Safety Leadership

You are critical to keeping your people safe and healthy. Your leadership is vital to protecting your organization's assets. This resource is designed to help you be proactive in how you serve your organization as a **safety leader**.

As a safety leader, you will be ready to:

- Explain your leadership role in safety and health.
- Integrate safety into decision-making.
- Support an organizational culture that reflects your commitment to safety and health.
- Produce an Accident Prevention Program that reflects the true needs of your organization.

Washington Food Coalition

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Safety Leadership was written by Nancy Bacon and Margaret Meps Schulte.

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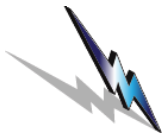
Overview

There are three main topics for you to know about related to safety.

1. General Safety Law 1
2. Safety Culture 5
3. Safety Systems 9

At the end of each topic, you'll find a **Discussion Guide**.

This course is accompanied by a series of **short videos**, also available from nonprofitsafetyhero.com.



We recommend that you print this document and have a pen or pencil handy. We've provided exercises where you can reflect on your situation and make plans. The first one is below.

Before we start with what you need to know, let's pause to reflect on what we mean by leadership and how it relates to safety and health.

Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal.

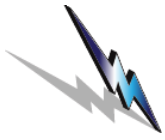
Take a moment to reflect on these questions:

☐ What does the word "art" mean to you in this context?

☐ Who are "your people"?

☐ What motivates these people?

☐ What is your common goal? What is your safety and health goal?



Put it all together: What does leadership mean to you?

1. General Safety Law

You join the staff or board of a nonprofit to achieve a mission. Once there, you are responsible for making sure that organization follows the law. Through the Nonprofit Safety Hero course, we cover specific safety topics related to the work of emergency food programs. Here we will review some *general actions* that every organization must follow regardless of their mission.

The Core Safety and Health Rules cover (but are not limited to) these actions:

1. Talk about safety regularly through a **safety committee or in safety meetings**.

   Safety committee: This is required for employers with 11 employees or more.

   Safety meeting: An option for employers with 10 or fewer employees or employers with 11 employees or more who are segregated on different shifts or work in dispersed locations

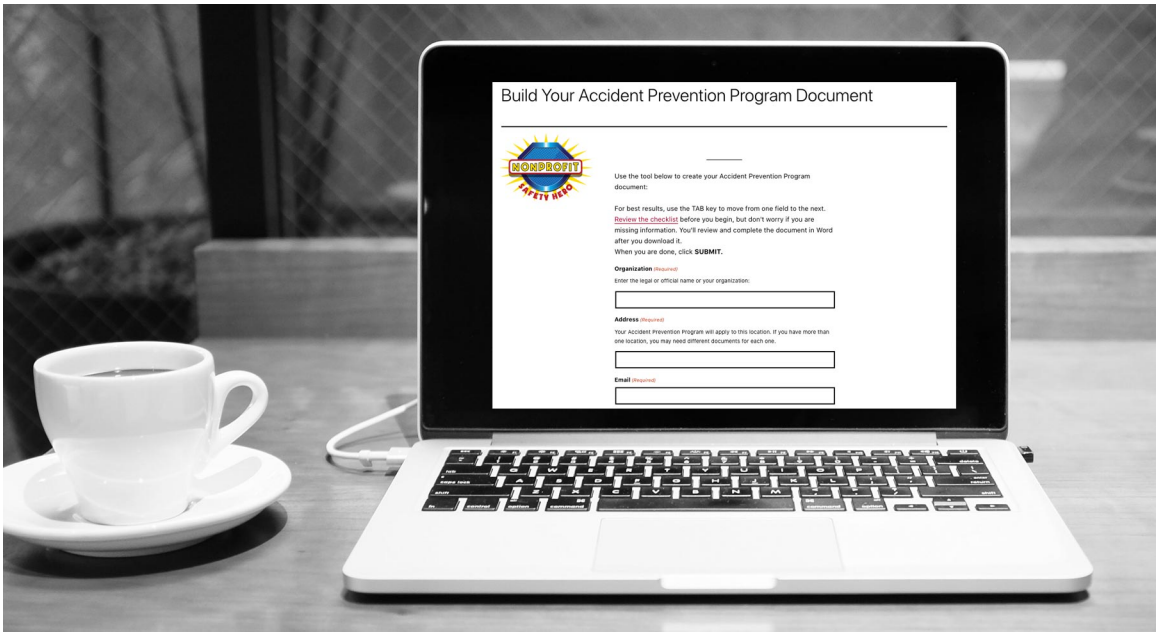
   Keep minutes from your past 12 meetings.

