



The State of **Employee Safety** in 2023

Contents

- 3** Research Summary
- 4** Employees' Priorities
- 10** Business Travel
- 13** Remote Work
- 14** Mental Health
- 17** Employers' Actions
- 24** Key Takeaways
- 24** Methodology

Safety Matters More Than Ever in a Changing World

As employees' concerns and priorities change, the desire to feel safe is a constant.

The world remains a dangerous place in 2023, and workers expect their employers to keep them safe. Geopolitical upheaval, coupled with another year of extreme weather and natural disasters, has impacted employees' perceptions of the world in which they live, work, and travel. Add the financial stress caused by global economic instability and an uncertain labor market, and the resulting picture is one of an American workforce stretched thin.

We surveyed 2,000+ full-time U.S. employees for the second year in a row to understand their perceptions of safety in 2023 and to equip employers with insights on how they can better protect their people.

Last year, 97% of U.S. employees said it was important to always feel safe at work. This year, safety is still a top priority, yet employees often see their organizations falling short on safety efforts. 71% of employees don't think their employers are following through on safety promises, and 64% believe their employers are not making an active effort to improve training.

The implication? Employees don't feel prepared to navigate an increasingly dangerous world. This report reveals that not all employers' efforts to improve safety have been successful over the past year. Ensuring that employees feel safe and valued at work will require better training, more effective communication about safety plans and policies, and plenty of consistency and transparency about how safety incidents are being handled across the organization.



75%

*of employees say
employers' safety
efforts have not been
very effective.*



Workers Want Employers to Care About Their Safety

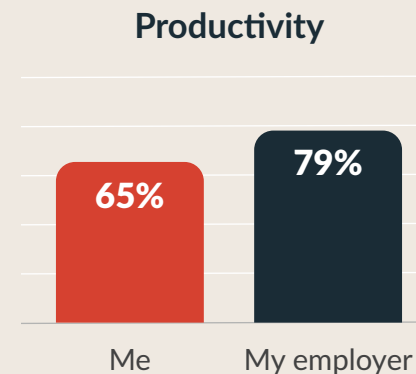
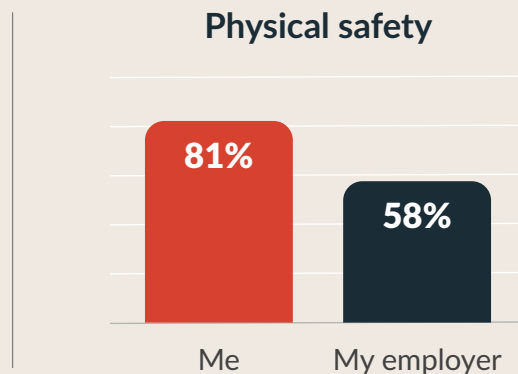
Employees believe their employers prioritize productivity over safety.

When we asked respondents how *they* feel about safety and how they think *their employers* feel about safety, there was a stark contrast. While most employees rank their physical safety and mental health as top priorities at work, they believe their employers care about productivity above all else.

Why the disconnect? Employers may be falling short on safety efforts or simply failing to communicate and engage employees in safety initiatives. In either case, people are not feeling protected or valued beyond their productivity output. Employees' trust and engagement are at stake if these priorities continue to be misaligned. And when you take care of your people by prioritizing safety, you enable them to be productive.



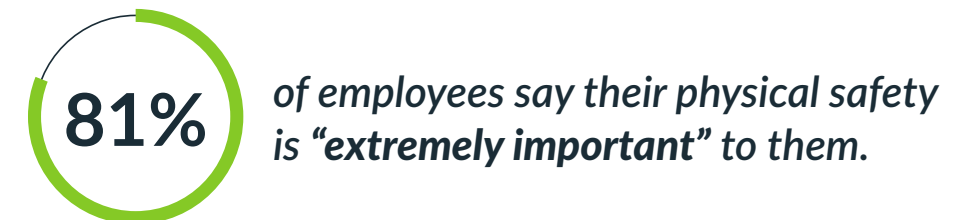
*How important are
the following to you?
To your employer?*





Safety Isn't Just Important—It's an Expectation

For two years in a row, employees have reported that safety is more of a priority for them than almost all other employment incentives. Nearly half (46%) of respondents say they are more likely to stay with an employer who genuinely cares about their safety.



