

EHS Daily Advisor

The Impact of
Technology on
Health and Safety

Summary

The *Impact of Technology on Health and Safety* survey, sponsored by eCompliance, sought to learn how environment, health, and safety (EHS) professionals are leveraging software solutions to address their safety needs. The survey asked our response pool:

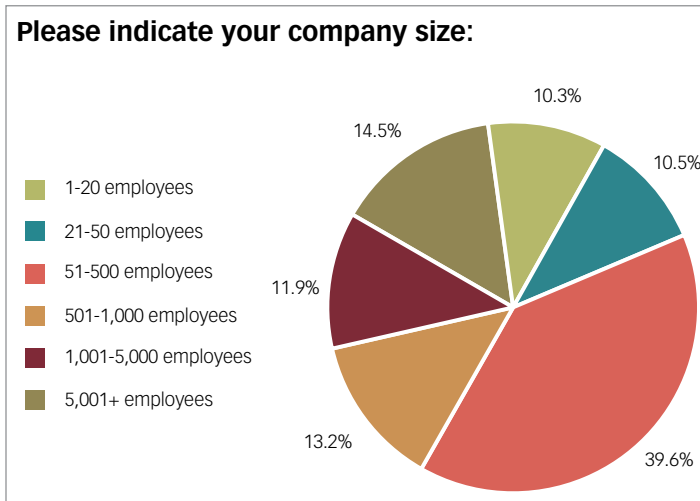
- How they perceive the safety culture at their organization.
- The specific challenges they face within their safety program.
- How they define and measure aspects of safety performance.
- Their thoughts on safety software, including whether they have evaluated any programs.
- The driving factors behind purchasing software.

Survey Participants

A total of 638 safety professionals participated in the survey. Demographic information describing our response pool includes the following findings:

Organization Size

A majority of participants (60.4%) work for companies with 500 or fewer employees. 13.2% of survey respondents work for companies with 501–1,000 employees, and 14.5% work for companies with 5,000 or more employees.



Industry

The largest share of our survey participants, 21%, represent the manufacturing industry. 12.8% of respondents said they work in “other” industries not listed, and participants working in the construction industry made up 10.7% of the response pool. Respondents from chemical and pharmaceutical companies comprised 6.2% of those polled, while health care employees made up 5.9%.

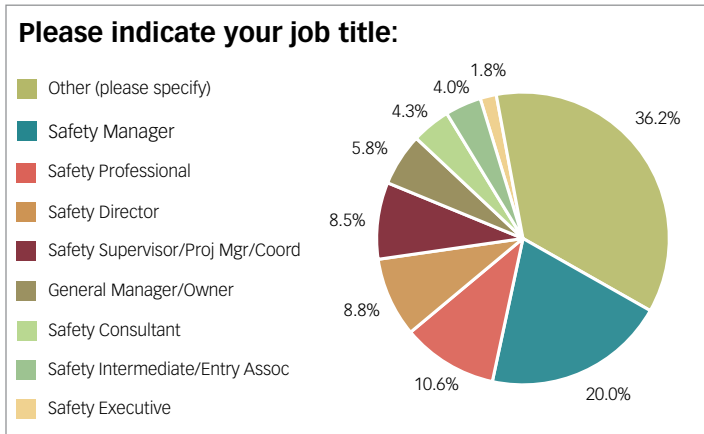
Top 10 Industries Represented

Answer Options	Response Percent
1. Other manufacturing	21.0%
2. Other (please specify)	12.8%
3. Construction	10.7%
4. Chemicals and pharmaceuticals	6.2%
5. Health care	5.9%
6. General government	5.9%
7. Education	5.2%
8. Consulting	3.6%
9. Electric / gas / sanitary services	3.0%
10. Automotive and transportation equipment	2.5%
All other industry responses	23.4%

