the company cares about the protection of their employees and understands the drawbacks of having an injury on the jobsite.

## **Student Opinions**

As aforementioned, a survey was sent out to 40 future-employed students currently graduating into the construction field. The following charts show the questions asked, and the percentage of response to each answer chosen.

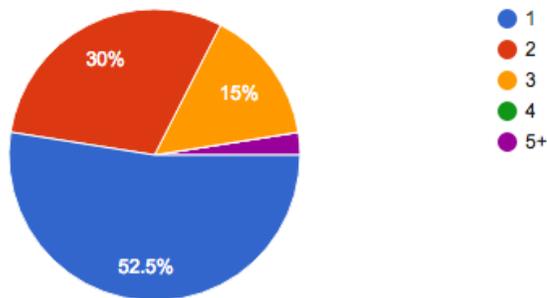
### Do you think jobsite safety is an important aspect of the construction industry?

(40 responses)



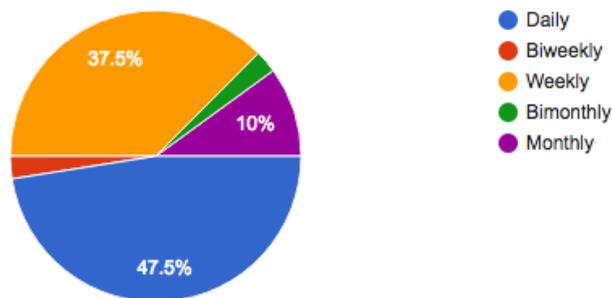
### How many different construction companies have you worked for?

(40 responses)



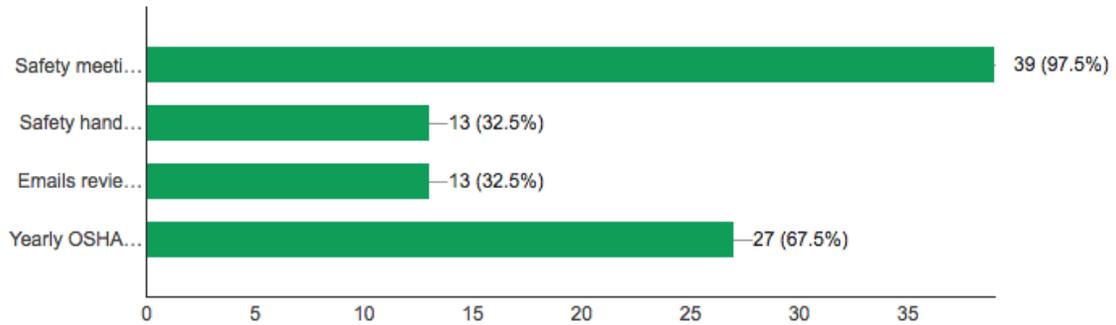
### In your opinion, how many times should a construction company review jobsite safety?

(40 responses)



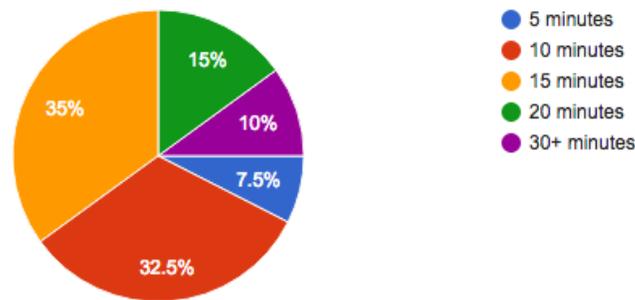
### What method do you believe is effective to educate employees about jobsite safety? (Check all that apply)

(40 responses)



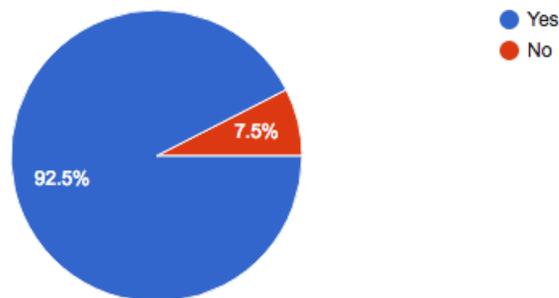
### What is a good amount of time for a company to talk about jobsite safety?