   We know that many food banks are run by volunteers. You may not have employees. You may therefore decide that these rules don't apply to you. Talking about safety and health matters no matter who is doing the work. While Safety and Health rules refer to "employees," you are encouraged to apply these rules whether your operation is run by employees or volunteers.

2. Have a current **Accident Prevention Program (APP)**. This is a written document, required by state law, that describes your prevention and response plan related to accidents.

   Check out the APPapp, an important component of the Nonprofit Safety Hero program. It asks you a series of questions. Your answers generate an editable document that you customize to your organization, creating your final plan.

   The APPapp is available at https://planning.nonprofitsafetyhero.com/.



3. Have a **safety bulletin board**. This is where you make public your key documents and resources.
   - ☐ Accident Prevention Program
   - ☐ Safety meeting agenda/minutes
   - ☐ List of Safety Committee members (if applicable)
   - ☐ WISHA job Safety and Health Law poster
   - ☐ Emergency contact person's name, phone, and email
   - ☐ Emergency phone numbers
   - ☐ Location of first aid kit
   - ☐ Accident, Incident & Injury reporting forms

4. Provide **first aid materials**, which includes regular training.

   Document your nearest clinic or hospital. If Emergency Medical Technicians (EMT) services can't reach your organization within four minutes, provide adequate first-aid training for someone to provide on-site first aid.

   OSHA requires that emergency personnel can reach a site with high injury likelihood within 3 to 4 minutes. Most food banks have equipment or work situations that could cause serious injuries. That is why you are encouraged to train members of your team on first aid if it would take more than four minutes for EMT services to reach out. If your worksite is an office (or similar) with a low emergency likelihood, EMT services must be able to reach you within 15 minutes.

   Stock first aid supplies in a readily accessible place.

5. Provide **fire extinguishers** appropriate to the kinds of fires that you are likely to face:
   - ☐ Class A: Paper & wood
   - ☐ Class B: Flammable and combustible liquids (gas, diesel, paint thinners)
   - ☐ Class C: Electrical fire
   - ☐ Class K: Kitchen greases

   Fire extinguisher training: If you intend for your employees or volunteers to use a fire extinguisher (as opposed to evacuating the premises in the case of a fire), train them how to use them. Otherwise, awareness training suffices. Fire departments usually conduct fire extinguisher training.

Make sure you spend time with the other modules in this series to learn more about other safety topics: food safety, ergonomics, safe buildings, and equipment use.

Also worth knowing

Workers Compensation

You are not required to cover your volunteers with Workers Compensation. You can *elect* to extend workers compensation coverage to them just as you would an employee. This protects them in the case of on-the-job injury. The cost is very reasonable. Learn more from Department of Labor & Industries at:

https://lni.wa.gov/insurance/insurance-requirements/volunteers/

Safety Consultations

You have access to free safety and health consultations through Washington State's Department of Labor & Industries. Many nonprofit organizations have found this a helpful way to know how well they are doing and what to focus on in the future. No fines or penalties will result from issues uncovered during a consultation.