Position

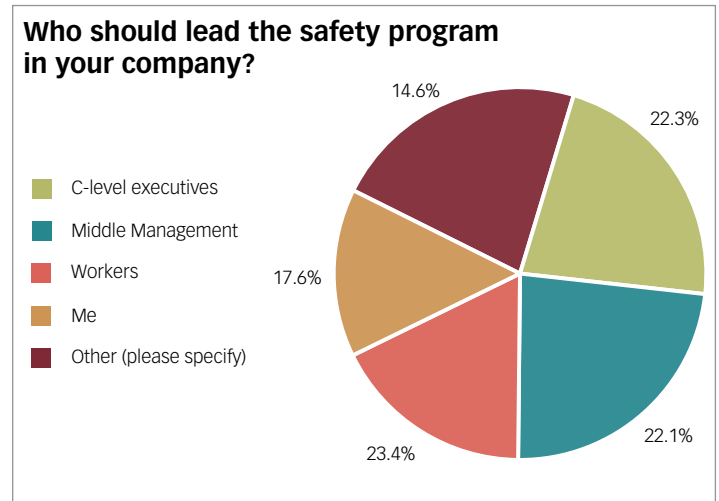
One-fifth of survey participants identified themselves as safety managers, and 10.6% identified as safety professionals. 8.8% of respondents are safety directors, and the smallest percentage of participants (1.8%) are safety executives. However, the largest share of survey takers, 36.2%, selected “other.” Some of the other titles specified were:

- Foreman
- Environmental manager
- Counselor
- HR director or manager



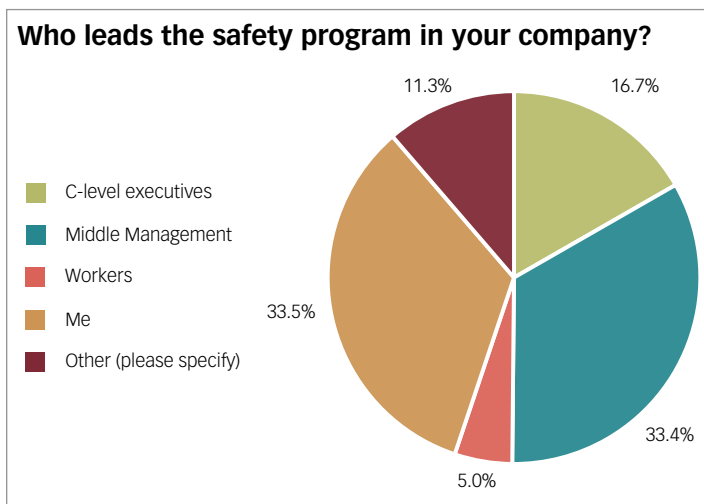
Who should lead the safety program in your company?

Our survey participants have diverse opinions about who should run their company’s safety program. Nearly one-quarter (23.4%) believe workers should take a leadership role in safety—a dramatic difference from the 5% of respondents who, in the previous question, actually do work at organizations where workers lead the safety program.



Who leads the safety program in your company?

About one-third of participants, 33.4%, indicated that middle management leads their company’s safety program. Another third of those polled run the program themselves. Workers were least likely to lead safety programs, with only 5% of participants indicating this was the case at their organization.



What position do you report to?

624 of our survey participants specified the position they report to, and their responses included (among others):

- Various C-suite positions, including the CEO, CFO, CIO, and COO
- The president or owner of the company
- Vice president
- Director or deputy director
- Plant superintendent
- Middle management
- Various other managers, including risk managers, EHS managers, HR managers, or operations managers

Several respondents indicated that they reported to no one (e.g., they were the CEO, president, or owner of the company).

On a scale from 1-10, how important is improved safety performance to your company?

Improved safety performance is clearly important to those surveyed. On average, respondents rated the importance of improving safety performance at 8.8, and over half of our survey participants (55.1%) rated the importance at 10, or “very important.”

On a scale from 1-10, how important is improved safety performance to your company?										
1. Not important	2	3	4	5. Somewhat important	6	7	8	9	10. Very important	Rating Average
0.0%	0.5%	0.6%	0.6%	5.0%	3.8%	7.9%	15.3%	11.2%	55.1%	8.8