Improving communication about safety is the #1 way to make employees feel like it's a business priority.

Conducting more safety training & drills is the #1 way to help employees feel more prepared to navigate a crisis.

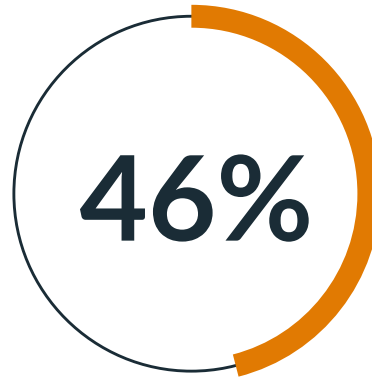
Respondents also identified what employers can do to help them feel safer and more prepared: Improve communication and invest in better training. In fact, respondents who said their employers' current safety efforts were highly effective were more than twice as likely to say they are prepared with the knowledge to stay safe and productive during an actual emergency.

Even in a Down Economy, Safety Remains a Powerful Incentive to Stay

The economic downturn at the end of 2022 brought financial workplace incentives into sharper focus versus a year ago.

For a second consecutive year, nearly half (46%) of employees said safety is a priority consideration when assessing whether or not to stay with their employers. However, compared to our 2022 survey, employees are placing even greater importance on compensation (56%) and benefits (53%).

Following a year of rising inflation costs, expiring pandemic subsidies, and lingering fears about a recession, it's not surprising that employees are placing greater importance on financial incentives to help weather a period of economic uncertainty. But as the economy improves, employers' ability to demonstrate a lasting commitment to their employees' well-being will remain a key differentiator in a competitive labor market.