Learn more from the L&I website:
https://lni.wa.gov/safety-health/preventing-injuries-illnesses/request-consultation/

Discussion Guide: General Safety Law

We hope that these resources help you to talk about safety and health as a regular part of your operations. Here are some topics to consider. Set aside time in your next agenda to survey your staff or board on what safety issues they most want to talk about.

Elements of a safety program

We cover these elements in this unit of Nonprofit Safety Hero. You can discuss how you will implement these cornerstone safety and health practices.

1. Accident Prevention Program
2. Safety and health training
3. Safety meetings/safety committee

Employer responsibilities

According to Washington State Labor & Industries, every employer is responsible to ensure that their workspace is safe in these ways. Discuss how your workplace meets these standards.

- ☐ Provide a workplace free from recognized hazards
- ☐ Provide and use appropriate tools to make your workplace safe
- ☐ Prohibit employees from entering, or being in, any workplace that is not safe
- ☐ Construct your workplace so it is safe
- ☐ Prohibit alcohol and narcotics from your workplace
- ☐ Prohibit employees from using tools and equipment that are not safe
- ☐ Establish, supervise, and enforce effective and practical rules that lead to a safe and healthy work environment
- ☐ Control harmful chemical agents
- ☐ Protect employees from harmful biological agents

Top safety rule violations

Another way to look at safety and health is through the lens of where most organizations fall short. You want to make sure you aren't on the list of organizations not meeting safety and health law. Which of these apply most to you?

Click for more info: *Each item below is hyperlinked to more information on the L&I website.*

- ☐ Fall Protection, Fall Restraint & Fall Arrest
- ☐ Accident Prevention Program (APP)
- ☐ Chemical Hazard Communication and GHS
- ☐ Safety Meetings and Committees
- ☐ Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- ☐ Ladder Safety
- ☐ First Aid
- ☐ Electrical Safety

Feedback loops

You want to be a learning organization that puts a system in place and then continually improves that system to better serve your people. Here is a way to understand and improve your system.

- ☐ Map possible causes of injury
- ☐ Review safety meeting minutes and other reporting to help correct hazards.
- ☐ Evaluate any accident investigations conducted since the last meeting to determine if the cause(s) of the unsafe situation was/were identified and corrected.
- ☐ Evaluate your workplace's Accident Prevention Program and discuss recommendations for improvement.
- ☐ Discuss what would make safety meetings more worth your time.

2. Safety Culture

Culture is the way a group of people does things. It includes the systems of knowledge shared by this group, as well as the values, beliefs, attitudes, and roles individuals take within the group. Your organization has a culture. You work within a larger culture that impacts your ability to do your work.

> "Culture is like the wind. It is invisible, yet its effect can be seen and felt. When it is blowing in your direction, it makes for smooth sailing. When it is blowing against you, everything is more difficult."
>
> - Simon Sinek

What three words would you use to describe your organization's safety culture?

1.
2.
3.

Culture shows up in three ways: resources, behavior, and underlying values. We define each of these with examples related to safety and health.

Resources	Behaviors	Values
DEFINITIONS		
Documents or other "stuff" of the organization	What you can observe or see when people interact	Underlying or prevailing values and beliefs that are invisible
EXAMPLES		
• Accident Prevention Plan • Safety Bulletin Board • Safety committee agenda or safety and health's place on staff/board meeting agendas • Staff/volunteer orientation schedule • Budget • Strategic plan • Professional development plans	• Discussions about safety and health • Casual comments related to safety and health • Participation in meetings related to safety and health • Cross-organization interactions like leadership/staff and staff/people served • How individuals and team members respond when a concern or compliant is raised	• Openness to listening across all levels of the organization ("open door policy") • Value placed on safety and health in decision-making • Assumptions about people's behavior • Attitudes about what is acceptable behavior • Attitudes about partners • Unspoken rules • Unspoken perceptions

The best way to build a strong culture is to know what your culture is now and decide what you want it to be. Use the worksheet below to help you do that.

