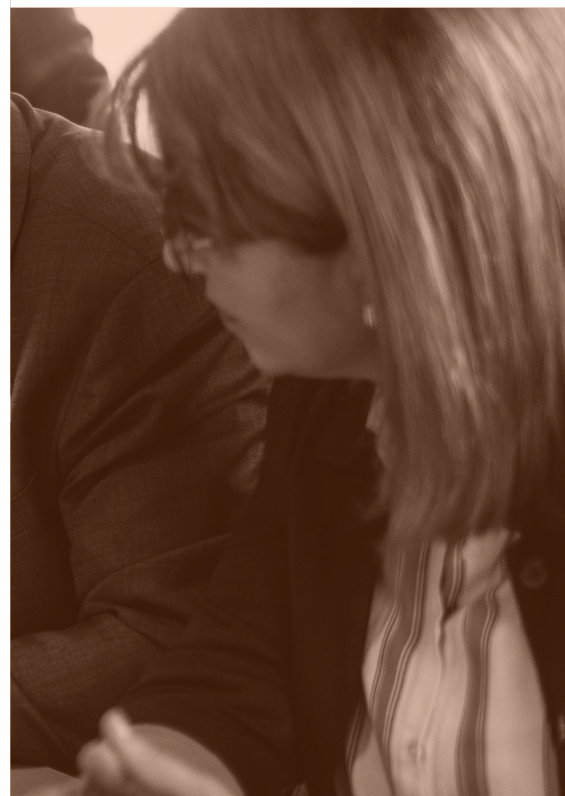




RESPECT WORKS PLAYBOOK

SECTION 2: ESSENTIAL ORGANIZATIONAL STEPS



INTRODUCTION

This section of the Respect Works Playbook outlines the organizational steps required to implement a respectful workplace program. It is designed for organizational leaders who have the authority to develop policy, implement organizational change, and drive organizational culture.

As leaders and executives in the construction industry, you recognize that a strong workforce is the foundation of business success. Creating jobsites where employees feel respected, supported, and able to perform at their best is not only the right thing to do—it is a strategic imperative. Investing in a respectful workplace culture strengthens professional well-being, enhances organizational performance, and positions your company as an employer of choice in a highly competitive labor market.

Creating and maintaining a respectful workplace requires thoughtful planning and a comprehensive, organizational approach. This section of the Playbook provides essential organizational steps for success. The broad goal of this step-by-step process is to ensure a continuous improvement process you can follow to enhance existing norms and behavior so that core values of civility, professionalism, psychological safety, welcoming workplace and fairness become regular, everyday practices.

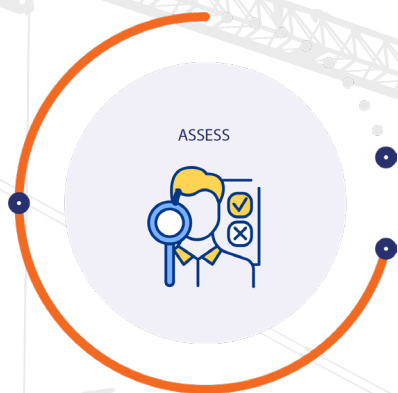
From an organizational standpoint, your company is likely doing a lot to keep your employees safe. The following procedural steps are meant to be integrated into your existing continuous improvement process as it relates to health and safety procedures and systems.

STEP ONE: PREPARE



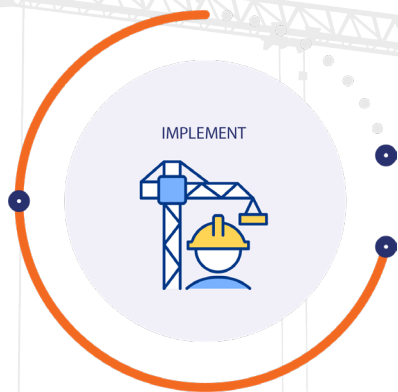
Prepare your organization for culture change: Lay the groundwork by building leadership support, communicating why the change matters, and ensuring that everyone understands the goals. This step helps create buy in and sets expectations for what's ahead.