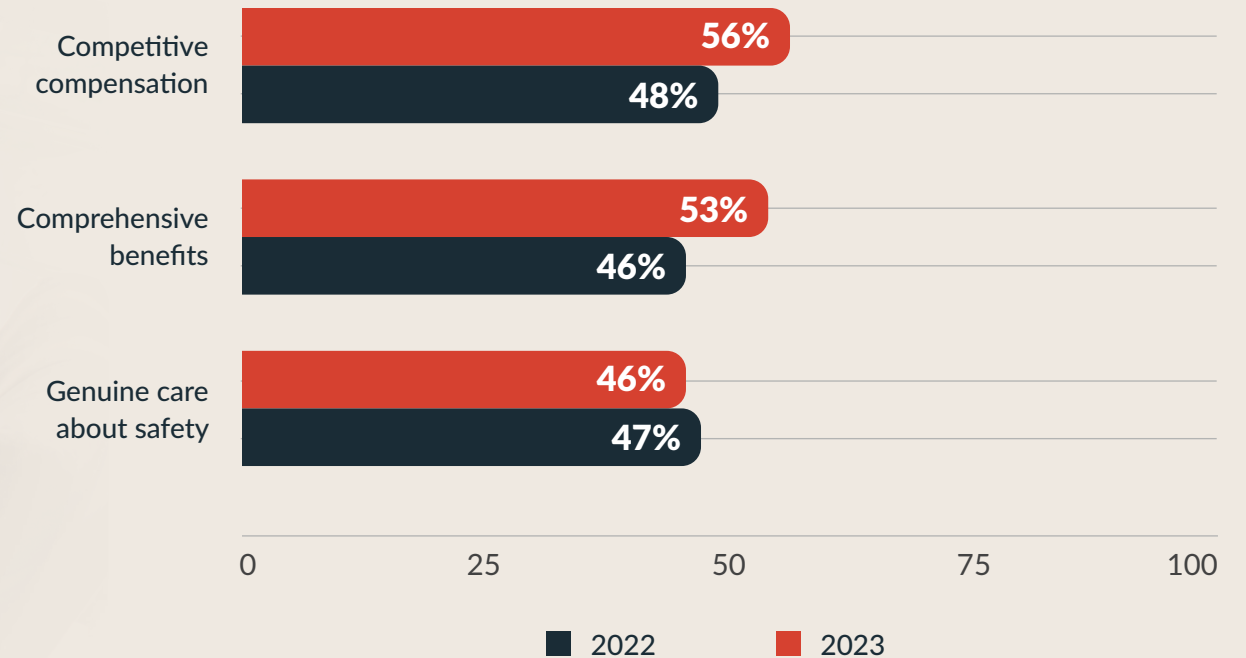


of employees say safety is a priority consideration when assessing whether or not to stay with their employers.





Which of the following would motivate you to remain with your current employer for the long term?

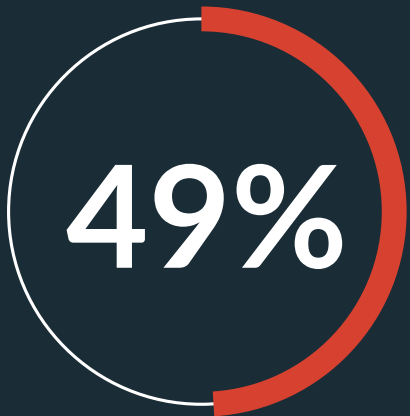


Employees Are More Concerned About Emergencies at Work

Employees' perception of safety is a moving target influenced by recent events, media coverage, and other regional factors employers can't fully control. We found that 49% of employees think the world is more dangerous today than a few years ago. This means that half of the current workforce is spending time and mental energy worrying about things outside of their control and outside the scope of their jobs.

Their concern is justified. In 2022, U.S. workers experienced a rise in protests and demonstrations, acts of violence, and multiple natural disasters, all of which likely factored into their perception of the workplace, their communities, and the world.

Unsurprisingly, many of the most frequent threats are also the most concerning to employees. More respondents said they are concerned about public health emergencies (66%), severe weather (61%), and technology failure (61%) than other potential emergencies affecting the workplace.

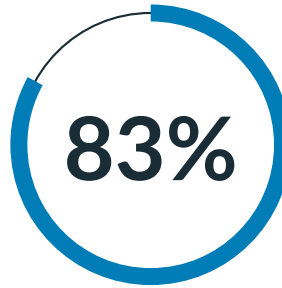


of employees think the world is more dangerous today than it was previously.



Assuming threats won't reach your facilities and your people is neither a safe practice nor a reasonable one.

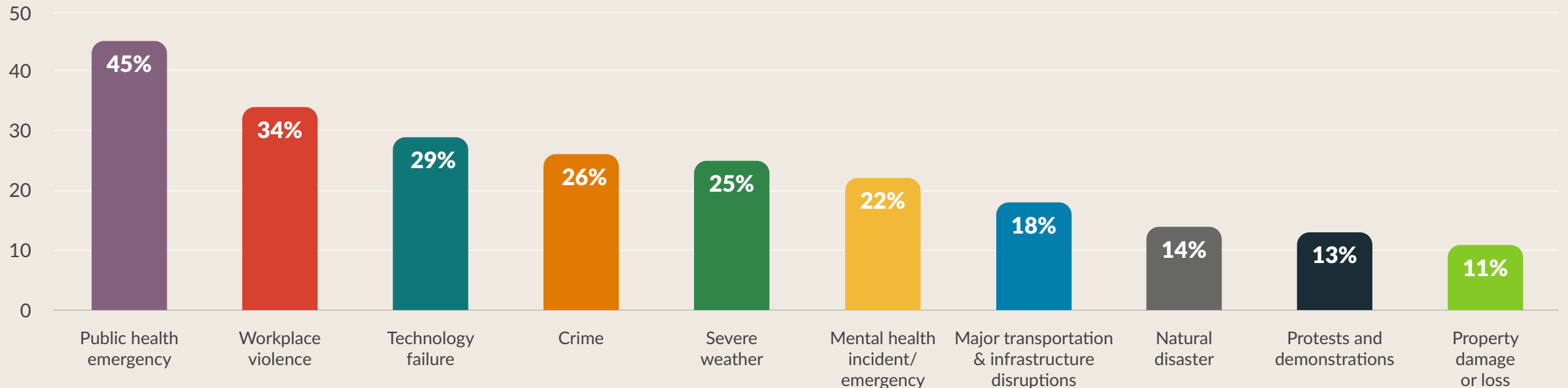
Statistically speaking, it's not a question of if an emergency will impact your people and organization but when. Our research found that 83% of employees have experienced an emergency at work at some point in their careers. Both safety and business continuity are at risk when organizations don't meet the evolving threat landscape with ongoing emergency response planning and employee preparedness.