(40 responses)



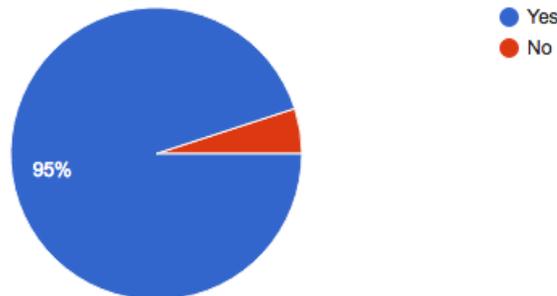
### Does a company jobsite safety record influence how successful their company functions?

(40 responses)



## Would you say that your time spent learning about jobsite safety was meaningful to your career?

(40 responses)



### Survey Analysis

This survey is a diverse sample of the Cal Poly Construction Management Department. Although half of the students answering this survey had only worked for one construction company, the other half had jobsite safety experience from multiple companies. This research makes it more accurate for the number of companies being reviewed for safety.

The vast majority of the students believed that a construction company should review jobsite safety on a daily or weekly basis. This shows that the students believe that it is more beneficial for a construction company to review jobsite safety often. Reviewing jobsite safety often results in more topics being covered quickly, and keeps the employees constantly learning different jobsite safety procedures.

From the survey results, most students believed that ten to fifteen minutes was a good amount of time for a company to review jobsite safety. This is because five minutes does not seem like a sufficient amount of time for a company to go over all the safety procedures for a certain topic. On the other end of the spectrum, twenty to thirty minutes will seem like too long of a safety lecture, and may lose the interest of the employees.

A question was also asked to find out what ways students believed was the best ways to reach out to employees and teach jobsite safety. Almost all students found that having safety meetings was the best way to educate employees about jobsite safety.

### Safety Development

In order for companies to successfully teach their employees about jobsite safety, they first need to understand the resources they have to help them educate their employees. Occupational Safety and Health Administration offers many different resources to teach construction workers the safeties of the jobsite. OSHA offers online Outreach Training Programs, Training Institute Education Centers for classroom learning, and a Cooperative Program that organizations can work cooperatively with the agency. (USDL 2016) Outreach Training Programs is the most common type of safety education because it is online, and easily accessible to employees. (OSHA 10&30 2016) However, Training Institute Education Centers provide hands on learning that helps educate employees on a deeper level by actually seeing safety procedures executed in a classroom environment.

Companies can also create their own job safety workshops in order to educate their workers on specific areas of construction that focus on their job. Weekly safety meeting designed by the company is an efficient way to teach employees different jobsite hazards for each different project, and continue to educate their employees about the dangers in all aspects of construction. (CST 2016)

## Conclusion

As a result of the survey and students' opinions, it is easy to conclude that jobsite safety will remain the most important aspect of construction. This means that jobsite safety should be a company's number one priority when it comes to their employees and maximum efficiency for the construction of the project. In order for employees to obtain the proper knowledge to protect them on the jobsite, their company must first educate their employees to minimize risk and create a safer environment on the jobsite. Companies receive benefits for having a safe jobsite by protecting its employees, and reducing down time during construction when an injury occurs.

The best opportunity for employees would be to work with a company that takes pride in being one of the safest construction companies to work with. It is beneficial for employees to work around professional workers that are also aware of different safety measures in order to protect others around them. Companies need to take advantage of the resources that Occupational Safety and Health Administration offers because this agency is the best when it comes to safety measures in the construction industry.

## References

- "Cal/OSHA." - Division of Occupational Safety and Health. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 June 2016. <<http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/>>.
- "Construction Safety Tips: A Comprehensive Resource." Construction Safety Tips: A Comprehensive Resource by Atlantic Training. Atlantic Training, n.d. Web. 02 June 2016. <<http://www.atlantictraining.com/safety-tips/construction-safety-tips.php>>.
- "Health and Safety in the Construction Industry." Construction. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 June 2016. <<http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/>>.
- "OSHA 10 & 30 Hour Construction, Online OSHA Outreach Training - OSHA.com." OSHA 10 & 30 Hour Construction, Online OSHA Outreach Training - OSHA.com. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 June 2016. <<http://www.osha.com/courses/outreach-construction.html>>.
- "UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR." OSHA's Cooperative Programs. N.p., n.d. Web. 02 June 2016. <[https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/compliance\\_assistance/index\\_programs.html](https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/compliance_assistance/index_programs.html)>.
- "Updating OSHA Standards Based on National Consensus Standards; Eye and Face Protection." Federal Register. Occupational Safety and Health Administration, n.d. Web. 02 June 2016. <<https://www.federalregister.gov>>.