STEP TWO: ASSESS



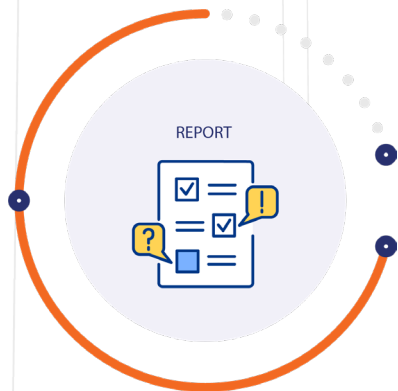
Assess the current culture and readiness for change: Take stock of how things currently work: What are your strengths? Where are the challenges? Gathering input from workers and supervisors helps determine what's needed and how prepared the organization is to move forward.

STEP THREE: IMPLEMENT



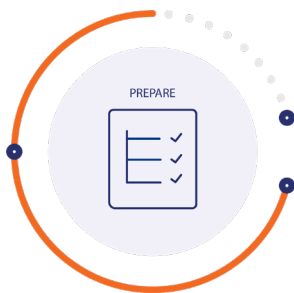
Implement new jobsite practices and procedures: Put your plan into action by introducing new activities, behaviors, tools, and training that promote respect, safety, and wellbeing on the jobsite.

STEP FOUR: REPORT AND REFLECT



Report on the progress and reflect on how to continue improving: Track what's working, share results with your teams, and learn from successes and challenges. Use the insights to adjust your approach and keep building a strong, respectful workplace culture over time.

These steps are not a replacement of your statutory laws and federal regulatory policy requirements such as EEOC and anti-harassment policies. A respectful workplace program should be considered a voluntary supplementary procedure. [Link to public policy section of website](#)



STEP ONE: PREPARE

- **Purpose:** Building and maintaining a culture of respect requires explicit leadership commitment and a coherent set of policies and procedures that support implementation. Organizational preparation is key and it's important that leaders spend time together getting on the same page before launching a respectful workplace program.

1.1 Familiarize leadership with the need

It's likely there is already a champion for respectful workplace practices in your organization. But not all leaders will be familiar with the case for respect in the workplace. Preparing leaders for culture change efforts is an important first step. To get every leader on the same page, familiarize yourselves with the business case for building respect in the workplace. Section 1 of the Respect Works Playbook [\[insert hyperlink to\]](#), maps out the four elements of a respectful workplace and explains how respect in the workplace contributes to lower employee turnover, high levels of employee engagement, improved safety and productivity gains.

1.2 Commit to authentic leadership

Respectful Workplaces start with leaders whose internal and external values, beliefs and behaviors align with psychological safety, civility and professionalism, welcoming workplace, and fairness for all (the four pillars of respectful workplaces). While this may not be intuitive at first, executive leaders, project team leaders, jobsite leaders and trades workers can be coached and taught to develop these skills.

Our workplace safety climate research confirms that a commitment to respect in the workplace must be genuine, demonstrable, and consistent. Leaders in an organization can be authentic in their behaviours in two primary ways: by embedding respect in the workplace as a priority in policies, procedure and practice, and by modeling respectful behavior in their day-to-day decisions and

interactions. These are critical starting points for any organization embarking on culture change. In addition, clear, transparent communication and active engagement with workers at all levels are critical for building trust and encouraging participation. Leaders should encourage a two-way dialogue by actively listening to worker concerns, providing regular check-in updates on respectful workplace culture efforts, and creating opportunities for workers to give genuine input and feedback. This can help foster a sense of ownership and collective responsibility for jobsite culture.

ORGANIZATION LEVEL ACTIONS THAT DEMONSTRATE A COMMITMENT TO A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE CULTURE

- Incorporate the values of respect and civility into mission and vision statements.
- Develop a code of conduct with clear expectations regarding respectful behavior that is easy to understand and follow [Respect Works Code of Conduct Sample- [insert hyperlink](#)].
- Develop and deliver Respectful Workplace education and training for operational management and jobsite leaders that is engaging and clarifies roles and responsibilities [Respect Works Training Blueprint- [insert hyperlink](#)]
- Develop and deliver a Respectful Workplace Orientation for all workers and subcontractors.
- Develop clear and consistent Incident Reporting policy and procedures that all employees understand [Respect Works Incident Report Guide - [insert hyperlink](#)]
- Clearly communicate expectations and consequences for disrespectful behavior to all employees.
- Communicate the value (human and financial) of respectful workplace culture to all workers on a regular basis.
- Require project specific Respectful Workplace Plans.