*of employees have
experienced an emergency
at work at some point in
their careers.*



Which of the following scenarios are you more concerned about happening at work now than you were a few years ago?

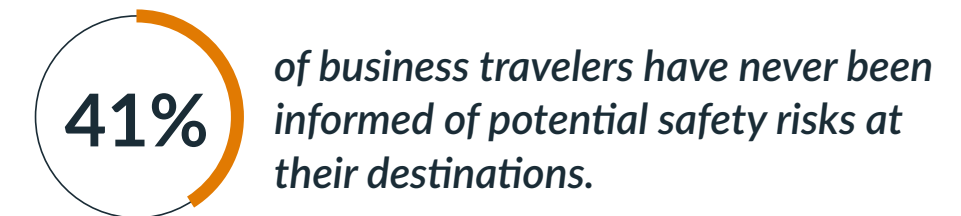




As Business Travel Recovers, Safety Concerns Soar

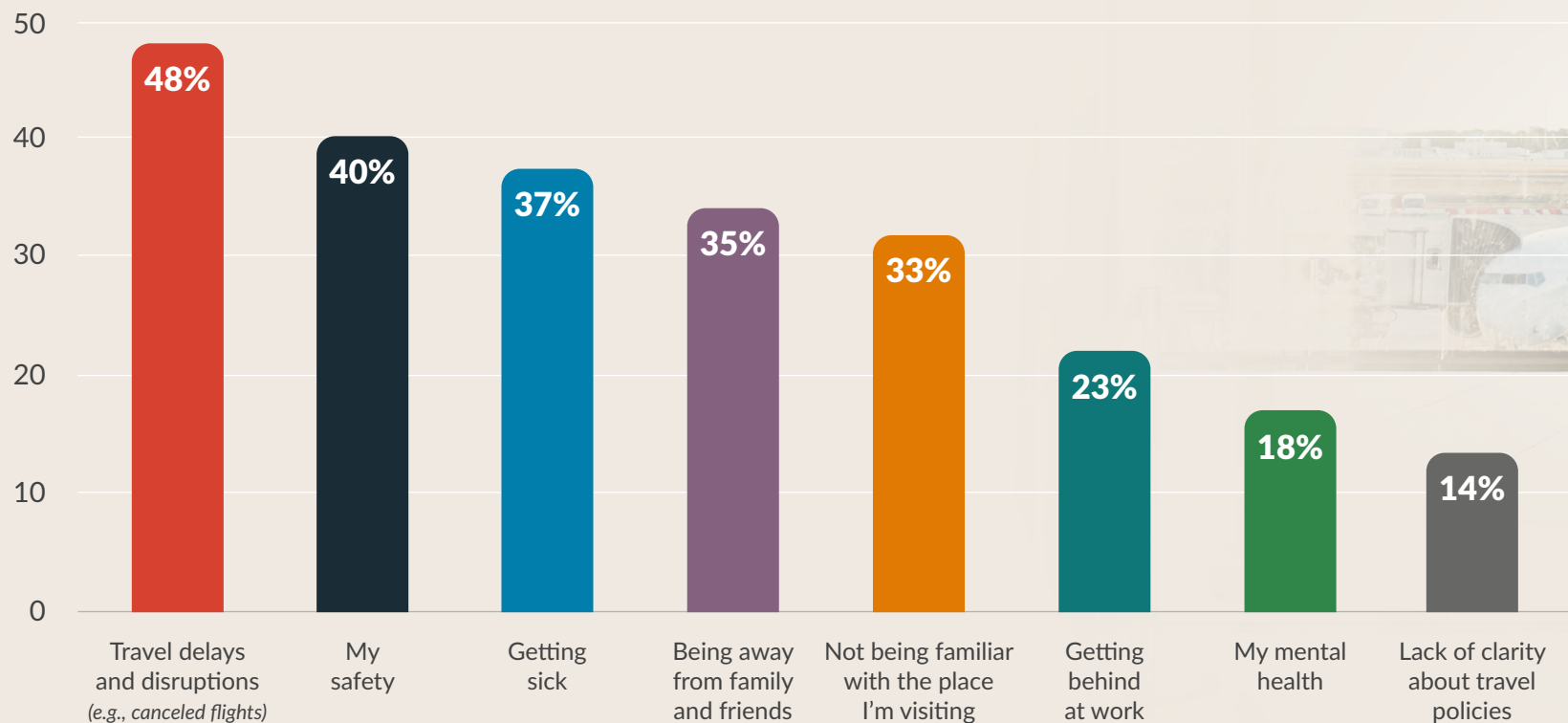
Work travel is back to levels not seen since the start of the pandemic, but many organizations are not fully addressing employees' travel safety concerns. Our research found that 38% of employees are required to travel for their job in some capacity—outside of regular commutes. But only 44% of those employees feel extremely safe while traveling for work.

