EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

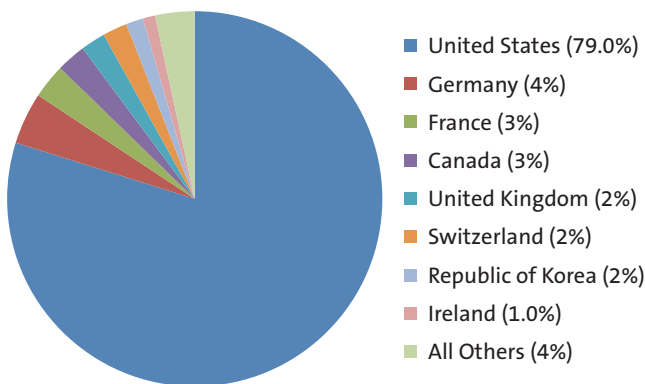## MULTINATIONAL SURVEY ON INTERNATIONAL SAFETY PROGRAMS

UL

About the Survey

Over the last several decades, the pace of globalization has increased exponentially. Multinational corporations—also known as transnational corporations—are now common among all sectors and sizes. Conducting business across borders brings a host of challenges, including for the health and safety of the workforce. International regulations are not generally sufficient so companies rely on local regulations and their own corporate standards. In all cases, employees must somehow learn what the rules are and how to follow them. How do multinational safety training programs stack up?
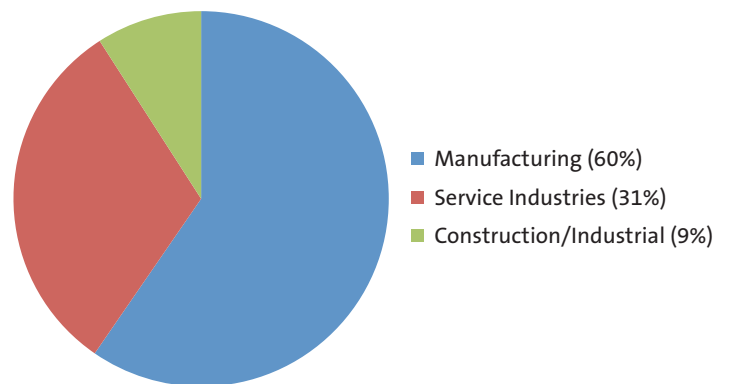
UL Workplace Health & Safety, the leader in workplace health and safety, undertook a survey with the research arm of Penton (the parent company of *EHS Today*) to explore how multinational corporations look at their health and safety programs. Specifically, UL wanted to understand how safety decisions are made in companies with multiple locations and under a variety of country regulations.

Nearly 60% of the survey respondents are in the manufacturing industry, followed by Service (31%) and Construction/ Industrial (9%). The majority of responding companies (88%) have 1,000 or more employees while almost half have 10,000 or more employees worldwide. A strong majority (79%) are headquartered in the United States, followed by Germany, France, Canada, the United Kingdom, Switzerland, and the Republic of Korea. Respondent companies are most likely to have offices or facilities in China (42%), Canada (40%) and the United Kingdom (38%), followed closely by Brazil (34%), Germany (34%) and Mexico (34%).

Respondents by Country

- United States (79.0%)
- Germany (4%)
- France (3%)
- Canada (3%)
- United Kingdom (2%)
- Switzerland (2%)
- Republic of Korea (2%)
- Ireland (1.0%)
- All Others (4%)

Respondents by Industry

- Manufacturing (60%)
- Service Industries (31%)
- Construction/Industrial (9%)