1.3 Communicate your commitment

A visible and sustained commitment from company leadership is essential to building a respectful workplace culture. Communicating this leadership commitment signals that this is a business priority and can also motivate others across your organization to get involved. It is especially important to engage project managers, superintendents, foremen and other frontline supervisors. These leaders interact with crews daily and play a key role in shaping trust, reinforcing expectations, modelling behaviour, communication, and in creating respectful jobsite culture.

You may also consider sharing your efforts publicly—for example, posting about your company's pledge to respect in the workplace on social media, incorporating the program's core actions in the company's communication venues , or issuing a press release. Publicly highlighting your commitment sends a strong message to industry partners, public owners, clients, and prospective workers that your company is forward-thinking, proactive, and aligned with the growing national movement to strengthen respect and well-being in the construction industry.

1.4 Clarify roles and responsibilities

Culture change takes time and requires a lot of effort from everyone, especially from leaders. In fact, successful culture change efforts only take root if leaders at all levels are bought in. You might be thinking you already know your roles and responsibilities but have you considered your role and responsibility in facilitating a culture of respect? Each level of leadership has important roles to play in modeling and reinforcing the importance of respect in the workplace. Prior to launching a respectful workplace program, leaders at each level need to understand why the company has made this commitment and what expectations and responsibilities are for leading and driving this effort throughout the organization.

RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

EXECUTIVE LEADERS

- Set strategic goals (the “why”)
- Establish related policies, procedures
- Drive and measure organizational culture change
- Demonstrate accountability
- Model and communicate core values

OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT

- Implement related policies, procedures
- Implement and make time for education and training
- Support/recognize jobsite leaders that embrace culture change
- Resolve employee complaints and reported incidents
- Model behaviors that foster a respectful and inclusive work environment.

JOBSITE LEADERS

- Develop and implement project level respectful workplace plans
- Practice civil and respectful behavior at all times
- Emphasize the importance of respect in the workplace for team dynamics, safety and productivity on a regular basis
- Educate team members about respectful workplace topics
- Create and maintain a psychologically and physically safe environment
- Actively engage in ongoing education and training
- Act as a coach for crew members on respectful behaviours
- Encourage consistent reporting of misconduct

TRADE WORKERS

- Communicate civilly and respectfully with others
- Follow policies and procedures including code of conduct
- Understand worker rights and responsibilities
- Actively engage in ongoing education and training
- Support co-workers experiencing harmful behaviors by intervening respectfully when safe and appropriate (bystander intervention).

1.5 Review existing policies and procedures

Clear and consistent policies and procedures provide a backbone for respectful workplace practices by codifying behavioral expectations, outlining reporting and investigation processes, and defining consequences for misconduct. When policies and procedures are fair, communicated effectively, and consistently enforced, it helps establish a shared understanding of respectful workplace culture and accountability that can be maintained over time. Take a moment to review the three policies/procedures below that provide a foundation for respect in the workplace.

Code of conduct

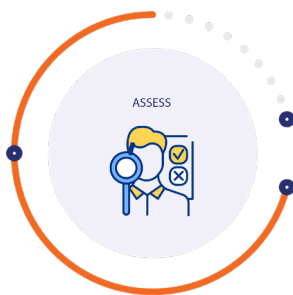
A code of conduct in a work setting is a formal set of guidelines that explains how employees are expected to behave at work. It establishes standards for professional behavior, ethical decision making, and compliance with laws and company policies. A code of conduct should include the following: purpose, commitment statement, core values, definitions, roles and responsibilities, and behavioral expectations regarding respect in the workplace. The Respect Works Code of Conduct Sample provides customizable template language that organizations can use to establish consistent expectations for workplace behavior and reinforce a culture of respect and professionalism.

Incident reporting guide

Even when employees believe in, and strive to create respectful workplaces, harmful behaviors may occur. When they do, organizations need to be equipped to respond. Failing to respond, being unable to respond and responding poorly can set efforts back significantly. Consistency is key. Employees need to know what to do when an incident occurs, who to contact, how to report the incident, and what to expect in terms of follow-up. They also need to be assured that retaliation is unacceptable and will be addressed and that confidentiality will be protected. Respect Works Incident Reporting Guide provides sample language that can be incorporated into a company's incident reporting process along with suggested best practices to follow during incident response and/or investigations.

