



June 12-18, 2017

# Worker Participation

## Show You are Listening and Ask for Feedback

### What Is It?

**Worker participation** is meaningfully engaging workers at all levels in establishing, implementing, evaluating, and improving safety and health in the workplace. This means workers understand they are a valuable partner in making their workplace safer and are encouraged and able to communicate with management about hazards on the job. Workers are the experts when it comes to the tasks they do and the tools and equipment they use, which makes them a key resource for knowledge and innovative ideas that can improve safety and health.



### How Do You Do It?

You can engage your workers during Safe + Sound Week by **showing you are listening and asking for feedback**. Reminders about a [worker's right](#) to raise a safety and health concern or report a work-related injury or illness without fear of retaliation create the opportunity for an open dialogue between managers and workers. The following are a few suggestions and resources to get you started. You can select one of these activities or choose a different [activity to engage workers](#) in your organization.

- Establish safety and health office hours with management:** Be present and maintain an open-door policy for an agreed-upon amount of time, during work hours, to allow workers to speak with managers about safety and health concerns in your workplace. Depending on the discussion, communicate next steps during their visits and follow up to let them know how it was resolved.
- Host listening and discussion sessions:** Invite your workers to participate in a safety listening and discussion session with management. Have a manager ask open-ended questions to spur dialogue, such as, What hazards do you face on the job? Which current safety procedures should be revised? How should we improve the processes for workers to report hazards? Document and absorb what workers say.
- Conduct a worker perception survey:** Ask workers to evaluate safety in your workplace and suggest areas for improvement. Make the survey responses anonymous so workers won't fear reprisal for voicing concerns. Give workers who complete the survey a chance to win a prize or receive incentives.
  - National Safety Council's [Employee Safety Perception Survey](#)
- Provide a suggestion box:** Set up an anonymous real or virtual (e.g., email, voicemail, hotline, intranet site portal) suggestion box that workers can use to communicate safety and health concerns. Make it clear there will be no retaliation for submissions. You should publicize the suggestions you receive and your response so that people know that they were heard.
- Give a hotline directly to management:** Give workers a phone number to call during working hours to speak with management about safety and health issues. Field phone calls promptly and professionally, and take notes on the workers' concerns. Make sure to follow up with any resolutions.
- Or, create your own activity!**

## How Do You Make It Effective?

**Have an open mind:** Be receptive to suggestions. Focus on advancing proactive solutions and continuous improvement. Leave the past behind you. Avoid being defensive, adversarial, and casting blame.

**Make it easy:** Provide workers with easy outlets to give their safety and health feedback in places and ways where they can access them; all workers might not be computer-savvy or have email addresses.

**Keep it on the clock:** Allow workers to provide feedback during working hours, rather than off-time.

**Listen as an ally:** Workers are the experts when it comes to the tasks they do and the tools and equipment they use. Listening to their ideas could result in more efficient work and better products.

**No fear:** Workers should never fear retaliation for speaking up about safety or health. If you don't already have an [anti-retaliation policy](#), consider developing one.

**Be inclusive:** Ensure that workers at all levels of your organization can participate, regardless of skill level, status, or education. Provide translators if needed to make sure all are heard.

**Follow up:** Give frequent and regular updates to show that workers' feedback is heard and addressed.

## Show Your Commitment to Safety and Health

Remember to share your commitment to a safe and healthy workplace with all involved in your operations, including workers, contractors, customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders. Here are a few ways to do that:

- Share what you learned from workers and the actions you plan to take to address their concerns in your next newsletter or communication.
- Make sure you have ongoing listening mechanisms in place to engage workers in keeping the workplace safe throughout the year.
- Publicize your anti-retaliation policy where workers, contractors, customers, and suppliers can see it, and encourage ongoing engagement on safety in your workplace without fear of retaliation.
- Use your website, brochures, and annual reports to tell your customers and suppliers what you learned from workers and how you will implement those ideas in the future to keep your workplace safe.

Visit the Safe + Sound Campaign website to learn more about [worker participation](#).