

# LOSS PREVENTION: LEADERSHIP BY EXAMPLE

This quick quiz can help supervisors evaluate the level of emphasis being placed on safety at their companies—and determine where improvements need to be made.

By Lawrence N. Bonino

**W**hy do so many supervisors wind up as fatalities? In a study of construction activities in the mining industry, supervisors accounted for one out of every three fatalities (about 34 percent). The types of activities in which these supervisors were killed are identical to the work performed at typical construction sites every day.

Supervisors and workers alike will benefit from learning why supervisors are willing to take more risks, and how that leads to injuries and fatalities for both. “Do as I say, not as I do” does not work. This article should help make everyone aware of how supervisors shape the behaviors of the workers they are responsible for, and how to provide positive leadership for a safer workplace.

Contractors should consider this question: How much time is spent each day safety training employees and coworkers? Is it less than 1 hour per day? Is it 1 to 4 hours per day? Or is it more than 4 hours per day?

Everything supervisors do serves as an example for the people they supervise. As supervisors, what is said is not nearly as important as the example set. Coworkers look to each other for guidance on what is acceptable behavior in the workplace. This is especially true of employees who are new to an organization, regardless of age.



ABOUT the  
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Lawrence N. Bonino brings both construction experience and more than 25 years of safety, health, and risk management expertise to his role as president of American Safety Consultants, Inc., the loss control division of Allied North America. For more information, please visit [www.alliedna.com](http://www.alliedna.com).

## SAFETY QUIZ FOR SUPERVISORS

The following informal quiz can help supervisors determine the emphasis placed on workplace safety at their companies.

**1. If I see employees or coworkers doing something in an unsafe way, I stop them and show them how to do it in a safe manner.**

- Not True
- Not True More Often
- As Likely To Be True as Not
- True More Often Than Not
- True

*If the answer selected to this question is “Not True,” the silence sends the message to employees or coworkers that the behavior is acceptable.*

*If the answer is “True,” someone’s life may be saved.*

**2. I tell my employees or coworkers that it is part of their job to follow safety procedures and do their work in a safe manner.**

- Not True
- Not True More Often
- As Likely To Be True as Not
- True More Often Than Not
- True

*If the answer is “Not True,” the silence is creating confusion and uncertainty among employees and coworkers. One of the results of confusion is always a decrease in productivity.*

*If the answer is “True,” the kind of leadership necessary to create a world class organization is being provided.*

**3. At least one of my employees or coworkers will do something in an unsafe way today.**

- Not True
- Not True More Often
- As Likely To Be True as Not
- True More Often Than Not
- True

If the answer to this question is “Not True,” that is great. This would indicate that the type of company culture that values safety as much as it values production has been created.

If the answer is “True,” what can be done to help save this employee from the possibility of serious injury or death? Is there someone to call for assistance? Is the safety team available 24/7? Are measures put in place to ensure that all employees know who they should call when?

4. Before I would ask an employee or coworker to do something that can most easily be done in an unsafe way, I would do it myself.

- Not True
- Not True More Often
- As Likely To Be True as Not
- True More Often Than Not
- True

Hopefully, the answer is “Not True.” Remember, one of the most important goals a company can set is to work 100 percent safe, 100 percent of the time. This requires teamwork and leadership from all of a company’s supervisors and employees.

If the answer is “True,” stop to consider what kind of message is being sent. In reality, actions—which truly do speak louder than words—are saying that working in an unsafe manner is acceptable.



5. I will ignore or compromise at least one safety rule or regulation in any given day to get my work done.

- Not True
- Not True More Often
- As Likely To Be True as Not
- True More Often Than Not
- True

Once again, if the answer is “Not True,” great. This would be another indicator that a company is making progress toward achieving the goal of working 100 percent safe, 100 percent of the time. It also indicates that the company is creating a culture that enhances

quality of life for all of its employees.

If the answer is “True,” then the significance of leading by example is not understood. Teamwork is critical to culture change. Each and every person in a company must be fully engaged in leading by example to ensure that everyone goes home injury and illness free every day. In this regard, there is no room for compromise.

## THE BOTTOM LINE

This quiz is just a starting place for evaluating workplace safety, but it can start some very important conversations between employers and employees. Open communication about safety expectations is critical for any construction company. By creating an environment where safety is emphasized every day, companies can reach new levels of success. ♦



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