New employee orientation

Employee orientation is an important step in welcoming new employees and communicating company and/or project-specific policies and expectations. In workplace safety, particularly on multi-employer construction sites, clear communication of safety rules is both an OSHA requirement and an industry best practice. The same principles apply to creating respectful workplace rules: all employees must clearly understand the behavioral standards expected of them and the processes in place to uphold those standards. Orientation should explicitly address behavioral expectations, the consequences of violating workplace norms, and the resources available to employees who experience or witness inappropriate behavior. It should also introduce new employees to the company's code of conduct and incident reporting procedures. The Respect Works Employee Orientation Template provides a starting point for developing or enhancing an orientation program that reinforces a culture of respect, accountability, and professionalism from day one.



STEP TWO: ASSESS

- **Purpose:** Before launching a new program, organizations should take time to assess their current workplace culture, policies, practices, and readiness for change. Organizational assessments help establish a baseline understanding of existing strengths, gaps, and opportunities, ensuring that implementation efforts are tailored to the organization's unique needs and context. A baseline measure also helps companies track progress toward goals over time.

2.1 Select an assessment tool

Respect Works offers two assessment tools. These tools can be used in combination or on an individual basis. Each tool serves a different purpose.

Organizational readiness checklist

Description: A simple self-assessment checklist to establish an organizational baseline regarding where you are and what you need to focus on to create a respectful workplace. This tool forms the basis for shared team exploration of existing and/or needed organizational elements that support respect in the workplace.

Purpose: To engage leaders from across the organization in a discussion of workplace culture and current respectful workplace policies and practices. This tool quickly reveals areas where respectful workplace practices are already working well, as well as areas for improvement. It helps leaders identify priority actions, allocate resources strategically, and set realistic goals.

Use when: You're working to get everyone on the same page, preparing to gather insights across teams, and need a structured way to assess readiness themes.

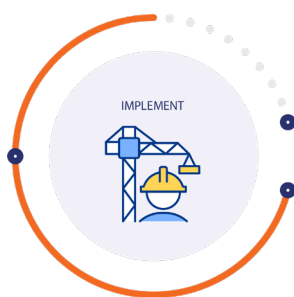
Benefits: Taking stock of readiness to change before taking action increases the likelihood of successful implementation and demonstrates a thoughtful, data-informed commitment to building a respectful workplace.

Respectful Workplace Climate Scale

Purpose: The Respectful Workplace Climate Scale is a scientifically validated assessment tool designed to measure employee perceptions of company policies, procedures and practices as they relate to building a respectful workplace. Adapted specifically for the construction environment with input from contractors, workers, and other industry stakeholders, the scale provides a reliable way to assess workplace culture and identify opportunities for improvement at two levels: company level and jobsite level versions.

Use when: You are ready to learn directly from your employees and subcontractors, assess progress over time and benchmark your efforts.

Benefits: The scale provides actionable, data-driven insights that help organizations prioritize resources, strengthen workplace culture, and measure the effectiveness of their respectful workplace efforts over time.



STEP THREE: IMPLEMENT

- Purpose: Successful implementation is the key to a sustained, respectful workplace program. The goal should be to integrate respectful workplace practices into day-to-day operations of the company and jobsite so that they become standard practice. This section of the Playbook provides steps to ensure successful program implementation.

3.1 Integrate Respect Works program into your existing management system

Rather than creating an entirely new system, companies can integrate Respect Works into existing management systems and new hire practices in a seamless way. Key program components can be incorporated into employee onboarding, supervisor and leadership development training, safety meetings, toolbox talks, incident reporting processes, performance management systems, and continuous improvement initiatives. Embedding respect and well-being into established business practices helps reinforce expectations, promote accountability, and ensure that respectful workplace principles become part of everyday operations rather than a standalone initiative.

3.2 Create your respectful workplace implementation team

Successful implementation requires a dedicated team of leaders, champions, and key stakeholders who can guide, support, and sustain the effort over time. At a minimum, the implementation team should include executive leadership sponsors, human resources representatives, safety and health professionals, operations leaders, project managers, superintendents, and frontline supervisors. Organizations may also benefit from including employee representatives, craft workers, union representatives, and subcontractor partners to ensure diverse perspectives are considered.

