

Succeeding at Safety: We Did It and You Can Too

QUESTION	ANSWER
<p>WHAT ARE BEST PRACTICES FOR CLIENTS/CUSTOMERS/INVESTORS TOURING THE PRODUCTION FLOOR? (NOT REFERRING TO A "BREWERY TOUR") SIGNED WAIVERS, PPE, SOMETHING ELSE?</p>	<p>Waivers can only go so far legally, but it's a good way to show people that you're serious. Usually visitors there during work hours (like vendors or other industry folks) won't wander off or mess with things, but people there on the weekend for a tour + drinking might. Have PPE available if production is happening, at the very least safety glasses, slip covers for folks without closed-toe shoes and hearing protection if you'll be in areas where you'll need it. Make sure your staff is setting a good PPE example!</p>
<p>ARE THERE SERVICES FOR MOCK OSHA VISITS? IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHAT THEY'LL BE LOOKING FOR / WHAT WE SHOULD ADDRESS FIRST</p>	<p>Yes! Each state should have a consultation program, sometimes run via a university with an industrial hygiene program. You will have to be prepared to fix any violations they find within a specified time frame, but they'll work with you and give you extensions in most cases. Then you're protected from an actual inspection and fines for at least a year.</p>
<p>IS THERE AN AFFORDABLE BUT EFFECTIVE EYEWASH STATION THAT YOU CAN RECOMMEND? WE HAVE THE SMALL, MANUAL SQUEEZE STATION BUT I'D LIKE TO UPGRADE. THANKS</p>	<p>Unfortunately you'll have to spend a bit to get a good, plumbed in eyewash/chem shower set up, and a good big of that cost will be getting it installed correctly. You want to make sure the water temp and pressure are good and wouldn't make a bad situation worse! You could potentially find one from a facility that's closing, but you'd want to take extra steps to make sure it's in good working order.</p>
<p>IS THERE A FORM OF PUNISHMENT YOU WOULD RECOMMEND FOR EMPLOYEES THAT DO NOT COMPLY/PRACTICE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS?</p>	<p>Create a policy with steps and enforce it. Start with warnings, documented write ups and then remove privileges, like discounts, shift beers or availability for raises or promotions. Honestly- if someone doesn't take you seriously after the first few write ups, and especially after you remove some benefits, you probably want to terminate them.</p>
<p>MATT COURTRIGHT WAS THE BEST OF US AT STONE. I APPRECIATE YOU BRINGING HIM UP</p>	<p><3</p>
<p>HOW ARE YOU GETTING BUY-IN FROM LEADERSHIP TO MAKE SAFETY A PRIORITY IF YOU DON'T HAVE THOSE CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION?</p>	<p>Keep attempting to make your voice heard with them. Try to find out what sort of data might motivate them, like similar industry stats, or your insurance company offering a discounted premium. Try to get buy in from other folks they do listen to.</p>
<p>WHERE DO YOU START BUILDING YOUR OWN SAFETY PROGRAMME?</p>	<p>Research! OSHA standards are the bare minimum, even though they seem like a lot. Figure out what you need to do to meet those, and then build from there to make it ideal for your brewery. Also- talk to your team. Listen to their experiences. Observe daily tasks and do a hazard assessment: what can go wrong? What steps can we take to prevent that from happening? Talk to other local breweries that have a program or ask questions on the BA forum.</p>
<p>ANY ADVICE ON BUILDING A SAFETY ROLE OUT OF NOTHING FROM THE BREWDECK?</p>	<p>Same as above, but start with hazard assessments for all tasks. Involve all stakeholders. Do research on OSHA standards and check out publications from them and other orgs like NIOSH.</p>
<p>JEFF, CAN YOU GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF A GREAT CATCH?</p>	

