

# Executive Summary

**CTE administrators and instructors in construction programs are critical to establishing Safety and Health Management Systems that will protect and prepare new and young construction workers.**

1. School & Program

2. Instructor Qualifications and Support

3. Effective Teaching and Learning

4. Offsite Learning: Safety and Health Program Practices

CONSTRUCTION IS BOOMING, AND INDUSTRY DEMAND FOR NEW, skilled workers is growing. Each year, 2-year post-secondary Career Technical Education (CTE) programs train roughly 78,000 students to enter this dynamic field. Yet construction work is also dangerous, with two to three construction workers dying every day on the job in the United States. Young workers and workers new to the job are at even greater risk for injury. In 2015, more than 8,300 workers between the ages of 16-24 were seriously hurt on the job.

Workers in construction need to be prepared to work safely in changing, hazard-filled environments, armed with the knowledge and skills to protect themselves and their co-workers. Safety skills are critical employability skills, and well-trained workers help save their employers the high human and financial costs of injuries. One of the few places new construction workers gain these critical employment skills are in construction programs at community colleges and technical schools. Providing effective safety and health education to students in these programs is essential to ensuring future workers return safe and healthy to their families.

**Safety Happens in Systems.** Injuries in construction do not just happen because someone is careless one day. Whether it is out in the field or in the community college classroom, safety depends on systems that are established by leadership at schools and by contractors out on the jobsite.

**Purpose of this Guide.** This guide focuses on key program elements of these systems for safety. It describes each element and shares new research data from a recent study on the current state of safety and health education in these programs. It then provides action steps CTE administrators and instructors can take to strengthen their programs. Be sure to check out the online [Self-Assessment Tool](#) to see how your program stacks up and to identify areas to focus on in the guide.

# FROM OUR RESEARCH

## The Good News:

- *The majority of instructors had positive impressions of the Safety and Health Management Systems at their schools.*
- *All instructors come in with field experience, and most reported at least some training in a variety of teaching skills, with support for professional development available.*
- *Instructors prioritize hands-on skills training and regularly update their curriculum.*

## The Challenge:

- *A significant number of schools are lacking in important components of an effective Safety and Health Management System, including regular inspections to identify hazards, involving key players in investigations of hazards or injuries, and a clear commitment to the “hierarchy of controls” in addressing hazards.*
- *Only half of all programs require either OSHA 10-hour Construction Training (OSHA 10) or the OSHA 30.*
- *A significant number of instructors lack training and support for developing effective safety and health instruction, especially in integrating the OSHA 10-hour content.*
- *In the classroom, there is a gap in providing students with critical thinking skills in safety and health, such as job hazard analysis, understanding the “hierarchy of controls,” and self-advocacy skills.*
- *Industry Advisory Committees (IACs) are being leveraged well in only about half of programs—a critical missed opportunity to strengthen SHMS in the program and classroom.*

## Administrators



- **Make sure your CTE program has an effective written SHMS policy.** Establish a regular internal inspection schedule in the programs you oversee and ensure follow-up on any identified hazards. Regularly communicate the SHMS policy, and your program’s management commitment to safety and health, to staff and students. Participate in periodic health and safety inspections in the classroom.
- **Prioritize engineering controls or “upstream” solutions when possible.**
- **Develop systems to support instructors as safety and health educators.** Require safety and health goals in instructor professional development plans and evaluations. Make sure all instructors have taken the OSHA 30 for construction, even if your regional accrediting body does not require it. Establish a mentoring program for new instructors. Provide time, resources, and concrete expectations for instructors regarding IAC recruitment and engagement.

## Instructors



- **Work with your administration to establish a workable internal inspection process and schedule.** Include students on your inspection teams. Follow-up on any classroom hazards that are identified.
- **In the classroom:** Integrate the OSHA 10 throughout coursework. Focus on safety and health critical thinking skills, such as Job Hazard Analysis and the hierarchy of controls. Have students practice self-advocacy and communication skills. Have students participate in the classroom SHMS.
- **Establish systems for recruiting and engaging IAC members.** Clarify expectations, invite them to participate in specific ways that support your safety and health training, and hold them accountable.