



**STATE OF SAFETY
AND BEYOND**



ABOUT THE STATE OF SAFETY AND BEYOND SURVEY



The State of Safety and Beyond Survey from Avetta® and the EHS Daily Advisor was launched in August and gathered the insight of 314 environment, health, and safety (EHS) professionals about how their organizations are dealing with current safety challenges and what they're expecting in the future. These concerns run the gamut from the very real threat of COVID-19 to perennial issues such as training, leadership, safety culture, and generational differences.

Avetta® and the EHS Daily Advisor research team would like to extend our gratitude to all the professionals who chose to participate in the survey, as well as our readers, for their help in deepening our understanding of the challenges they face on a daily basis. All percentages in this report have been rounded to the nearest whole percent. If you have any questions or comments about the State of Safety and Beyond Survey and this accompanying report, please email media@simplifycompliance.com.

ABOUT AVETTA

Avetta leads the world in connecting leading global organizations with qualified and vetted suppliers, contractors and vendors. The company brings visibility to supply chains through innovative and configurable technology, coupled with highly experienced human knowledge and insight. We contribute to the advancement of our clients' sustainable growth by protecting supply chains from a wide range of potential risks through trusted contractor prequalification, safety training and monitoring, regulatory compliance, insurance/financial stability, and other areas of risk. Avetta currently serves more than 500 enterprise companies and 125K suppliers across 120+ countries. Visit www.avetta.com for more information.


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THE GREATEST SAFETY CHALLENGE

COVID-19 has presented a major problem for businesses, but there are plenty of other safety-related issues to deal with. Asked to describe the single greatest safety challenge they're currently facing, respondents had a wide variety of responses, including:

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- Adequate staffing to meet programmatic needs
 - Complying with both client and company safety standards
 - Staff engagement; willingness to take on projects
 - Workers wearing the required personal protective equipment
 - Remote workers
 - Overcoming pervasive poor culture
 - Ensuring that company leadership and management consistently lead by example and demonstrate commitment to safety
 - High stress, high overtime, mentally and physically tired workers resulting in safety issues
 - Whether to mandate vaccines
 - COVID taking all the resources needed to address other issues
 - Adherence to masking and distancing policies regarding COVID
 - Employees feeling comfortable when working with unvaccinated individuals
 - Employee turnover
 - Effectively training employees
 - Young workers (20s) who do not want to follow policies and rules
 - Subcontractor compliance
 - Lack of genuine and consistent support for safety initiatives by senior leadership of various clients
 - Unwillingness to embrace new ideas
 - Workplace violence
 - Lack of management support or buy-in
 - Lack of funding for safety efforts

To address these concerns over the next year, respondents said they have rolled out a variety of solutions. For staffing, one respondent said this includes petitioning that as the organization grows, so does EHS staffing. In addition, the respondent plans to look at opportunities for a feeder system for entry-level positions.

Other solutions include developing a more inclusive and transparent safety culture; developing more guidelines for remote work, training, and communications/feedback; changing the management of safety teams; leadership training and setting top-down expectations; establishing disciplinary for employees who do not comply with safety policies; improved recruiting efforts; increased training opportunities; increased interaction with clients to educate them on preventable accidents and potential OSHA fines for noncompliance; and holding more engagement sessions.

SAFETY CULTURE

Several questions on the survey focused on safety culture. Asked how they would rate their organization's safety culture, **64%** of survey respondents said it was good, **18%** said excellent, **16%** said their culture was below average, and **2%** said their culture was poor.

When it came to ranking the top challenges in building a culture of safety, respondents said engaging and motivating employees (**72%**), balancing production pressures with safety efforts (**59%**), and getting supervisor cooperation (**45%**) were the most challenging. These were followed by providing effective training (**34%**), employee unwillingness to follow rules (**31%**), getting support from C-suite or upper management (**26%**), and measuring safety performance (**26%**).

Top challenges in building a culture of safety:



A major factor in having a strong safety culture is leadership support. Asked about this:





EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT

Safety efforts don't work without engaged employees. Asked how engaged employees are in organizational safety programs, **20%** of respondents said their employees were very involved, **68%** said they were somewhat involved, and **12%** said their employees had minimal or no involvement.