Safety Culture Worksheet

Our culture now: Where we see safety and health show up across three faces of culture.

Resources Documents or other "stuff" that you can touch	Behaviors Behaviors and actions we can see and experience	Values Attitudes and assumptions we experience but don't see

Future culture: What we would like to add/change to strengthen our culture.

Resources	Behaviors	Values

Now that you have thought about your culture, what you would like it to be? Write down three actions you can take to move towards your desired culture.

1.

2.

3.

Discussion Guide: Safety Culture

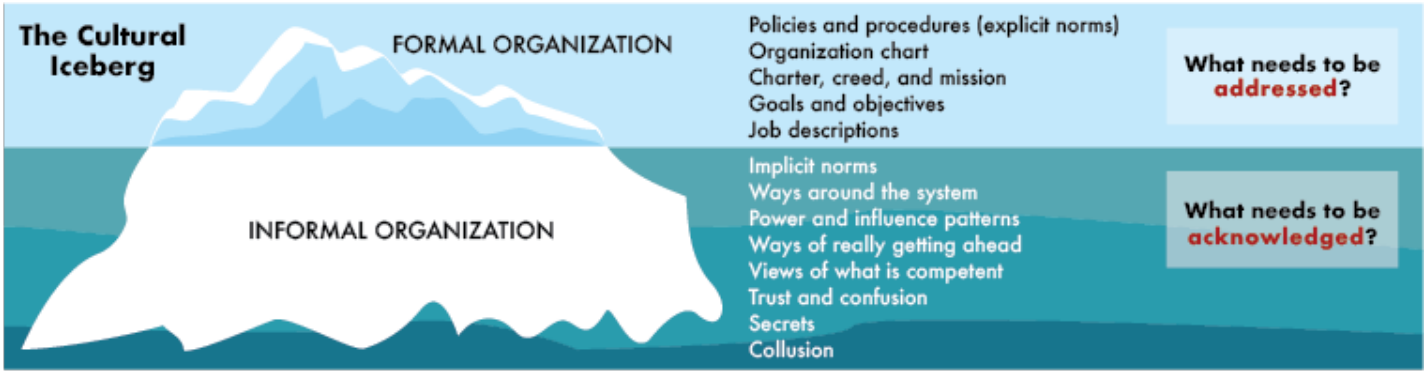
In this discussion guide, we have provided two exercises you can use in a staff or board meeting to talk about culture: Three Faces of Culture and the Cultural Iceberg.

Three Faces of Culture

- Set aside 30-45 minutes at your next staff or board meeting to talk about culture. Introduce the three faces of culture. Check to see if your group understands by asking for examples of how your safety culture shows up in your organization.
- Break into small groups of 3 or 4 people.
- Handout out three colors of sticky notes, assigning labels to each (resources, behavior, values).
- Tell people that next week a visitor is coming to look for evidence of our organizational culture. Their job is to write down what this person can expect to find, see, hear, or feel. Use a different color for each type of culture. Convey that this exercise is designed to be anonymous so they feel comfortable being honest or forthright.
- After 15 minutes, ask groups to bring up their sticky notes and sort them into 3 groups. You can use flipchart people to collect them in a way that is movable. Talk about what you see. Talk about what you don't see.
- Use 15 minutes to plan for the future. What elements of your culture do you want to prioritize to have a stronger safety and health culture? Who can best move that forward and by when?

The Cultural Iceberg

Culture is often compared to an iceberg because there are aspects of culture that can be seen, and other aspects of culture that can't be seen. We often talk about what we can see, but some of the most important, most influential aspects of a culture are unspoken. Our goal is to talk about what we see as well as what we don't see but experience.



In a staff or board meeting, draw the outline of a simple iceberg on flip chart paper. Explain the concept of culture being like an iceberg.

Ask people to write down aspects of culture and place them on the iceberg, using sticky notes or markers. They should put them near the tip if they are very seen, near the waterline if they require some searching, or below the water if they are unseen but have affects.