A Global Business Travel Association poll found that 78% of travel managers anticipate higher or much higher numbers of business trips at their companies in 2023 compared to 2022.¹ As business travel returns, employers can ensure their employees feel safer by alerting them to potential safety and security risks while traveling. Failing to be proactive exposes employees to avoidable risks and adds additional stress to what is, for many, already a complex and stressful experience.



1. "GBTA Business Travel Recovery Poll Results." Global Business Travel Association. October 6, 2022. <https://www.gbta.org/wp-content/uploads/GBTA-Business-Travel-Recovery-Poll-Results-v1-publication-Oct-6-2022-October-2022.pdf>.

What concerns do you have about traveling for work?

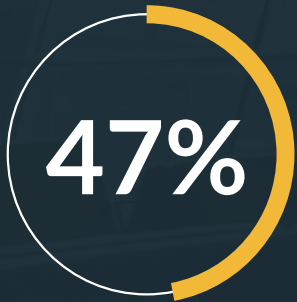


Business Travelers Don't Understand Employers' Duty of Care

Business travel factors into an employer's general duty of care, but most employees aren't aware of that.

Our research shows 90% of workers believe their organizations have a responsibility to protect them from harm at work. But when we asked specifically about employers' duty of care extending to business travelers, only 41% of respondents said their organization has an obligation to protect them.

These employees don't know to reach out to their organizations for support or instruction during an emergency away from home, and without clear communication and training, they're unlikely to respond quickly and effectively when things do go wrong. When organizations proactively monitor and communicate about threats—such as monitoring the location of traveling employees and setting up automated alerts about nearby risks—team members will be reassured that their safety is a priority. Travelers can better avoid dangers and disruptions, and they will be more likely to return home safe.



Less than half of employees know who to reach out to if they are in harm's way while traveling for work.

The State of Remote Work in 2023

Last year, our report covered the workforce's return to the office after the COVID-19 pandemic sent many employees home. In 2023, the workforce is still nearly as distributed as it was in 2022, with 42% of employees working from home in some capacity (down from 47% last year). This year's survey reveals noteworthy differences in employees' perceptions of safety "at work."

- **Employees feel the safest when working from home**

Employees who split time working in an office and from home are significantly more likely to feel "extremely safe" in their home environment (89%) than in the office (60%).

- **Remote workers feel their safety isn't a priority**

Remote and hybrid employees are less likely to think their physical safety is "extremely important" to their employer and more likely to think productivity is "extremely important" to their employer.

- **Remote workers receive less safety training**

Remote employees are offered up to 13% less safety training than hybrid and in-office employees.

