



Safety

11 New Year’s Resolutions to Buff Up Manufacturing Safety

James Langford | Jan 09, 2025

People who think their lives have room for improvement frequently start a new calendar year by making resolutions to exercise more often, eat healthier foods or manage their money more carefully.

How well they succeed depends heavily on their own willpower. There’s no rule limiting such self-improvement initiatives to parties of one, however, and resolutions can prove even more effective for businesses and organizations that have access to, and take advantage of, broader support networks.

That makes them an ideal tool for workplace safety initiatives, since managers can leverage insights from the previous year—including the U.S. Occupational Safety and Health Administration’s list of *most common violations*—to target improvements for the next one.

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“Effective safety practices are not merely rules and regulations, but a shared commitment cultivated through open communication, individual initiative and collective action,” Abdullah Malik, an occupational safety and health professional, writes in a *SafetyPedia* article on New Year’s safety resolutions. “It’s about empowering everyone to be safety champions, to identify and address potential hazards, and to continuously strive for improvement.

Getting broad buy-in from employees, contractors and managers alike is a crucial step toward maximizing occupational safety, experts agree. Here are some of the workplace resolutions they recommend considering in 2025, gathered from expert interviews, safety industry publications and organizations including the National Safety Council.

1. **Consider developing a *safety calendar*** with different focus areas for each month, suggests Gil Truesdale, president of Martin Technical, a safety training and consulting firm. For businesses that don’t have a comprehensive safety plan in place, this can be a useful tool in developing one. For others, it establishes a timetable for periodic review and can help demonstrate to OSHA inspectors a good-faith effort to maintain safety standards and comply with regulations.
2. **Gauge safety success through multiple measures.** Don’t rely solely on injury and illness rates, the National Safety Council suggests. Instead, include leading indicators such as *inspections, training*

programs and completion of corrective actions, all of which have been linked to injury and illness rates by research. Set up a dashboard to track your performance and periodically review the findings.

3. **Track and analyze subtle signals that may predict catastrophes.** *Signs of disaster* are often unrecognized until one has occurred. Increase your business's sensitivity to patterns of low-level events that can signal increased risk (but might be considered beneath the threshold for investigation) by developing a system to identify, track and analyze them.
4. **Enlist employees in safety improvement efforts.** Consider setting up a safety committee to get buy-in from a broad range of stakeholders including departments, employees, managers and contractors, SafetyPedia suggests. Other tools might include employee-perception surveys, near-miss reports and town hall meetings, the National Safety Council says.
5. **Provide training.** Teach your employees how to identify and control hazards with systems such as *OSHA's Hazard Identification Training Tool*, and establish programs tailored to high-priority safety issues at your workplace. Common examples might include fall protection and wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.
6. **Remove barriers to worker involvement.** Ensure that all employees, regardless of education, skill level or language, can participate in safety programs. Authorize sufficient time and resources with steps such as holding health and safety meetings during regular working hours. Remember that workers who fear retaliation—or the potential loss of incentive payments such as bonuses—are less likely to report safety issues.
7. **Implement a safety reporting system.** Make sure workers can report injuries, illnesses, and near misses or *close calls* without fear of retaliation. Include an option for anonymous reports and remember to follow up with workers on how their concerns and suggestions were addressed.
8. **Conduct safety inspections.** When performing inspections, ask workers to share any concerns about activity, equipment or materials. The checklists included in *OSHA's Small Business Safety and Health Handbook* may help.
9. **Connect on-the-job safety to off-the-job safety.** Along with fostering an attitude of constant vigilance toward safety, helping employees address issues such as home, recreational and food safety can improve workforce health while reducing sick days and overtime pay required to cover shifts.
10. **Obtain a professional safety assessment.** Assessments like those provided by *MSC Industrial Supply's team of safety consultants* can help identify overlooked hazards and provide actionable insights that protect your workforce, curb absenteeism and improve productivity.
11. **Prepare for the worst (while hoping for the best).** Make plans for coping with natural disasters like hurricanes or emergencies such as fires or infectious disease outbreaks. Identify your business's risks and vulnerabilities and be sure to involve not only company staff but outside stakeholders like utilities and police and fire departments.

What are your company's safety priorities in 2025? Tell us in the comments below.

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