

Workplace safety: Make it part of our DNA



In 2009, Boeing set a five-year goal to reduce its lost-workday injury rate by 25 percent. *Frontiers* spoke to Mary Armstrong, vice president of Environment, Health and Safety, to get her perspective on Boeing's progress toward this target.

How has Boeing's workplace safety performance been lately?

Overall job injuries at Boeing have dropped about 5 percent since 2008. That's a tremendous start toward our five-year goal. Still, there's a lot to do. Collectively, we're developing innovative ways to protect ourselves and our co-workers from injury. And there are some outstanding examples in this edition of *Frontiers* of what people and teams around the company are doing to prevent injuries.

Where is Boeing focusing its efforts?

Post-injury investigations often uncover ergonomics issues we can address through thoughtful process redesign. By analyzing the data, we have found the top 10 areas where injuries occur most often. The data also have shown us some of the root causes. Now, we're focusing our efforts on these high-leverage areas. As we make gains, we'll replicate these proven solutions in other areas around the company where people do similar work.

Are these the only areas we're focusing on through the Safety Now program?

Actually, the opposite is true. We're raising the bar on workplace safety in both manufacturing and office environments. For example, in our office areas during the past five years, ergonomics-related injuries that caused lost workdays dropped 45 percent. That's partly due to ergonomics focals who use Lean+ methodologies to help make workplace improvements.

What are the next steps?

By the end of 2011, major Boeing manufacturing sites will implement a common safety management system aligned to OHSAS 18001, the globally recognized standard, which we will tailor appropriately to meet our aerospace needs. By having a single safety management system, we will use similar tools

and metrics at all sites and programs across Boeing. This will enable us to consistently assess and manage safety risks—and understand how to best target our resources and how to design safety enhancements into our processes. This will give us a common way to meet safety-improvement targets, comply with safety and health regulations, and, most important, protect employees.

As a company, we build amazing machines that fly in unforgiving environments. Our success has depended on making flight safety part of Boeing's DNA. Workplace safety is equally important, and we intend to make workplace safety part of our DNA as well.

With our ongoing Safety Now effort, strong leadership at every level and the continued commitment of employees around the company, we have everything we need to achieve our aggressive goal of a 25 percent improvement in workplace safety. Keeping everyone safe at work is our responsibility and our right. It's up to all of us to get it done. ■

PHOTO: JIM COLEY/BOEING

These workplace-safety resources are available for employees:

An overall Safety Now guide, <http://ehs.web.boeing.com/sheadocs/safetynow/safety%20now%20guide.pdf>

Ergonomics Solutions Catalog, http://ehs.web.boeing.com/ergonomics/ergo_catalog.asp

Office Ergonomics Self-Help checklist, http://ehs.web.boeing.com/ergonomics/office_ergo.asp