# Importance of a Global Safety Message

95% ─ **5%**
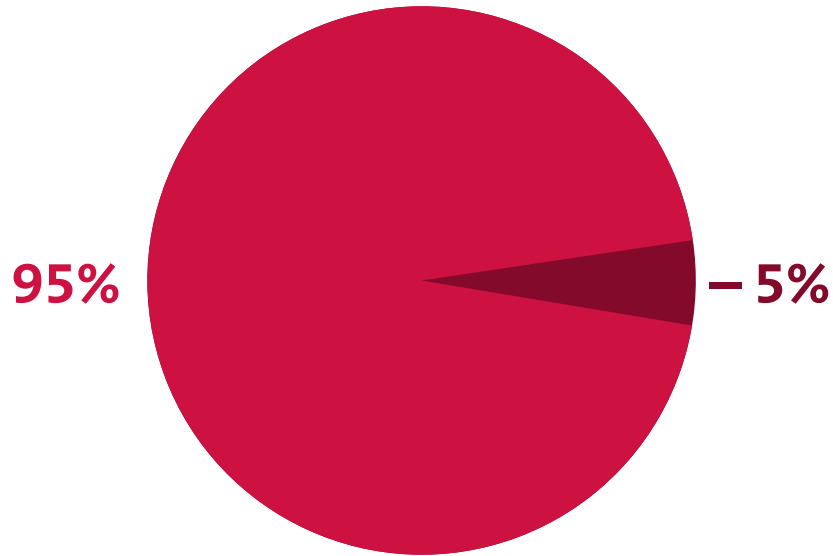
{ *Is a consistent safety message important, globally?* }

Nearly all respondents (95%) believe a globally consistent safety message is important. The next steps are to determine "what" and "how" of that safety message. A globally-consistent safety message that supports or drives existing company culture and communications will improve success. A standalone safety message that is not integrated into a company's culture might be less effective when rolled out to different regions, languages, and cultures. Enthusiastic support from top management can help transcend borders. All communication related to safety, especially training, should take a consistent and measured approach to ensure long term retention. Being able to brand and customize training helps connect that consistent safety message across diverse work locations.

Number of People Involved in Safety Training Purchases
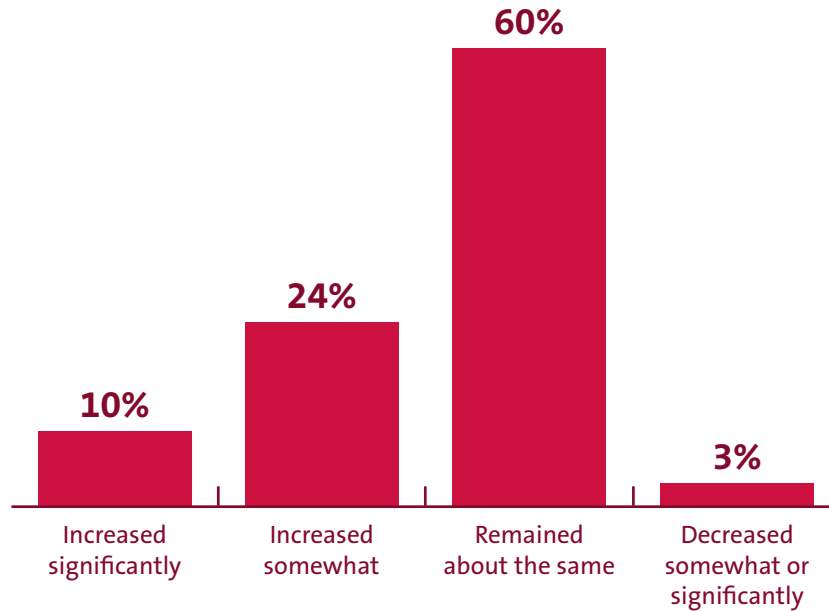
How has the number of people involved in your company's
safety training purchases changed compared to three years ago?

One in three respondents (34%) report the number of people involved in their companies' safety training purchases has increased compared to three years ago. The majority report no change (60%).

The survey did not detail why a third of respondents reported an increase compared to three years ago, but there are several potential causes. Different procurement processes within an organization can result in more individuals need to sign off on the purchases. Safety related issues identified in other departments/processes might need the input of those subject matter experts (SMEs). A transformation in the company's safety culture— from compliance into commitment—can lead to additional input. Finally, better or more robust audits inspections or job hazard analyses might have identified more issues/ processes that need safety-related awareness training.