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<p>LOVE THE IDEA OF THE SAFETY STAR AND CATCH OF THE MONTH</p>	
<p>CAN YOU GIVE US SOME EXAMPLES OF MEASURABLES WITHIN A START UP SAFETY PROGRAMME. WHAT CAN WE TRACK AND HOW ?</p>	<p>Make quizzes to assess everyone's baseline knowledge of safety. A great one is chemical safety for Haz Com. Forklifts can also be telling if it's been 1-2 years since a person was certified. You can also spot check and record how many people you see wearing PPE at certain times, check to see if logs are being used, etc. It's also interesting to have people do some self-reporting surveys. Ask how they FEEL about certain safety things, including mental health. Ask what areas they think training is strongest in vs weakest in. It can be interesting to see perceptions vs actual behavior.</p>
<p>WHAT INDUSTRY-WIDE BENCHMARKS ARE AVAILABLE FOR US? (RECORDABLE, REPORTABLE, AND NEAR MISS). HOW DO YOU MAKE USE OF THEM.</p>	<p>There isn't much for our specific industry, because it mostly relies on self-reporting, and many breweries don't report injuries. OSHA does come out with some general statistics, and there was a really good presentation online for CBC 2020 from an illness and injury survey. It should be under the BA Resource Hub list for Safety. Making use of this info is all up to you. You can see areas that other breweries seem to be weak in and try to be better if that helps motivate you. It's more important to track your facility's stats and make decisions based on that. Seeing how you line up with other folks is always interesting, but I feel like it's sort of like comparing your marriage to national averages. What works for some people doesn't always work for others, and numbers can only tell you a tiny part of the story. You know the story when you focus on your own numbers.</p>
<p>CAN YOU TALK A BIT ABOUT HOW TO BUILD A SAFETY PROGRAM IN A SMALL, PREDOMINANTLY TAPROOM FOCUSED BREWERY. WE HAVE TEN STAFF, ONLY ONE IS IN PRODUCTION.</p>	<p>A lot of your program would be centered around taproom safety, which still includes hazards like CO2 exposure, ergonomics, slips/trips/falls and possibly violence...but if they spend time in close proximity to chemicals and brewing equipment or forklifts it's a good idea to include them in training done with your production person (or possibly lead by them). I'm just assuming that you have a small space as well! Maybe your brewhouse is kept totally separate! You'll still have to make sure the production person is following safety guidelines. It would be ideal if detailed SOPs existed, in case an essential task had to be performed while that person was sick or out of town, especially in emergency situations. It would also be good to make sure other staff checks on them if they're working alone and isolated.</p>
<p>I LOVE SHARING NEAR MISSES WITH OUR ENTIRE TEAM AS A MEANS OF LEARNING. BUT, ARE THEIR ANY LIABILITY RISKS IN DOING SO, IN TERMS OF SHARING SAFETY VIOLATIONS?</p>	<p>There shouldn't be. Mainly because if you don't share it, assume someone else will. People talk. Better to act like you have nothing to hide, because you don't. It should be a learning opportunity. If you keep having the same problems come up and it's clear nothing is being done to fix it, then you might have to worry about someone filing a complaint, but I find that really only happens if a person honestly feels scared or if it's a disgruntled, angry employee (and they are more likely to make something up or embellish). It sounds like you have good communication, so I'd hope if someone felt truly uncomfortable they would speak up. If you're worried about setting a negative tone when you talk about near misses you can also try to discuss positive aspects as well, like good behavior catches.</p>

