

Safety Climate Monitoring in Canada

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New approaches to addressing the problem of work-related injuries are needed. Safety climate is a well studied measure of shared perceptions of a firm's priority for health and safety versus productivity. Safety climate has been shown to be a leading indicator for identifying the need for action, thus offering an avenue for preventative action instead of waiting for injuries to occur. Therefore, routine monitoring of safety climate has the potential to lead to sustainable improvements in occupational health and safety performance. This project brings together leading researchers in the field with workplace partners. It is the first stage of a planned research program to advance theoretical and practical aspects of safety climate monitoring and interventions that impact safety climate. The project has three components. Component 1 aims to develop a benchmarking database for safety climate by introducing eight safety climate questions into the Statistics Canada Workplace and Employee Survey. Component 2 will examine the reliability of measuring safety climate and determine its' capacity to predict injury and illness rates. Component 3 will introduce safety climate leadership development to unions, management, workers and other stakeholders in British Columbia and Ontario.

We have developed a partnership with the Industrial Accident Prevention Association, Statistics Canada, Dalhousie University, the University of British Columbia, the Institute for Work & Health, the University of Toronto, and Simon Fraser University to develop of our long-term research program. This poster presentation will present an overview of our plans in each of the three component areas. Additionally, findings from two safety climate studies completed by members of the team will be highlighted as they provide important background to our planned research program. One of the studies was conducted in a large manufacturing firm in Nova Scotia and findings demonstrated the effectiveness of a leadership intervention in safety climate. The other project, conducted with the BC Road Construction and Maintenance Safety Network, had a primary goal of gaining an understanding of the effect of certification training on safety climate. Both these studies provide evidence for the relationship of safety climate with lagging indicators and both highlight the opportunities for using safety climate in prevention initiatives.