"*Responses to later questions indicate that respondents are not entirely happy with their current awareness training efforts...*"

Responses to later questions indicate that respondents are not entirely happy with their current awareness training efforts despite the fact that 60% of programs have not changed in the last three years. This lack of confidence in the quality (subject) and overall training program might indicate a need to change.
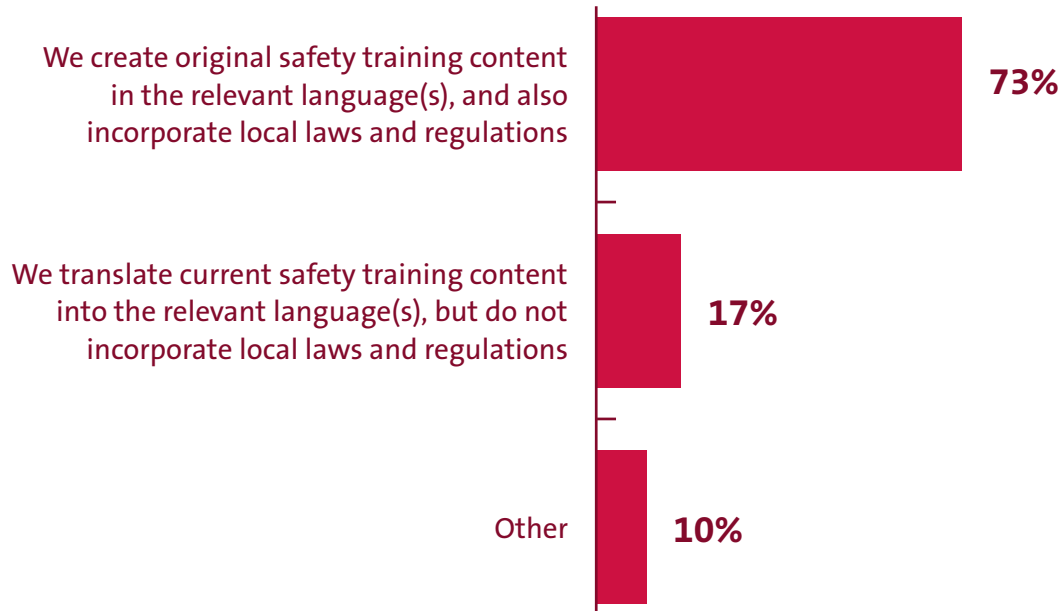
Safety Training Methods at International Locations
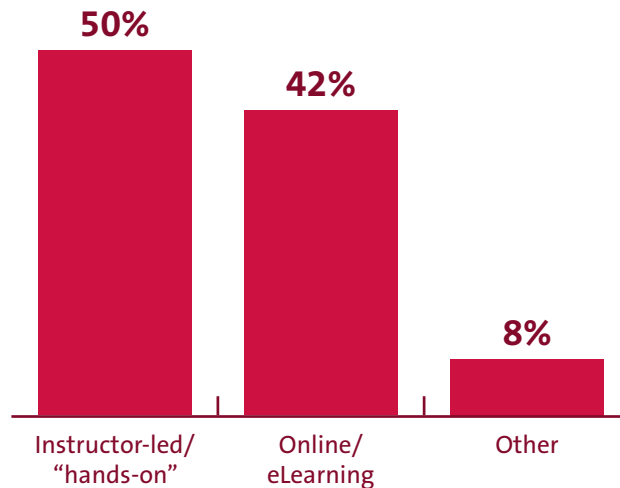
What percent of the safety training programs held at your company's locations outside the United states are conducted...?

Instructor-led training is still the preferred method of delivery for those outside the United States although eLearning appears to be gaining traction. There are a number of possible reasons for the persistence of instructor-led training. In many countries, training is viewed as a "human-to-human" transaction. It is also possible that in some countries, regulatory environments have not yet recognized eLearning as an acceptable form of training.