There are many different ways to participate in safety programs. **Ninety-one percent** of respondents said their employees receive training, **78%** said they attend safety meetings, **71%** said employees report hazards, **54%** said they conduct equipment inspections, and **54%** said they serve on safety committees.



91%

Receive Training



78%

Employees Attend
Safety Meetings



71%

Employees Report
Hazards




54%

Employees Conduct
Equipment Inspections



54%

Employees Serve on
Safety Committees



Other methods of participation include a safety corner that features posted safety information, an observation program, safety incentive programs, a “Safety Pulse Hotline,” union training, assisting in training others, risk assessments, safety tailgate meetings, “Safety Standout Awards,” reporting good catches and near misses, “hazard hunts,” mentoring of safety professionals on job sites, quarterly safety drills, and having designated safety captains work with employees on safety.

Asked about barriers to employee engagement in safety,

38%

of respondents said lack of time for employees to participate in safety efforts,

29%

said employees do not view safety as a core part of their job duties,

13%

said employees view safety as a barrier to productivity,

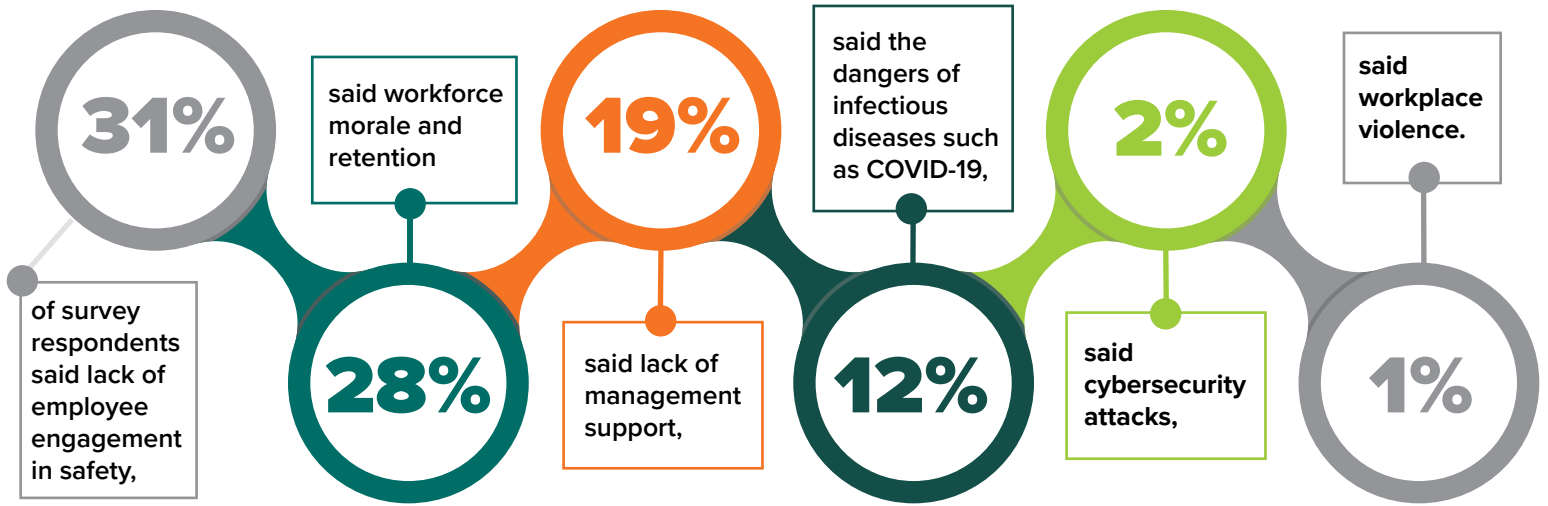
11%

said lack of trust between employees and management.

Other barriers noted included lack of consistent accountability and proper resources/tools to do their jobs safely; employees have become too comfortable working remotely; employees are concerned about retaliation; lack of injuries creates a “we’re doing OK” mentality; lack of training and awareness; and lack of leadership.

