



Changing the Safety Culture

by Guy Benson

How does the desire for safety information become a quest to change your organization’s safety culture? Ask Fernando Hernandez, Assistant Manager, Risk Management Department, City of McAllen, Texas.

In 2019, Fernando’s served as Public Works Safety Coordinator for the City. His desire to get the CSHO certification was sparked that year when he took the OSHA #510 course during a Texas A&M Engineering Extension Service (TEEX) Safety Summit in Harlingen.



From there, in person and online, Fernando started knocking out CSHO courses. About halfway through, City of McAllen opened the program manager position at its Risk Management office, and Fernando applied for that. A few months ago, he became the assistant director.

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Safety Culture (cont.)

“I can see what I’m doing helping the safety culture to change.”

Now Fernando’s focus has become changing the culture, person by person.

He illustrates this way, “It can be something simple like a ladder. Something they use day to day. They can become complacent. We need to circle back and refocus. My job is that we all come back ‘with 10 fingers and 10 toes,’ like we always say in our meetings.”

Fernando is also changing the culture by inspiring fellow employees. A young worker took over Fernando’s old position at Public Works. Fernando told the young employee to at least do the accident investigation course. That employee recently told Fernando, “Hey I’m doing it. I got approval. I’m already scheduled for my next three classes.”

Fernando sums up, “I can see what I’m doing helping the safety culture to change.”



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