Another potential reason is the ability to hire instructors who speak a variety of languages. Translating eLearning content can be expensive and cumbersome, and employees might speak a variety of local languages or dialects. The location might also lack the technology or facilities to support eLearning or a SaaS (software as a service) model.

If an organization does not have a domestic eLearning program at its headquarters that is well-built and integrated into the company, it is unlikely to be successful with eLearning efforts in multiple locations. In these cases, a blended learning approach that combines in-person instruction with eLearning can be an effective approach.

Content Creation for International Safety Training

We create original safety training content in the relevant language(s), and also incorporate local laws and regulations **73%**

We translate current safety training content into the relevant language(s), but do not incorporate local laws and regulations **17%**

Other **10%**

{ *Which of the following statements best reflects your process for creating the content for your international safety training programs?* }

When creating content for their international safety training programs, most respondents (73%) create original safety content in the relevant languages, and incorporate local laws and regulations for that specific country. Another 17% say do not presently require country-specific regulation training for their organization. The remaining respondents said that they allow their locations to develop their own training, or that they contract third party trainers or content providers. Some training is based off on company regulations, some is general awareness training, or and some is based off of U.S. or other international standards.

Incorrect, confusing, and irrelevant training is counterproductive. Regulatory agencies like OSHA require that training must be clearly understandable. Making content understandable often necessitates the use of interpreters or content translation into a trainee's native language. Luckily many trainees comprehend training given in English, _even when English is not their native language_.

Meeting requirements (and ensuring the health and safety of workers) requires that companies ensure training events result in workers who are knowledgeable and competent to perform their work safely. Compliance officers interview employees when performing programmed inspections, investigating serious incidents and workplace complaints. A "check the box" approach to training that doesn't account for knowledge transfer and competency can expose companies to citations and costly penalties.

Good instructional designers keep content conversational and focused on communicating the significance of workplace hazards, precautions and risk, rather than simply restating standards and regulations. Other efforts to meet diverse training needs include imperial and metric equivalent measurements and images purposefully selected to appeal to an international audience. Together, these efforts serve to improve adult learner interest, comprehension, and result in a standardized basis for localization.

Incidence of Country-Specific Regulation Training

78%		
	14%	
		8%
Yes	No, but we are considering doing so	No, and we are not considering doing so
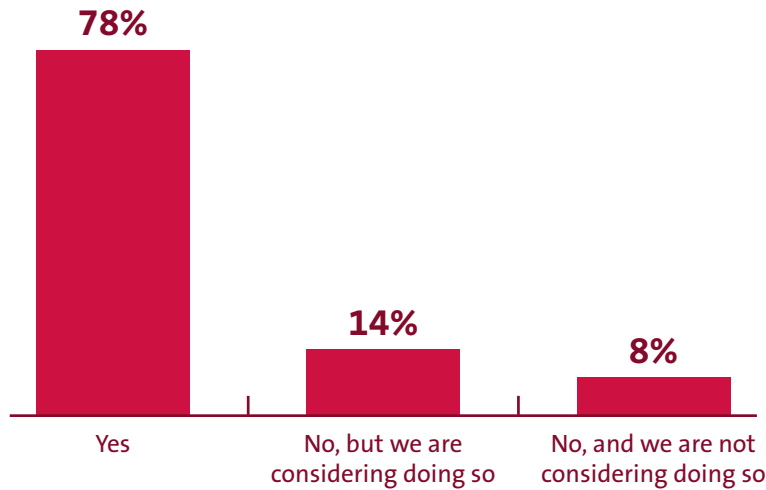
{ Does your organization require country-specific regulation training? }

A large majority of respondents (78%) report their organization requires country-specific regulation training. An additional 14% are considering doing so. If they choose to follow stricter standards, then those standards will typically be based off of the country's regulations. If they do not, general awareness courses or company-specific standards will usually suffice.