LEADERSHIP CONCERNS

Safety leaders have many concerns to deal with on a daily basis. Asked about their biggest concern,

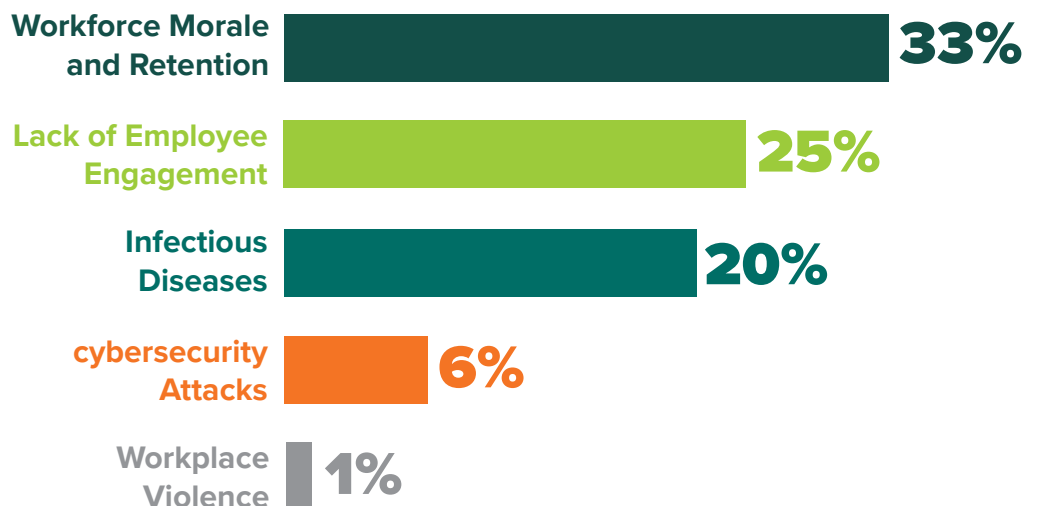


Other concerns listed included systematic failures and loss of interest; serious injury; miscommunication; making time for safety training; fire safety/evacuating a high-rise building; language barriers; lack of recognition for employees’ efforts to reduce incidents; inability to create lasting or widespread change in workplace culture and practices; lack of internal standards; enforcement by supervisors; and OSHA inspectors who “have to cite something no matter the efforts made to correct unsafe environments.”

Asked about management’s main safety concern, **33%** of respondents said workforce morale and retention, **25%** said lack of employee engagement, **20%** said infectious diseases such as COVID-19, **6%** said cybersecurity attacks, and **1%** said workplace violence. Other concerns listed included tracking metrics; lack of production; increased costs in workers’ comp expense and recent law changes; serious injury; governmental mandates; ergonomics; and OSHA citations.



Management’s Main Safety Concerns



NEW RESPONSIBILITIES

The last two years have been particularly stressful for everyone, but especially for safety leaders. **Seventy-three percent** of respondents said they had to take on new responsibilities over the last two years that aren't traditional for their role. These new responsibilities included worker health tracking and confidentiality (**49%**), mental health and worker well-being programs (**42%**), sustainability compliance (**38%**), workspace design and work flow processes (**34%**), business continuity planning (**33%**), cybersecurity and data privacy (**10%**), and supplier financial tracking (**6%**).

Other responsibilities listed included keeping COVID testing and vaccination documents; physically support operations due to lack of staff; financial scrutiny and review analysis; data entry and testing of new computer system; truck maintenance and tool records; harassment investigations; human resources; contact tracing, quarantine protocols, employee stress management; fit testing and PPE inventory control and management; security; quality management; and some environmental inspection duties.

81% of respondents said they expect these changes to remain in the long term.

Maintaining high safety standards is also a challenge for businesses that deal with suppliers and contractors. **Seventy-one percent** of survey respondents say they hold suppliers and contractors to the same safety standards as their employees, **15%** said they do not hold them to the same standards, and **14%** were unsure. For those who answered yes, they said they ensure contractors and suppliers meet standards in various ways, such as having it written into contracts; requiring onboarding training prior to entering the site; making them wear PPE when they are on site; requiring them to take several e-learning courses prior to arrival; implementing a contractor safety program; notifications, online attestation of knowledge when checking in, sharing training with contractor leaders; auditing PPE and safety protocols during service; pre-approval training; and screening of all vendors and visitors upon arrival.