In addition to the core implementation team, organizations should identify Respect Works Champions throughout the company. Champions serve as visible advocates for respectful workplace practices, reinforce program messages, encourage participation, model desired behaviors, and help identify emerging concerns or opportunities for improvement. Because supervisors and foremen interact directly with crews on a daily basis, they are particularly important champions who help translate organizational commitment into day-to-day workplace behaviors. Together, the implementation team

and workplace champions create the leadership, engagement, and accountability structures necessary to successfully embed respect into organizational culture and jobsite operations.

3.3 Invest in jobsite leaders' skills and knowledge

Jobsite leaders are the key to respectful construction jobsites. Ultimately, they are responsible for developing and delivering respectful workplace plans at the project level. But it's not realistic to expect them to do this without adequate orientation, training, tools, and information at their disposal.

Many jobsite leaders have never received formal training in respectful workplace practices, interpersonal communication skills, conflict resolution, psychological safety or supportive supervision. Preparing and skilling-up leaders in these new competencies is an essential step in creating and maintaining respectful jobsites. Investing in leadership development helps ensure that all supervisors have the same skills and are confident to foster positive crew relationships, respond effectively to workplace concerns, and reinforce a culture of respect, safety, and well-being throughout the project lifecycle.

Deliver jobsite leader orientation

A jobsite leader orientation should provide a deeper understanding of what a respectful workplace is and why it's important. The orientation should explain why the company is committed to respect in the workplace and introduce jobsite leaders to the Respect Works Program including the Training Program, supplementary Learning Resources, and the Jobsite Toolkit. The orientation should outline the jobsite leaders' role in driving culture change and establishing project plans; it should offer tips and best practices to align new respectful jobsite activities with existing ones, including how to integrate respectful workplace behaviors into routine worksite activities, meetings and safety trainings.

Orientation sessions should be led by an experienced leader who is knowledgeable and committed to respect in the workplace. Related company policies and practices such as the code of conduct and incident reporting procedures, should be reviewed and incorporated into the orientation.

Make time for training

Creating and sustaining a respectful workplace requires more than establishing policies—it requires leaders who have the skills, confidence, and tools to model and reinforce respectful behaviors every day. The Respect Works Training Program is designed to help jobsite leaders develop these competencies through engaging, practical learning experiences tailored to the construction environment.

The program consists of four online self-paced training modules covering the core elements of a respectful workplace:

- Psychological Safety – creating an environment where employees feel comfortable speaking up, asking questions, and raising concerns.
- Civility and Professionalism – promoting respectful communication, conflict resolution, and professional conduct.
- Welcoming Workplace – fostering inclusion and ensuring all workers feel valued and supported.
- Fairness for All – encouraging equitable treatment, consistency, and accountability in workplace practices.

A fifth online training focuses on supporting the mental health of crew members. It helps leaders recognize signs of distress, respond appropriately, and connect employees with available mental health resources.

Provide supplementary learning resources

Sustained culture change requires more than training alone—it requires ongoing reinforcement and opportunities to put new skills into practice. The Respect Works Program provides a variety of practical jobsite resources and activities designed to help leaders translate training concepts into everyday behaviors and keep respectful workplace goals front and center.

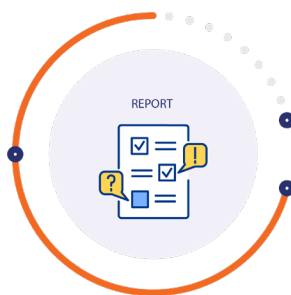
To support continuous learning, a series of Toolbox Talks, “Need to Know” Worksheets, discussion guides, and other jobsite-ready resources covering topics such as psychosocial hazards, active listening, de-escalating conflict, psychological safety, women in the workplace, microaggressions, bystander intervention, and respectful communication, have been developed and reviewed by industry experts. These tools are designed for easy integration into regular safety meetings, crew discussions, and supervisory activities.

By providing concise, practical guidance that can be applied in real-world situations, these resources help jobsite leaders strengthen their interpersonal and leadership skills, reinforce respectful workplace expectations, encourage meaningful conversations among crews, and maintain momentum toward a positive, inclusive, and high-performing workplace culture

Develop site-level respectful workplace plans

The Respect Works Jobsite Toolkit provides a practical framework for translating organizational commitments into project-level action. Designed specifically for a busy construction environment, the toolkit helps project teams develop and implement site-specific respectful workplace plans that are tailored to the unique needs, workforce composition, and operating conditions of each jobsite.