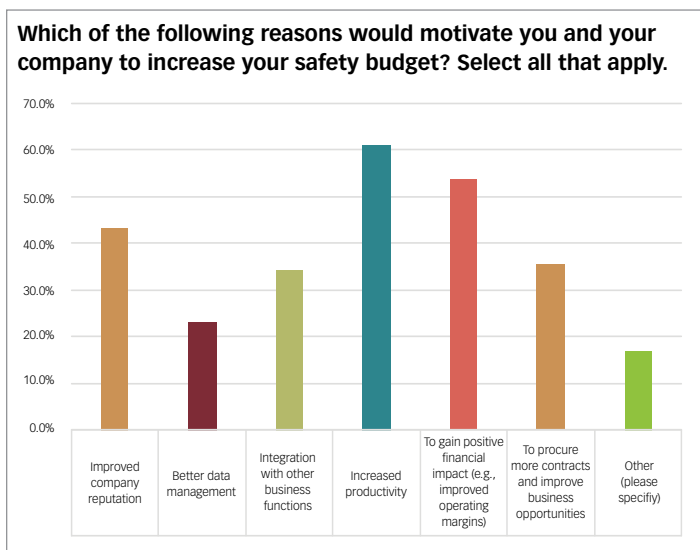
On a scale from 1-10, how would you rate the safety culture of your organization?

While the response wasn’t as strong as in the previous question, participants still have a positive view of the safety culture at their organizations. On average, they rated their safety cultures at 7.3, and the largest portion of participants, 24.1%, rated their safety culture at an 8.

On a scale from 1-10, how would you rate the safety culture of your organization?										
1. Weak safety culture	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10. Strong safety culture	Rating Average
0.2%	1.1%	2.5%	5.8%	9.6%	12.9%	17.3%	24.1%	10.2%	16.2%	7.3

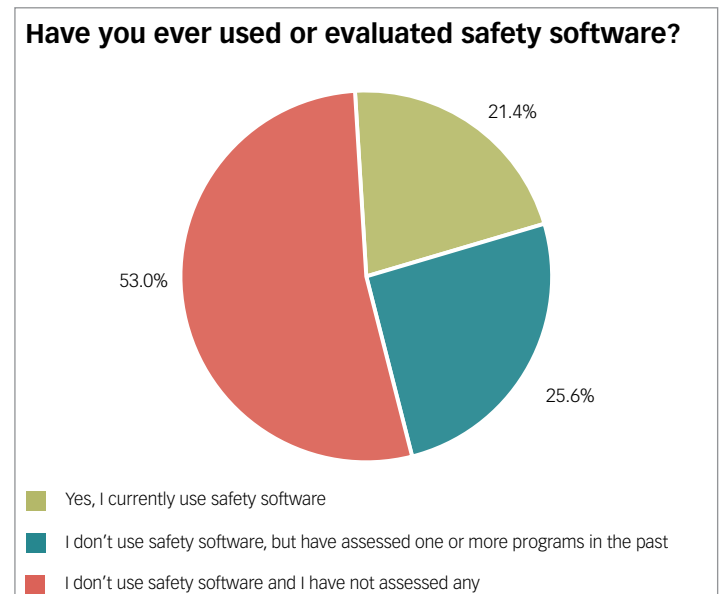
Which of the following reasons would motivate you and your company to increase your safety budget? Select all that apply.

When it comes to increasing the safety budget, the strongest motivating factor for our survey participants was increased productivity, with 61.3% selecting this option. This was followed by gains in positive financial impact (a motivating factor for 53.7% of respondents) and an improved reputation for the company (selected by 43.4% of participants).



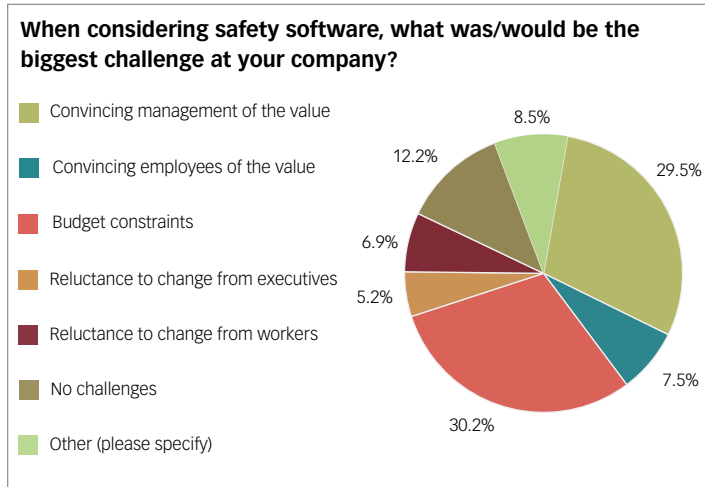
Have you ever used or evaluated safety software?