SUSTAINABILITY

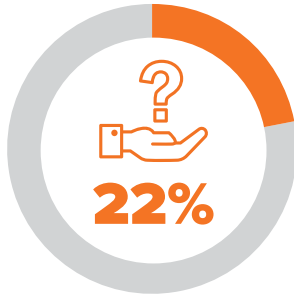
Sustainability efforts are taking on increased importance, with **56%** of respondents saying their organization's leadership has made sustainability a strategic priority; **21%** said it is not a priority and **22%** were unsure. Asked what the main reason was for their organization engaging with sustainability, **49%** said it aligns with organizational goals, mission, and values, **12%** said to meet regulatory requirements, **12%** said to improve/maintain brand reputation, **6%** said to attract/motivate/retain employees, **4%** said to meeting industry standards, and **4%** said to make a positive impact on an issue. Other reasons given include it's the right thing to do; to gain customer base; shareholder request; provide a tangible link between known and future technologies; and "our constituents are concerned about sustainability and therefore we take this into consideration."



respondents say sustainability is a priority



respondents say sustainability is not a priority



respondents were unsure

As noted earlier, employee engagement is a major concern of safety managers, but they are using different methods to engage workers in safety vs. sustainability efforts. When it comes to engaging employees in new safety efforts

65% of respondents said they train staff on safety culture,

56% said they use monitoring programs and track results,

54% solicit employee feedback,

48% use leadership commitment,

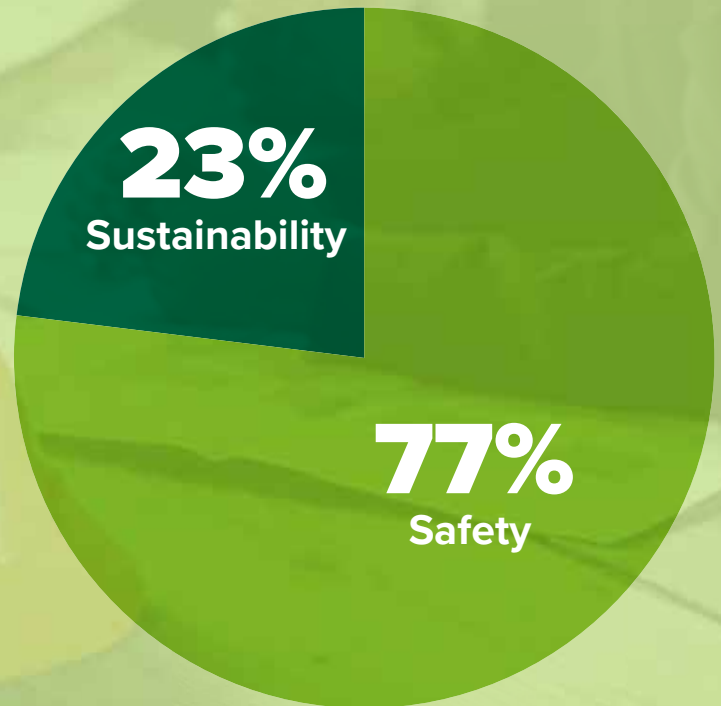
35% reward positive behaviors.

To engage employees in sustainability efforts, **47%** of respondents said they emphasize that sustainability is part of the corporate culture, **34%** said employees understand how sustainability efforts align with overall strategy, **31%** said all employees receive training on how to integrate sustainability practices into their everyday jobs, and **18%** said sustainability performance is considered in employee compensation decisions.

Other methods include adding safety captains to all facilities; safety incentive programs; staff engagement survey management by an international supplier; and safety culture surveys and follow-up on weaknesses identified.

To engage employees in sustainability efforts, **47%** of respondents said they emphasize that sustainability is part of the corporate culture, **34%** said employees understand how sustainability efforts align with overall strategy, **31%** said all employees receive training on how to integrate sustainability practices into their everyday jobs, and **18%** said sustainability performance is considered in employee compensation decisions. Other techniques included holding periodic town hall-style meetings at each location to communicate company goals and achievements; performance contacting of sustainability KPIs to line function; additional bonus and involvement of employee's family in sustainability campaign; marketing, grants, award programs, campus funding for sustainability initiatives.