Updating International Safety Training Content

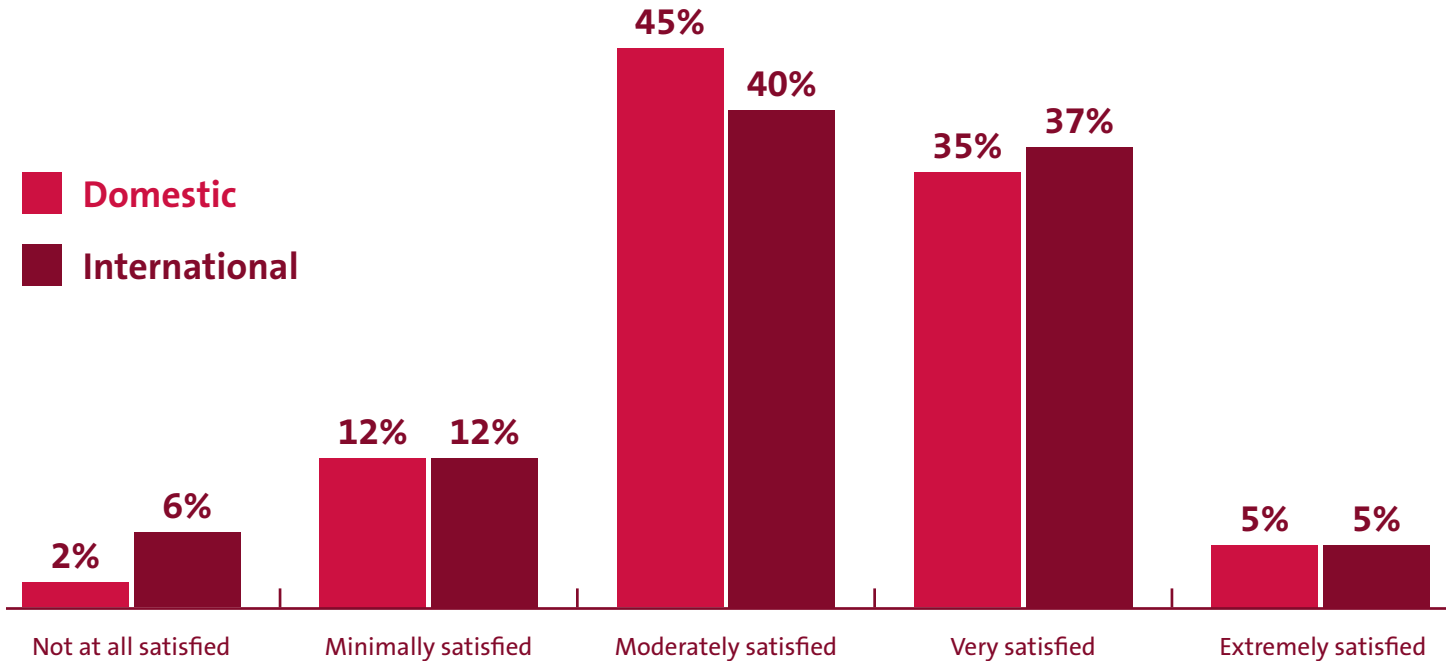| Category	Percentage
Only when regulations change	24%
Annually, regardless of regulations changes (e.g., image refresh, formatting)	22%
Only when notified of inaccurate content/images	13%
