

Driving Business Growth and Profitability Through Modern Occupational Environmental, Health and Safety Practices

Modern occupational environmental, health and safety (EHS) practices are key to driving economic growth. This document, developed by the **Intersociety Forum (ISF)**, a coalition of organizations dedicated to safeguarding worker safety and health, highlights the many ways safety practices create a strategic advantage that powers enduring business success while fostering innovation and protecting workers.

Despite advancements, workplace injury and fatality rates remain stagnant. By adopting proactive, risk-based safety strategies, businesses can unlock greater productivity, reduce costs and strengthen their global competitiveness.

We urge today's business leaders and policymakers to prioritize occupational EHS as a foundation of economic competitiveness. Adopting this approach will position the U.S. as a global leader in safety, innovation and workforce well-being, enabling workers and businesses to thrive.

Improving Business Success

Occupational EHS is the foundation of operational success and public trust. It ensures that employees return home safely every day and enables organizations to enhance productivity and improve their reputation. Yet, despite advancements in technology and awareness, injury and fatality statistics have largely remained flat for the past decade.

Successful safety practices go beyond mere compliance—they empower workforces to perform at their peak, reduce operational disruptions and foster innovation. Companies that prioritize occupational EHS gain a critical business advantage that drives growth and efficiency. Simply put, safety is good for business.

Embracing a Risk-Based Approach

The **ISF** calls for employers to go beyond compliance and adopt risk-based occupational EHS practices that protect all workers—their most valuable asset. When employees feel safe and protected from injuries and illnesses, they perform at their best, which fosters productivity, innovation and global competitiveness. We stand ready to assist policymakers and business leaders in ensuring America remains the largest and most robust economy in the world.

Three Key Principles to Strengthen Businesses

The following principles reflect our shared commitment to protecting workers, advancing operational excellence, and promoting a sustainable, thriving workforce. By working together to demonstrate these values and pursue these goals, we can help business realize the value of safety as a driver of competitiveness, economic growth and sustained operational success.

[Supporting Data (This information will be included in the sidebar within this section*)]**

The Human Cost Is Staggering

- In the U.S., one worker died on the job every 99 minutes in 2023, according to the [U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics](#). Workers in the U.S. experienced 222,698 preventable deaths and 62 million workplace injuries in 2023, according to [National Safety Council's \(NSC\) Injury Facts](#).

1. Business-Driven Practice: Standards and Worker Well-Being

Key Message

Safety is not just about compliance; it is about creating standards that foster business success while promoting holistic worker health.

Details

- **Return on investment.** Businesses investing in safety, health and well-being gain financial benefits through reduced turnover, increased productivity, enhanced reputation, reduced liability cost and stronger community ties.
- **Setting Standards for Success.** Industry-driven standards build reputational strength and provide consistent benchmarks for quality and occupational EHS.
- **Worker well-being.** Prioritizing whole worker health fosters higher engagement, reduces absenteeism and produces better long-term outcomes.

Why It Matters to Policymakers and Business Leaders

Investing in worker well-being demonstrates business commitment to economic resilience, business efficiency and workforce empowerment. Demonstrating a holistic, business-aligned safety framework signals leadership and responsibility.

[Supporting Data (*This information will be included in a sidebar within this section)]

The Business Costs Are Clear

- [NSC Injury Facts Chart: Work Injury Costs 2022](#)
The costs of unintentional injuries are huge. The burden on employers and society in general runs in the billions of dollars annually.



The true cost to the nation, employers, and individuals of work-related deaths and injuries is much greater than the cost of workers' compensation insurance alone. The figures above show National Safety Council estimates of the total economic costs of work-related deaths and injuries.

[The costs in this chart reflect the impact to society, not specifically to employers.]

- U.S. businesses spent more than \$1 billion per week on workplace injuries in 2021, according to the [2024 Liberty Mutual Workplace Safety Index](#).

The top 10 causes of injury, all of which are preventable, costs U.S. businesses \$47.9 billion in 2021, according to the [same index](#).

2. Beyond Compliance: Embracing Risk and Safety Management Systems

Key Message

Modern occupational EHS practices go beyond checking a box. They help organizations proactively mitigate risk and embed safety into every aspect of decision-making.

Details

- **Proactivity over reactivity.** Risk management and assessment frameworks anticipate challenges before they become problems, saving lives, reducing costs and protecting reputations.
- **Economic impact.** By identifying and reducing risks early, organizations reduce liability, minimize downtime and enhance worker morale—contributing to overall productivity.
- **Scalable solutions.** Safety management systems offer structured, scalable approaches to integrate occupational EHS into complex organizations.

Why It Matters to Policymakers and Business Leaders

A focus on safety management systems aligns with the critical goals of innovation, growth and measurable impact. It shows a commitment to improving efficiency while safeguarding workers and resources.

[Supporting Data (**This information will be included in the sidebar within this section*)]

The Results Are Encouraging

- Companies with high-performing occupational EHS functions saw faster increases in their net income, revenue and market capitalization in a select 10-year period compared with average performers, according to a [2024 report by Ernst & Young](#).
- Businesses that improve their occupational EHS performance also typically improve their financial, social and regulatory performance, according to the [same report](#).
- Organizations that implement effective safety and health programs can expect reductions of 20% or greater in their injury and illness rates and a return of \$4 to \$6 for every \$1 invested, according to an [American Society of Safety Professionals' report](#).

3. Leading Indicators: Revolutionizing Recordkeeping for Predictive Insights

Key Message

Traditional lagging indicators only tell part of the story. Leading indicators empower organizations to predict and prevent serious injuries, illnesses and fatalities.

Details

- **Data-driven decisions.** Recordkeeping and analytics on leading indicators (e.g., near-misses, training completion or equipment maintenance) offer actionable insights.
- **Cultural shift.** Moving from reactive incident tracking to proactive occupational EHS culture fosters transparency and trust.
- **Continuous improvement.** Leading indicators are benchmarks for refining processes and addressing gaps.

Why It Matters to Policymakers and Business Leaders

Promoting transparency and data-driven occupational EHS practices resonates with a modern governance approach. It helps organizations align with technology-enabled improvements and accountability—priorities for business success in the modern world.

[Supporting Data (**This information will be included in a sidebar within this section*)]

The Data Can Lead the Way

- Organizations can most effectively use data when they select leading indicators specific to their business and operational goals, according to the [Campbell Institute](#).
- Ongoing monitoring and analysis of leading indicators is the best way to ensure their predictive value and effectiveness in improving safety outcomes, according to [OSHA](#).
- Integrating safety performance metrics into overall business operations allows for a more systematic approach to risk management, according to [Lloyd's Register Foundation](#).

Conclusion: Why These Three Principles Matter Now

- Occupational EHS is not just a cost—it is a foundation of sustainable business and competitive growth.
- By prioritizing **risk assessment and management, predictive analytics and worker well-being**, businesses and policymakers help position the U.S. as a leader in a global economy.
- Adopting these practices will secure a safer, healthier and more prosperous future for businesses and their workers.

In our rapidly evolving world, the ability to proactively manage risks, leverage predictive analytics and prioritize worker well-being has become essential for staying ahead in the global economy. These practices not only safeguard lives but also drive efficiency, innovation and resilience, positioning organizations and industries as leaders on the world stage.

By following these core principles, we can “bring life” to workplaces across the nation, fostering a business model of safety and health that empowers workers and strengthens businesses. Embracing safety as a strategic priority will enable businesses to forge a safer, healthier and more prosperous future—one in which both businesses and workers thrive.

Sources

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