The majority of survey participants—53%—do not use safety software, nor have they assessed any such programs. 21.4% currently use safety software, and 25.6% have assessed one or more programs but do not currently use any.



When considering safety software, what was/would be the biggest challenge at your company?

30.2% of survey participants (the largest share of those polled) consider budget constraints to be the biggest challenge for their company when considering safety software. Convincing management of the value of safety software was a close second, with 29.5% of respondents viewing this as the biggest challenge.



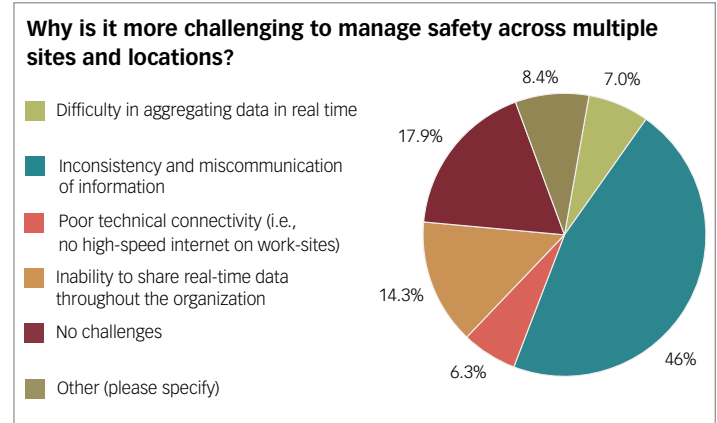
In order of importance to your organization, rank the drivers for purchasing safety software.

Here is how our survey respondents ranked the drivers for purchasing safety software, from most important to least important:

1. Reduce risk of injury to employees
2. Increase employee involvement in safety programs
3. (Tie) Improve communication throughout the organization
Gain a real time view of safety performance for improved management visibility
4. (Tie) Analyze safety information easily and share KPIs with stakeholders
Digitize safety records for ease of access and increased accountability
5. Increase revenue opportunities

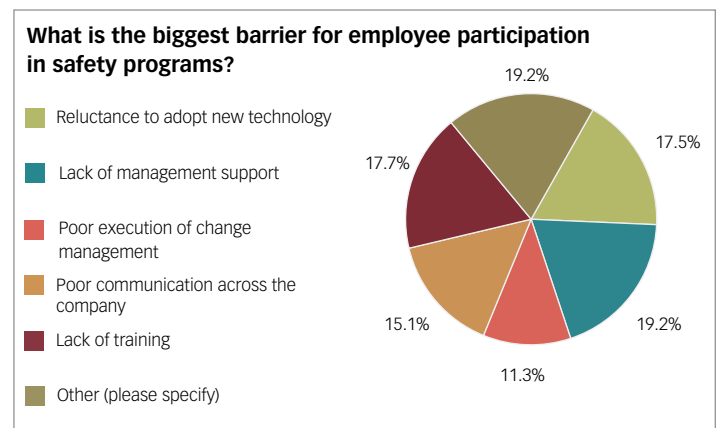
Why is it more challenging to manage safety across multiple sites and locations?

By far, the greatest share of survey participants (46%) believe that inconsistency and miscommunication of information is the biggest challenge of managing safety across multiple sites and locations. 17.9% believe that there are no challenges in this area at their company.



What is the biggest barrier for employee participation in safety programs?

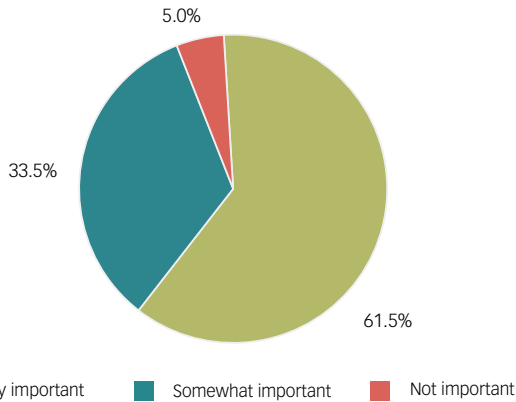
Participants responded equally to two options when it comes to the greatest barrier to employee participation in safety. The first was a lack of support from management. The second was "other" barriers specified by respondents.