Every other year, regardless of regulations changes (e.g., image refresh, formatting)	11%
Every six months, regardless of regulations changes (e.g., image refresh, formatting)	5%
Other	13%
Don't know	12%
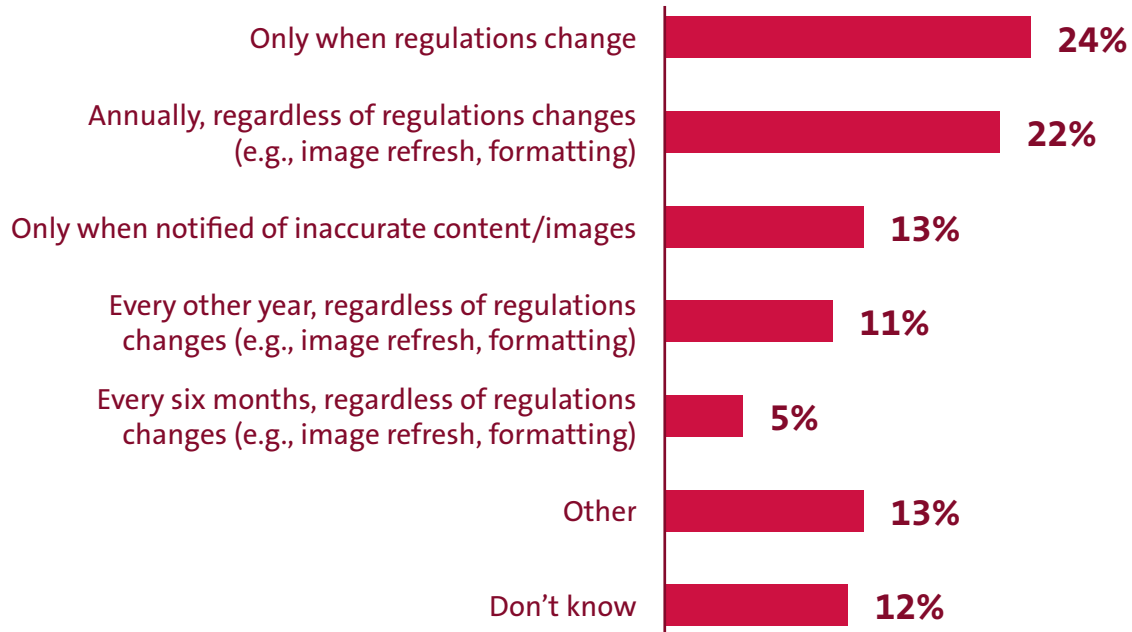
{ *How often do update your international safety training content?* }