Asked with which area employees are more engaged, **77%** of respondents said safety and **23%** said sustainability



INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Most respondents (**62%**) said safety is a part of the organization's integrated management systems, while **19%** said it was not and **20%** were unsure. Asked how safety is part of integrated management systems, responses included: through regular reporting; in the operations manual and top down from leadership; in everyday processes, at the monthly meeting, annual training, and constant discussions about COVID-19 restrictions; safety is the first topic discussed in meetings; safety is woven into all aspects of the business; monthly training opportunities; online training requirements; daily safety briefings; part of the annual employee appraisal along with being part of the bonus structure; safety goals are part of managers' performance measurement; risk management is prioritized in all business decisions; safety KPIs are tracked along with others and continual improvement is a goal; and tracking and trending lagging and leading indicators.

TWO YEARS LATER

We compared some of the answers from this survey to the Avetta Safety Leadership and Engagement survey conducted in the summer of 2019, which queried 557 EHS professionals. Asked how they would rate their organization's safety culture in 2021, **82%** of respondents said it was good or excellent, compared to **75%** of respondents two years ago.

Asked to rank the top challenges in building a culture of safety, respondents in 2021 listed the top three as engaging and motivating employees (**72%**), balancing production pressures with safety efforts (**59%**), and getting supervisor cooperation (**45%**). In 2019, the top three challenges were the same, but in lower percentages: **50%**, **46%**, and **29%**, respectively.

Top Challenges in Building a Culture of Safety

2019

50%

Engaging and motivating employees

46%

Balancing production pressures with safety efforts

29%

Getting supervisor cooperation

2021

72%

Engaging and motivating employees

59%

Balancing production pressures with safety efforts

45%

Getting supervisor cooperation

On the topic of employee engagement, **20%** of respondents in 2021 said their employees were very involved in organizational safety programs, compared to **33%** in 2019. **Sixty-eight percent** said they were somewhat involved in 2021 (**compared to 49% in 2019**) and **12%** said employees had minimal or no involvement in 2021 (**compared to 18% in 2019**).

Asked about ways to participate in safety programs, **91%** of respondents in 2021 said their employees receive training (**compared to 88% in 2019**), **78%** said they attend safety meetings (**86% in 2019**), **71%** said employees report hazards (**80% in 2019**), **54%** said they conduct equipment inspections (**63% in 2019**), and **54%** said they serve on safety committees (**60%**).

Barriers to employee engagement in safety include lack of time for employees to participate in safety efforts (**38% in 2021, 32% in 2019**), employees do not view safety as a core part of their job duties (**29% in 2021, 16% in 2019**), employees view safety as a barrier to productivity (**13% in 2021, 10% in 2019**), and lack of trust between employees and management (**11% in 2021 and 2019**).



WHO RESPONDED?

The safety professionals who participated in our State of Safety and Beyond Survey work in a variety of positions, with **45%** working as safety or EHS managers. **Ten percent** work as safety or EHS directors, while another **6%** are staff-level employees, **6%** are consultants or contractors, **5%** are HR or other managers, **5%** are frontline supervisors, **4%** are HR or other directors or executives, and **3%** are safety or EHS executives. The remainder of the response pool was made up of people with various job titles, including purchasing manager, warehouse specialist, hospital safety officer, risk/safety analyst, safety coordinator, and vice president of safety and security.

45%

Safety or
EHS Managers

10%

Safety or
or EHS Directors

6%

Staff-level
Employees

6%

Consultants or
Contractors

5%

HR or Other
Managers

5%

Frontline
Supervisors

4%

HR or Other
Directors or
Executives

3%

Safety or EHS
Executives

16%

Other



Thirty-one percent of respondents work in manufacturing. Other industries with a strong presence in our survey included construction (**11%**), government or public administration (**6%**), utilities or energy (**6%**), healthcare (**5%**), distribution/warehousing (**4%**), oil and gas (**4%**), consulting (**3%**), and chemical production (**3%**). Another **16%** specified other industries of which they are a part, including hospitality and entertainment, real estate, telecommunication, foodservice, military, and biotechnology.

Thirty-five percent of respondents work at organizations that employ **1,000** or more employees, while **26%** reported from smaller companies with fewer than **100** employees. The remaining **39%** work at businesses employing between **101** and **999** workers.