How important is real-time visibility of safety performance to you?

Real-time visibility is quite important to survey participants, with an overwhelming 95% of those polled deeming it at least somewhat important and 61.5% indicating that it is very important.

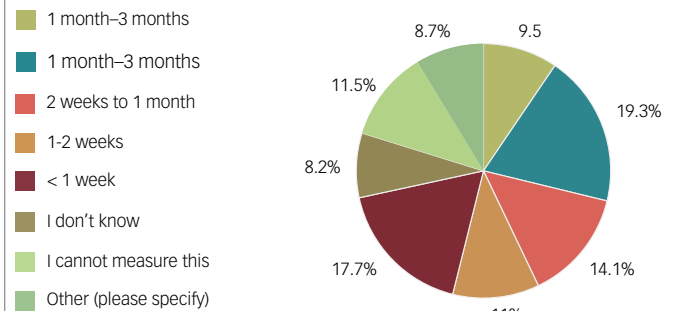
How important is real-time visibility of safety performance to you?



On average, how long does it take for a corrective action to be completed in your company?

Our survey participants' responses were quite diverse when it came to how long it takes for corrective action to be completed at their organizations. The largest share of participants, 19.3%, said that it takes one to three months. This option was followed by less than one week (which is the case for 17.7% of respondents), two weeks to one month (14.1%), and "I cannot measure this" (11.5% of participants selected this response).

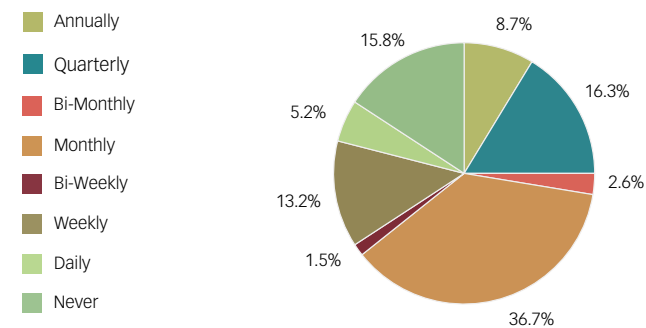
On average, how long does it take for a corrective action to be completed in your company?



How often do you present reports on safety metrics?

The largest share of survey respondents (36.7%) present safety metrics reports on a monthly basis. The second-largest share of the response pool, 16.3%, present these reports quarterly. 15.8% of participants never present reports on safety metrics.

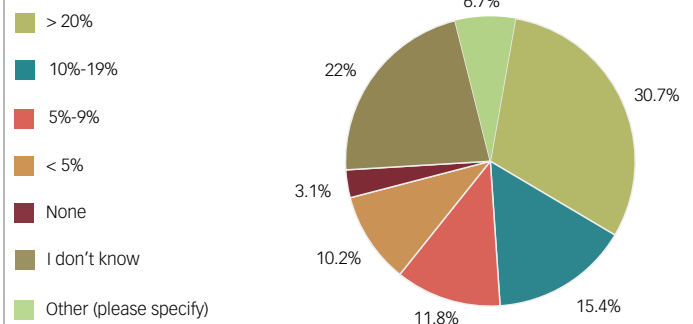
How often do you present reports of safety metrics?



If more employees participated in safety programs, what percentage of recordable incidents do you think could have been prevented in the past year?