Best practice for updating safety training should be when regulations change, on an annual basis for refreshing/ updating, and when incorrect or inaccurate content needs to be corrected. Whether international, or domestic, training should be updated on a timely basis. As in the United States, international regulations change regularly and need to be updated. Otherwise, employees will be trained on something that is incorrect or outdated. A perfect example for this would be Hazard Communication. If those parts of the world that have embraced and incorporated the United Nations' Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling have not trained their workers on these changes, employees might encounter highly hazardous situations that could potentially injure or kill them.

These data show less than a quarter of organizations update international safety training content only when regulations change, while 38% update content on a regular basis (every 6 months, annually, or every other year) whether regulations change or not. The rest of the respondents were either unsure or "other", meaning most likely they do not change or update their content, on a timely basis.

Satisfaction with Safety Training Program

Domestic

International

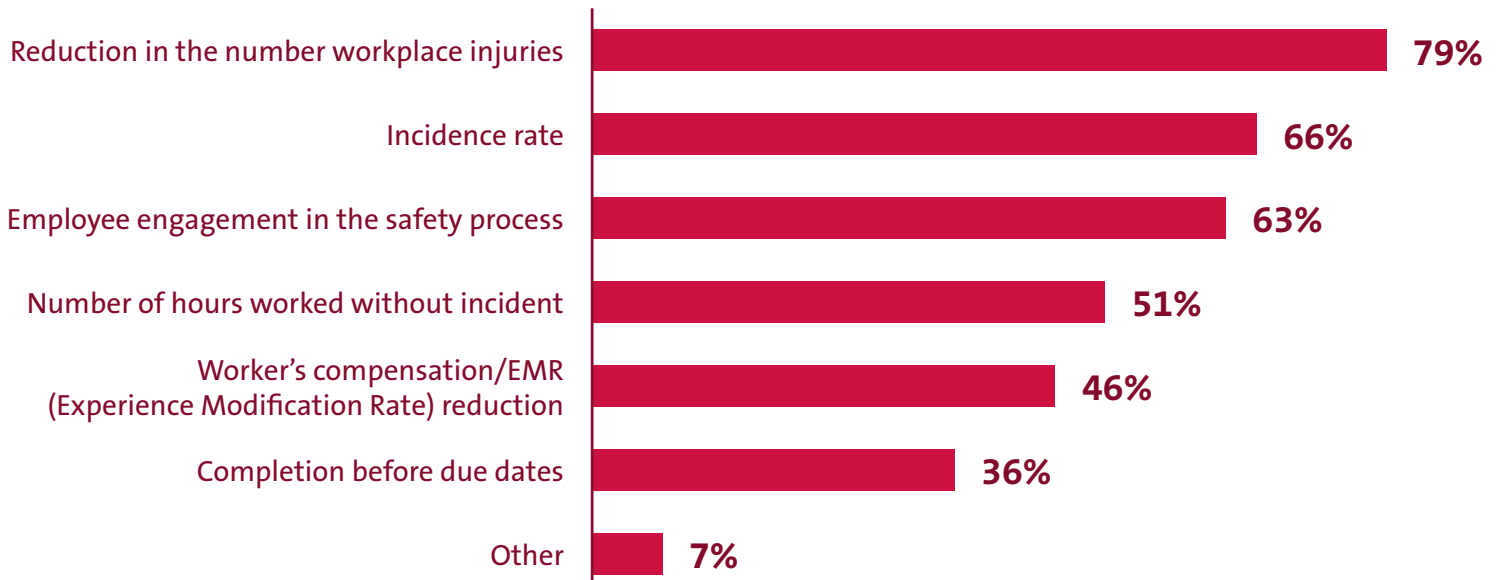|	Not at all satisfied	Minimally satisfied	Moderately satisfied	Very satisfied	Extremely satisfied
Domestic	2%	12%	45%	35%	5%
International	6%	12%	40%	37%	5%

{ How satisfied are you with the success of your domestic safety training program?
How satisfied are you with the success of your international safety training program? }

Respondent satisfaction with their safety training programs is very similar for domestic and international programs: 40% and 42% respectively are very/extremely satisfied with each. A substantial percentage reports only moderate satisfaction levels, indicating opportunities for improvement. A full 14% of surveyed respondents indicate dissatisfaction with their company's domestic safety training program while 18% are dissatisfied with its international safety training program. The reasons for this dissatisfaction deserve further study. UL experience indicates that translation and localization commonly influence trainee satisfaction with international programs (e.g. inappropriate dialect, culturally irrelevant images or scenarios, and references to another country's standards).

Measuring the Success of Safety Training

Reduction in the number workplace injuries **79%**

Incidence rate **66%**

Employee engagement in the safety process **63%**

Number of hours worked without incident **51%**

Worker's compensation/EMR (Experience Modification Rate) reduction **46%**

Completion before due dates **36%**

Other **7%**

{ *How does your organization measure the success of your safety training program?* }

It is not surprising that the lagging indicators—reduced injury and incident rates--are often collected and most likely reacted upon. Corrective actions should be implemented to prevent reoccurrence. However, acting on leading indicators such as engagement and observations can prevent an occurrence in the first place.

All metrics that measure for action can help reduce accidents by encouraging employees to report in order to prevent them. Focusing on the leading indicators will be the most effective way to reduce injuries, rates, EMR. The lagging indicators will align themselves to lower levels in the wake of leading indicator success.

Having timely reporting can be beneficial but perhaps a better approach would be to measure the completion rates of identified barriers through observations. Engaging in active listening can help remove the hazards spotted by the employees.

Closing

Although multinational corporations agree that a global safety message is important, they vary in their approaches to developing and delivering content. Companies have room to improve their employees' satisfaction with their existing training programs, and should evaluate how often they update content and who makes training decisions within the organization. This important data should be used as a benchmark to watch as businesses continue to expand internationally and as international regulations become more standardized.