Now, go one step further. Often what we find with culture is that what we see above the waterline needs to be addressed, and what follows below the waterline needs to be acknowledged. What needs to be addressed within your organization? What needs to be acknowledged? If necessary for a full and honest conversation, consider breaking into small groups or groups by role so people feel safe talking.

Here's an example:

The Small Town Food Bank operates in the basement of a church. The church is old, with aging electrical and plumbing systems. The Food Bank is operated by one paid staff member, the Executive Director, and a team of wonderful volunteers who do everything from unloading trucks of food to helping clients on the two days a week that the Food Bank is open.

Safety and Health has not been a priority for the Small Town Food Bank. All of their funding goes into food and the ED's salary. They decide that they want to strengthen their safety and health practices.

What to acknowledge: The Small Town Food Bank's culture is rooted in its history as a charitable activity of the church. Its unspoken belief has been that a "good nonprofit" spends its money on direct service, not "wasting" money on overhead, which is what a lot of safety and health practices fall under. The food bank is limited in how much it can invest in its infrastructure because it relies on the church for its space and volunteer base. It is important for the leadership of this food bank to acknowledge the role that a "charity mindset" has on its ability to invest in safety, as well as the limitations of being in someone else's space.

What to address: The Small Town Food Bank has the power to set clear goals and objectives around safety and health within the building. After it acknowledges its history not investing in core operating functions, it can intentionally update its thinking on how core investments can strengthen service. It can name a safety and health champion and budget for some training beyond what is available through local hospitals and fire departments.

3. Safety Systems

Ultimately, our goal is to improve safety and health practice by staff and volunteers *consistently over time*. To achieve that, we need to consider solutions that are both **individual** and **systems-focused**. Your task is to find the right blend of support that allows your team to know what they need to do — and then do it.

Individual-Focused Solutions

As a safety leader, your job is to inspire and influence the individuals who work within your organization. These three strategies are options for you to consider as you find ways to make it easy for people to follow safety and health protocols.

A. Action Planning

People are more likely to take action on what they need to do in these circumstances:

- They are motivated.
- The effort involved is low, or at least less than their motivation.
- There are social advantages.
- The environment supports action.

That means that you have the opportunity to find ways to increase motivation, decrease friction that may come from effort or environment, and leverage social connection.

Use the table below to reflect on your situation. Write your answers in the right column.

Action element	Your response
Motivation How can you tap into their intrinsic motivation or increase extrinsic motivation so they follow safety protocols?	
Effort How can you make the job easier? What do they need to know or be able to do to do what you need them to do?	
Social How can you tap into that person's peer group or social awareness to incentivize safety practice?	
Environment How can you make sure the culture, workspace, and other external aspects of the job are conducive to following safety protocols?	

B. Interventions

We often turn to training when people don't do what we want them to do, yet most performance problems are not a result of knowledge. People often know what to do, but they still don't do it. This list of **behavior change interventions** offers you some alternatives to training.

Use the fourth column to write how you could use this intervention type in your organization. If it is not applicable, feel free to cross it out.

Intervention	Definition	Example	How you could use this
Education	Increase knowledge or understanding	Provide information that answers safety and health questions	
Training	Impart and/or strengthen skills	Strengthen problem-solving skills or practices using PPE	
Persuasion	Use communication to influence emotions or encourage action	Use graphics of injured or sick people to demonstrate the impact of not following safety protocols	
Incentivization	Create an expectation of a reward	Use prizes or rewards to celebrate an accident-free period of time	
Coercion	Create an expectation of punishment or loss of privilege	Take away a privilege if protocols aren't followed. Unsafe forklift use, for example, requires retraining. If a person is involved in an unsafe situation or accident, they may not use the forklift until sufficient retraining.	
Restriction	Use rules to reduce the opportunity to engage in the target behavior	Restrict use of certain tools until certain prerequisites are met. In addition to forklift training, a volunteer must work at least 100 hours before being allowed to operate the forklift	
Environmental	Change the physical or social environment	Hang posters that remind people what to do or rearrange workspaces to encourage people to wash hands before handling food	
Modeling	Provide an example for people to aspire to or imitate	Use lead team members as mentors or provide videos that show proper behavior	

C. Behavioral science

You can also use behavior science to influence behavior. Humans are can be irrational, as you know. There are times when we can use strategies derived from psychology and behavior science research to improve the likelihood that people do what we need them to do.