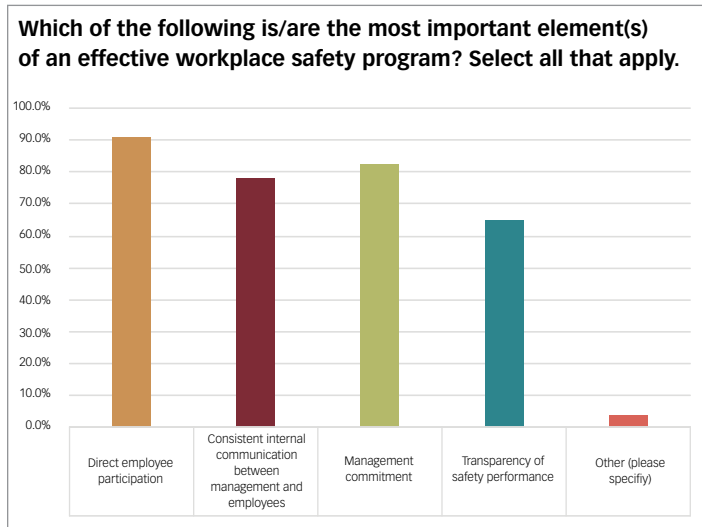
The largest share of the response pool, 30.7%, think that 20% or more of their recordable incidents in the past year could have been prevented by greater employee participation in safety programs. 15.4% believe that 10%–19% of incidents could have been prevented, and 22% of those polled said that they didn't know what sort of impact greater employee participation would have had.

If more employees participated in safety programs, what percentage of recordable incidents do you think could have been prevented in the past year?



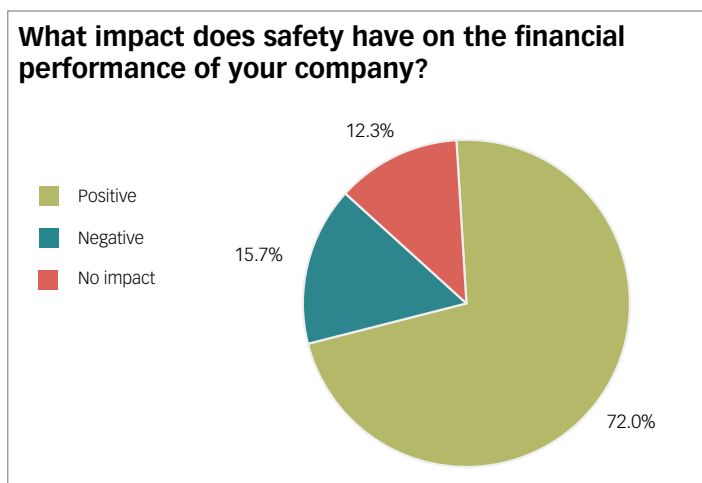
Which of the following is/are the most important element(s) of an effective workplace safety program? Select all that apply.

Generally speaking, our survey participants believe that all of the elements we listed are important to an effective workplace safety program. However, the element that came out on top was direct employee participation—90.9% of respondents said this was the most important element of a safety program. This was followed by commitment from management, which was deemed the most important element by 82.6% of those surveyed.



What impact does safety have on the financial performance of your company?

The vast majority of our participants think that safety has a direct impact on the financial performance of their companies, and 72% indicated that safety has a positive effect on their businesses' bottom lines.



Conclusion

Our survey sponsored by [eCompliance](#), *The Impact of Technology on Health and Safety*, demonstrated that the safety professionals polled tend to have an overall positive view of their company's safety culture and are committed to driving the continuous improvement of safety performance even further. However, a little over half of the survey respondents may be missing an opportunity for improvement by not leveraging technology (specifically, safety software) to their organization's advantage.

Many of the challenges being faced by our respondents (e.g., employee engagement, consistent communication, and real-time analysis of safety performance) can be eased with the use of proper technology. To gain the support of management and to find the budget necessary to improve EHS programs, safety professionals should stress the connection between the positive impact safety has on an organization's financial performance when presenting the business case to executives. In return, companies will be able to make their EHS programs more efficient, gain a competitive edge in the market, and reap the benefits of moving away from the status quo while achieving their most important goal: reducing the risk of injury to employees. The survey outlines the importance of safety performance for organizations and points out the opportunity that exists to leverage technology as a tool for continuous improvement.

Software

to help your organization reduce safety risk



eCompliance software is used by safety leaders to manage daily tasks so they can stop worrying about paperwork and ensure employees are protected.

Key Features

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- » Real-time Inspection Data
- » Training Management
- » Document Distribution
- » Leading Indicators
- » Corrective & Preventative Actions
- » OSHA Compliance
- » Report to Management

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