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WHAT IS THE NUMBER ONE WAY AS AN INDIVIDUAL TO INFLUENCE THE CULTURE OF SAFETY?	Lead by example and slowly convince others to be like you.
DID ANY OF THE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS CHANGE DURING COVID? FOR EXAMPLE, EYE PROTECTION NOT REQUIRED WHEN WEARING A MASK BECAUSE OF FOGGING.	No. That was definitely an annoying side effect though! In general, when you're faced with multiple hazards, and mitigating one might cause another it's a hazard assessment in the moment. What hazards is more dangerous? What behavior is riskier? Are you handling concentrated caustic, and no one else is around you and you have 0 symptoms? I'd take the mask off and be sure I can see what I'm doing, because that caustic could do more damage in 2 minutes than a cough from 30 feet away. OR, use full face shields. This is why additional behavior changes, like making work teams and isolating to just your team, were really important pre-vaccine as well. Ideally everyone would have gone through and re-assessed hazardous tasks at their facilities while wearing face masks and found solutions that worked best for everyone. Unfortunately I doubt many people were that detailed!
DO YOU RECOMMEND ONE EMPLOYEE OR MANAGER GETTING FORKLIFT TRAINED IN ORDER TO TRAIN THE STAFF OR INDIVIDUAL TRAINING FOR EACH STAFF MEMBER?	Having a certified trainer on site is amazing. I highly recommend that. Make sure they receive a good training and are solid, and having them on site to constantly help new drivers is much better than a single day with an instructors, especially one who won't know your equipment and facility as well as one of your own.
WHAT'S THE GENERAL PRACTICE ABOUT RUNNING IN THE PRODUCTION AREA?	It's never a good idea. And since rushing a task is basically the opposite of doing it safely, hopefully no one ever needs to run unless it's an absolute emergency.
WHAT IF YOUR PRODUCTION MANAGER DOESN'T FOLLOW SIMPLE SAFETY RULES BUT YOU TRY TO START AND FOLLOW THEM ON A DAILY BASIS.	Hopefully eventually other people follow your good example, including your manager. I do have concerns about how good of a manager they can be if they aren't invested in their employee's safety though.
WHERE'S A GOOD PLACE TO START WHEN LOOKING FOR A SAFETY CONSULTANT?	Ask around at a local guild meeting, or with vendors. Word of mouth is always a great way to find someone to work with. You could also see if a local university has a program that could help you. However, consultants can be very expensive, and they can't guarantee results. If you have a decent amount of money in the budget to spend on safety, I think its more cost effective to do the OSHA consultation program, which is free. You just have to fix the problems they find, and they are usually over the moon about you wanting to do it and will do whatever they can to help educate or give deadlines to help you get projects done without penalty. And then of course, you know for sure what OSHA would say if they came through, and you're usually protected from a real inspection for at least a year.
WHAT'S A GOOD PROCESS FOR KEEPING NEW EMPLOYEES UP TO DATE WITH TRAININGS AND CERTIFICATIONS THAT THE REST OF STAFF ACCUMULATED TOGETHER OVER TIME?	Google sheets is my favorite way for tracking anything. Easy to use, easy to share with coworkers. Some payroll or scheduling programs will have an option to keep certifications on file and alert you when someone is about to expire.

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HOW DO YOU IMPROVE LADDER SAFETY? LIFTS AREN'T POSSIBLE IN MY BREWERY

Make sure you have a variety of ladders and that they are all properly maintained. Go over how they are supposed to be used and call people out for using them incorrectly and dangerously. NIOSH has a free app you can find in any app store that helps with ladder selection and has a built in angle measuring feature so you can make sure your extension ladders are set up safely. If you have to carry heavy items up and down a ladder in regular locations, try to set up a winch or rope and pulley sort of thing. Have spotters present and invest in a good fall protection system (and training) if people are really spending a lot of time on them.

DO YOU THINK A BREWERS UNION WOULD BE A STEP TOWARDS BETTERING THE SAFETY CULTURE OF CRAFT BREWING AS AN INDUSTRY?

Unfortunately I'd be worried that it would have the opposite effect. There is a strong counterculture in the beer industry against any sort of regulation, including safety. People don't seem to get that the reason OSHA exists is because an insane amount of people used to die or lose body parts at work. I don't think unionizing would suddenly make people love following safety rules, and the protection of the union might end up making it easier for them to get away with unsafe behavior. I think we would need to fix this cultural issue before a union could be formed. I've honestly never really thought about it and am certainly not an expert though! This is just an off the cuff opinion.