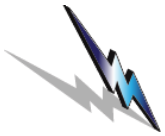
Use the third column to write down how you could use this behavioral science principle.

Behavioral science principle	Example of how to use it for safety and health	How could you use this
Provide decision-making, goal-setting, and planning supports	Discuss the goal and strategize together how to get there. Provide whatever support you decide is needed, such as more practice, coaching, or a job aid	
Remove hassles	Determine what barriers are in the way and remove/reduce them	
Use the right channel for the right message	Text people a daily safety and health message if they say that they prefer texts	
Use reminders	Use posters or other devises to remind people to wash their hands; create mnemonic devices to help people remember information	
Use public and private commitments	Ask people to verbally commit to using proper lifting practices in a public setting. Privately ask people to sign a document that states that they will follow a certain list of safety and health rules.	
Provide appropriate anchor or reference points	Provide a reference weight for how heavy a box should be or a maximum height to climb on a ladder (reference the DOSH ladder guide for help). Don't make people establish their own benchmarks, which could vary wildly.	
Frame choices around gains and loss	Individuals are more sensitive to losses than gains, so gain-framed messaging can help to influence people away from risk. For example: Frequent handwashing keeps people healthy (gain-framed) vs. dirty hands cause people to get sick (loss-framed).	

Behavioral science principle	Example of how to use it for safety and health	How could you use this
Provide early rewards	Celebrate staff or volunteers right away when they suggest a process improvement or report a safety violation.	
Prime positive identities	Before you ask people to adopt a new safety practice, such as how to use a new tool, remind them that they are service-oriented and committed to upholding the organization's safety practice. By doing this, you are getting them ready to hear your next message. *Then* tell them about the new tool.	
Use social proof and social influence	Spotlight individuals who are using a proper lifting method or use friendly challenges between volunteer teams to leverage social influence.	
Provide communications, workshops, or tutorials on the brain and learning	When re-teaching a safety practice, note that the brain is wired to forget. Our brains remember better over time if we have regular reminders and opportunities to practice.	

We just shared three strategies that encourage individuals to follow safety and health protocols:

- Action planning
- Intervention techniques
- Behavioral science



Which of these would help you strengthen your safety and health program?

System Solutions

As a safety leader, there are systems solutions that will help sustain safety and health practices over time. These systems are designed to reinforce what we've just covered in this course.

A. Staffing

The word "system" suggests that there is a set of programs and practices that are working together. Who is making that happen? Someone needs to pay attention to what you need to know and do related to safety and health. We strongly recommend that you choose one point person who has safety and health as a part of their job responsibilities.

We have drafted a general list of tasks that this person might do. You should customize it to what is best for your organization and what would work best within your context.

Safety and health coordinator tasks:

- Manage the master checklist tracking all safety programs
- Keep the Accident Prevention Program document current (at least annual review)
- Manage safety and health learning program (trainings, orientations)
- Staff (or volunteer) safety meetings/safety committee work. Ensure meeting minutes are taken
- Populate safety bulletin board
- Manage safety and health reporting protocols
- Compile and maintain relevant registrations to ensure compliance
- Inspect equipment regularly
- Promote safety initiatives
- Work closely with leadership and board to inform them about safety matters

B. Learning

There's so much to know to stay current on safety and health protocols. Some topics are new to people when they start working at your organization. Other topics are generally known—like handwashing—but we need reminders to keep information fresh. When you have a strategic learning program, you show your safety and health leadership of investing in your people.

