

Job Satisfaction Can Help Make Workplace Safer

Results of a five-year study suggest that workers who are satisfied with their jobs and feel challenged by them tend to have fewer accidents than those who are not.

Researchers also documented significant negative relationships between work-related injuries and employees who learn multiple job skills and know what is expected of them.

Conducted by the Florida-based Reliability Group, the study found that employees who learn multiple job skills and know what's expected of them suffer from less workplace stress than those who have had accidents.

"These findings validate some things we have known intuitively for a long time, and provided some new insights," said Reliability Group president Hank Sarkis. "Safety performance

is determined to a large extent by job satisfaction and challenge."

"Efforts to provide safety incentives, employee rewards and higher levels of safety training will fail if employees are not challenged or satisfied," Sarkis added. "This may explain why 55 percent of employees reported that the safety committee at their facility had not had a positive impact on safety."

The study also analyzed factors relating to job illnesses and "near misses" in the workplace. About one-third of the survey respondents experienced a near miss at work within the last three years. "A lot of near misses are not reported," Sarkis said, "and when near misses increase, accidents usually follow."

He said his organization is using this type of information to identify high-risk environments as an early intervention tool.