The toolkit outlines the key components of an effective respectful workplace plan, including roles and responsibilities, communication strategies, employee engagement activities, reporting and response procedures, and methods for monitoring progress throughout the project lifecycle. By providing a structured approach, the toolkit helps ensure that respectful workplace principles are consistently applied from project startup through completion.



STEP FOUR: REPORT AND REFLECT

- **Purpose:** The purpose of this step is not simply to measure activity, but to understand whether implementation efforts are leading to meaningful changes in workplace culture, leadership behaviors, employee experiences, and jobsite practices. Organizations should develop a plan for collecting information, reviewing progress, and discussing results and impact with key stakeholders on a regular basis.

4.1 Measuring progress

Implementing a respectful workplace is an ongoing process of learning, improvement, and accountability. Once implementation activities are underway, organizations should establish a structured process for assessing progress. Begin by reviewing what has been accomplished and evaluating whether planned activities are being implemented as intended. Key question to consider include:

- Are leaders actively demonstrating their commitment to a respectful workplace?
- Are employees aware of respectful workplace expectations and available resources?
- Have jobsite leaders completed the required training and applied what they learned?
- Are toolbox talks and other reinforcement activities occurring regularly?
- Are reporting procedures being used and understood?
- What successes, challenges, or unintended barriers have emerged?

Organizations should monitor both implementation activities and cultural indicators using a combination of quantitative and qualitative measures.

What to track (metrics)

Leadership engagement

- Participation in Respect Works training
- Leadership communications related to respectful workplaces
- Attendance at implementation team meetings
- Champion engagement activities

Training and education

- Completion rates for all Respect Works training modules
- Participation in toolbox talks and other refresher activities (worksheets, action tracker, etc)
- Follow-up coaching or mentoring activities

Workplace culture indicators

- Respectful Workplace Climate Scale results
- Employee feedback and suggestions
- Number and type of workplace concerns raised
- Perceptions of psychological safety and inclusion
- Team functioning and communication effectiveness

Policy and program implementation

- Employee orientation completion
- Distribution and awareness of Codes of Conduct
- Use of incident reporting procedures
- Completion of project-specific respectful workplace plans

Share assessment results

Transparency helps build trust and demonstrates accountability. Organizations should communicate key findings from assessments, surveys, and implementation activities to leaders, supervisors, and employees. Sharing both successes and opportunities for improvement reinforces the message of transparency and that employee feedback is valued and contributes to ongoing workplace improvements.

Reporting does not need to be complicated. Brief summaries, dashboards, leadership meetings, toolbox talks, company newsletters, and project update meetings can all be effective methods for communicating

Consult with jobsite leaders and craft workers

The people closest to the work often have the best insights into what is working and what needs improvement. Regular conversations with supervisors, foremen, craft workers, employee representatives, and subcontractors can provide valuable perspectives that may not be captured through surveys or formal metrics. Consider discussing:

- What respectful workplace activities have been most effective?
- What barriers make implementation difficult?
- What additional resources or support are needed?
- What concerns are emerging on jobsites?
- What improvements would employees like to see?

These discussions help ensure that the program remains practical, relevant, and responsive to workforce needs.

4.2 Establish next phase priorities

Reflection should lead to action. After reviewing results, organizations should identify priorities for the next phase of implementation. This may include updating policies, providing additional training, strengthening communication efforts, enhancing supervisor support, or expanding successful practices across projects.

Questions to guide future planning include:

- What should we continue doing?
- What should we improve?
- What new priorities have emerged?
- Where should additional resources be invested?
- How can we better support jobsite leaders and crews?

Creating a respectful workplace is not a one-time initiative—it is a continuous improvement process. By regularly assessing progress, gathering feedback, sharing results, and adjusting strategies, organizations can strengthen workplace culture over time and sustain meaningful change. Each cycle of planning, implementation, assessment, and reflection provides new opportunities to build safer, healthier, more inclusive, and more respectful jobsites for everyone.



Respect Works is a research-to-practice initiative of the Oregon Institute of Occupational Health Sciences at OHSU, in close collaboration with Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries (BOLI), and Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT).

For more information and inquiries, contact rwi@ohsu.edu