There are three elements of a learning program to consider: orientation, just-in-learning, and professional development.

1. ORIENTATION

We hold orientations for a variety of reasons:

- To share knowledge.
- To increase confidence.
- To increase enthusiasm.
- To avoid future problems.

- To increase retention.
- To build a unified group.

All of these reasons support a strong safety and health culture. A good orientation creates a safe space for staff and volunteers to learn, connect, and work.

Topics to cover in an orientation depend on your situation, but here is a generic list to help start your planning.

- A description of your total safety and health program.
- On-the-job orientation showing employees what they need to know to perform their initial job assignments safely.
- How and when to report on-the-job injuries including instruction about the location of first-aid facilities in your workplace.
- How to report unsafe conditions and practices.
- The use and care of required personal protective equipment (PPE).
- What to do in an emergency, including how to exit the workplace.
- Identification of hazardous gases, chemicals, or materials used on-the-job and instruction about the safe use and emergency action to take after accidental exposure.

2. JUST-IN-TIME LEARNING

Just-in-time learning, also called micro-learning or "learning in the workflow," is learning that solves a problem. It can be a video, a job aid (checklist, how-to guide), or technical assistance from a colleague. The learning is short, focused on one topic.

Here are some examples of just-in-time learning.

- Poster of handwashing steps over the sink
- Short video on how to use a fire extinguisher
- 15-minute instructor-led training on how to spot spoiled food
- Checklist posted in the loading dock on how to unload a truck to maximize refrigeration
- Sample agenda for a safety meeting
- Sample safety reporting form to help people know how to fill it out

Washington Food Coalition and Washington State Labor & Industries have additional resources for you to draw from.

How could you use just-in-time learning to help solve a safety or health problem in your organization?

3. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

There will be occasions when a deeper understanding of a topic will be needed. Consider the Certified Food Protection Manager Certificate, for example, which will be required of all food banks by March 2023. The Washington Food Coalition's Food Bank Certification Course is another example of deeper learning that cuts across a wider domain of knowledge. It is important for your organization to have a forward-looking plan that invests in the knowledge, skills, and practice of your people.

What professional development would strengthen the capacity of your organization?

C. Budget

You are doing important work. You are probably spending as much money as you can on food and other mission-critical expenses. It is also important to show your values in how you budget for the staffing and learning required to achieve a strong safety and health culture.

If an outsider were to review your budget and HR documents to sleuth out your safety and health commitment, they would look for money set aside for:

- Safety and health-focused staff
- Volunteer engagement and celebration
- Safety and health training (orientation, just-in-time learning, professional development)
- Worker's Compensation for volunteers
- Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)
- Building upgrades to ensure safe structures
- Equipment to help with lifting and moving products

Where does safety and health appear in your organizational budget?

Discussion Guide: Safety Systems

Safety Leadership

We have just covered the key pieces to a strong safety system. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has a model to describe safety leadership that integrates these elements. The OSHA model is called STARS, which represents:

Supervision: You oversee activities so staff and volunteers are safe.

Training: You conduct safety orientation and training.

Accountability: You require that people comply with safety policies and rules.

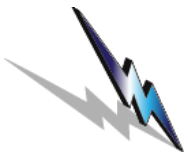
Resources: You provide physical resources—tools, equipment, materials—so employees can be safe.

Support: You create a psychologically-safe environment in which staff and volunteers can safely work without undue stress.

Your board, leadership, and staff/volunteers need to understand the importance of the model and see evidence that it is in place and functioning.

Discuss the STARS model. Which word resonates most with you in terms of what you do well? Which word do you think you should focus on for the future?

We started with the definition of leadership:

Leadership is the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal.

Now that you have worked through the Safety Leadership course, what insights do you have about safety leadership at your organization??