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**HELPFUL LINKS**

[www.merma.org](http://www.merma.org)  
[www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/](http://www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/)  
[Schedule an Ergo Evaluation](#)



**Safety culture—Addressing unsafe behavior**

If you want to contribute to the development of a strong safety culture, you’ll need to use your perspective, experience, and voice for the benefit of yourself and others. One way you can use your voice for safety is to call out unsafe behavior. These can include a broad scope of actions and behaviors, such as:

- Using defective tools, equipment, or supplies;
- Removing machine guards or barriers;
- Overloading outlets;
- Failing to use appropriate PPE or using PPE improperly;
- Lifting incorrectly;
- Failing to follow rules, training, and safety procedures; *and*
- Taking shortcuts and goofing around.

It can be intimidating to confront coworkers about their behavior because we often want to “fit in,” be well liked, and avoid conflict. You might also hesitate to intervene when you notice unsafe behavior because you’re not sure how to approach the situation.

When you notice a coworker behaving in a way that puts the individual or others at risk, keep the following tips in mind:

- Stay positive and approach each situation without criticism. Instead, offer genuine concern for the person’s safety.
- Choose your words carefully, and don’t single the person out. You can use words like “us” and “we” instead of “you.”
- Unless the behavior poses an immediate threat, don’t put your coworker on the spot in front of other coworkers.

Intervening in unsafe behavior can save lives. If you feel uncomfortable intervening, you should bring the unsafe behavior to the attention of your supervisor, who can then address the issue.

**Safety culture—Addressing unsafe behavior: Quiz**

1. You can contribute to the development of a strong safety culture by using your voice to call out unsafe behavior. TRUE or FALSE
2. Which of the following are examples of unsafe behavior?

## Maintaining Fire Detection Systems

Dirt, dust, or foreign materials can build up inside the sensor elements of a fire detector system, causing a reduced sensitivity that can limit the warning time given during a fire. Those assigned to ensure the alarm system will perform properly must:

- Operate and maintain the system in working condition, making sure it is always turned on, except during repairs or maintenance.
- Have fire detectors and fire detection systems tested and adjusted often to ensure they operate correctly and maintain reliability.
- Have a qualified person service, maintain, and test all fire detection systems.
- Have fire detectors cleaned of dust, dirt, or other particulates at periodic intervals.

To maintain and test audible and visual fire alarms:

- Conduct visual checks to ensure alarm devices are not obstructed or installed in a manner that would prevent sound or light from reaching or entering the protected areas. Alarms must be conspicuous and readily accessible.
- Use only properly trained persons to service, maintain, and test alarms.
- Test the reliability and adequacy of nonsupervised alarm systems every 2 months.
- Maintain or replace power supplies as often as necessary to ensure a fully operational condition.

A. Using defective tools, equipment, or supplies

B. Failing to use appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

C. Taking shortcuts

D. All of the above

**3.** Which of the following should you do when confronting a coworker about their unsafe behavior?

A. Use the word “you” instead of the words “us” or “we.”

B. Approach the situation without criticism.

C. Address your coworker in front of others.

D. Offer concern for the person’s safety.

**4.** You shouldn’t tell anyone about a coworker’s unsafe behavior if you feel uncomfortable confronting them. TRUE or FALSE

### **Job hazard analysis–Plan ahead**

A job hazard analysis (JHA) is a proactive safety tool that promotes a safety culture. The JHA focuses on the identification of hazards and measures to prevent injury before the job starts. It focuses on the relationship between the worker, the task, the tools, and the work environment. Ideally, after you identify uncontrolled hazards, you will take steps to control them. This is likely to result in fewer worker injuries and illnesses; safer, more effective work methods; reduced workers’ compensation costs; and increased worker productivity.

The JHA process

- Start by breaking the job down into steps. These don’t have to be extremely detailed, but they should capture the basic steps.
- Next, identify the hazards of each task. Common hazards include chemical exposure, fire and explosion, electrical, falls, noise, caught between, struck against, and flying objects. Be sure to write down the potential consequences of the hazards, as well. This will help you identify especially dangerous tasks.
- Finally, apply controls to eliminate or reduce the hazards. Hazard controls should be applied in the following order, based on feasibility. Remember that the effectiveness of these controls goes down as you get lower on the list. If at all feasible, use the top options on the list:
  1. Eliminate the hazard entirely by removing it, such as cleaning up an oil spill.
  2. Substitute something less hazardous for the task. An example would be using a less flammable brake cleaner.
  3. Engineer the hazard out, like installing guards on a machine.
  4. Use administrative measures such as shift rotations on hot days.
  5. Finally, use personal protective equipment (PPE) for any residual hazards.



### Incident Investigations: A *reactive* tool used as a *proactive measure* to prevent future similar Incidents.

Incident investigations are a key component of a sound safety program and the development of a safety culture. Why? Conducting thorough investigations assists employers in the identification of the root causes of incidents which is crucial for implementing effective corrective actions to prevent a similar incident from happening in the future.

Effective incident investigations can lead to fostering a safety culture. How? By conducting comprehensive investigations that lead to the identification of corrective measures and by promptly taking action in implementing changes to prevent future similar incidents, businesses send a message to all employees that their health and safety are a priority and, at the same time, demonstrate a commitment to compliance.

In a nutshell, effective incident investigations prevent future similar incidents, protect lives and promotes well-being, ensures compliance, enhances the organization's efficiency and in doing all of the above, promotes a safety culture.

## Incident Investigation and Workers' Compensation 101 Training

MERMA is offering Incident Investigation and Workers' Compensation (WC) 101 training to all Districts. The training will take place Monday, January 27, 2025, at MCOE's A and B Conference rooms located at 901 Blanco Circle in Salinas, California. The training is designed for supervisors and managers tasked with handling internal WC procedures and/or conducting incident investigations. Please contact Maria Lorenzana at [mlorenzana@merma.org](mailto:mlorenzana@merma.org) for more information on how to register.

## eBacksafe® by Future Industrial Technologies, Inc. (FIT)

Are you looking for strategies to improve culture, morale, staffing, and safety? The eBacksafe® program is perfect for you. **eBacksafe® is a great program that is free to our member districts, it is a virtual injury prevention program designed for teachers and paraeducators, however, the information and safety tips pertains to all types of classifications including maintenance, administration, and yard supervisors.** Note: Segments of the virtual safety training were customized and filmed locally to ensure that real-life wellness scenarios were addressed.

FIT has been in business for 30 years helping school districts and other organizations throughout the US protect the health and wellbeing of employees. Fatigue, discomfort, pain, and injuries are often caused by Cumulative Micro Trauma, and when employees learn how to prevent it, their quality of life at work and home improve dramatically.

Contact Maria Lorenzana via email at [mlorenzana@merma.org](mailto:mlorenzana@merma.org) or by phone at (831) 296-9196 for details on enrolling your staff in the virtual eBacksafe® training program or for training on any of the topics listed on this newsletter.

# January Safety Calendar

National Radon Action Month	<u>Environmental Protection Agency</u>	<u>Radon gas information</u>
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**ANSWERS**

1. TRUE. 2. D. 3. B. & D. 4. FALSE.