- **Illness is a concern for hybrid and remote workers**

1 in 5 workers still don't want to come into the workplace because they are concerned about getting sick.

With nearly half of U.S. employees now working remotely in some capacity, the only way to protect all of your workers is to ensure safety initiatives are inclusive.



Why are employees choosing to work from home instead of in the office?

I have better work-life balance working from home

50%

I'm more productive working from home

41%

I'm worried about getting sick

20%

There are too many distractions at the office

20%

My commute is too long

20%

Employers Don't Prioritize Mental Health Enough

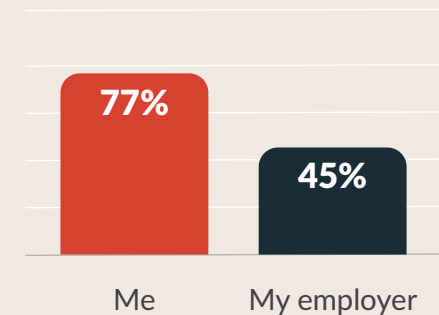


Much like with physical safety, employees don't believe their employers prioritize workers' mental health as much as they do. In fact, our research shows that employees think their mental health is the lowest priority for their organizations.

Mental health is more than just a trend in the wake of the pandemic. Employees are more aware of the effects of depression, anxiety, and burnout, and the results of this survey support the growing push to destigmatize these struggles in the workplace. Writing off this element of safety directly contradicts what employees say is important to them at a time when safety concerns and business threats continue to rise.

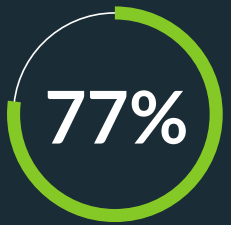
*How important is your
mental health to you?
To your employer?*

Extremely important to...



Workplace Safety Is About More Than Just Physical Health

Employees are asking for more than just the traditional focus on injury avoidance in the workplace. When we asked about workplace priorities, mental health ranks nearly as high in importance as physical safety at work.



say their mental health is “extremely important.”

Gen Z

77%

Millennial

78%

Gen X

76%

Boomer

79%

More than three quarters of respondents said their mental health is “extremely important,” and our research found very little difference between how Gen-Z employees (77%) and older “Boomers” (79%) prioritize mental wellness in the workplace. However, younger generations are more than twice as likely to be concerned about experiencing a mental health emergency at work.

So, how do you support employees’ mental health on a daily basis? It takes building a safety program complete with comprehensive benefits, a culture that supports psychological safety, and a work environment that mirrors employee needs.



Employee Mental Health Is Not Supported in the Workplace

While mental health has become more accepted as a topic of workplace conversation, employees still feel a lack of support. Nearly two thirds of employees say their organizations are not providing resources for mental health and their workplace culture does not allow for

positive discussion of this important topic. The lack of support may help explain why 50% of our survey participants voiced concerns about a mental health incident or emergency occurring while at work.

A circular infographic with a white outline and an orange arc. The number 34% is displayed in white text in the center.

34%

Only 34% believe their **employer makes an active effort to support** their mental health.

A circular infographic with a white outline and a yellow arc. The number 38% is displayed in white text in the center.

38%

Only 38% believe their **employer provides mental health resources.**

A circular infographic with a white outline and a red arc. The number 33% is displayed in white text in the center.

33%

Only 33% feel they **can have an open dialogue about their mental health** in the workplace.

One reason for optimism: One quarter (25%) of employees also said that providing better mental health resources would make them feel their employer genuinely cares about their safety, which our research also linked to long-term employee retention. What's clear is that improving communication about mental health and seeking out employee feedback on areas for improvement enables workers to be authentic, voice concerns, and play an active role in creating a safer workplace for all.

Where to Start With Impactful Safety Change

Employees are hungry for better safety communication and training processes.

This has been a significant finding for two years in a row:



84%

of employees think their employers can do more to make them feel prepared to face emergencies at work. Safety training and transparent communication have consistently ranked as the most in-demand solutions.

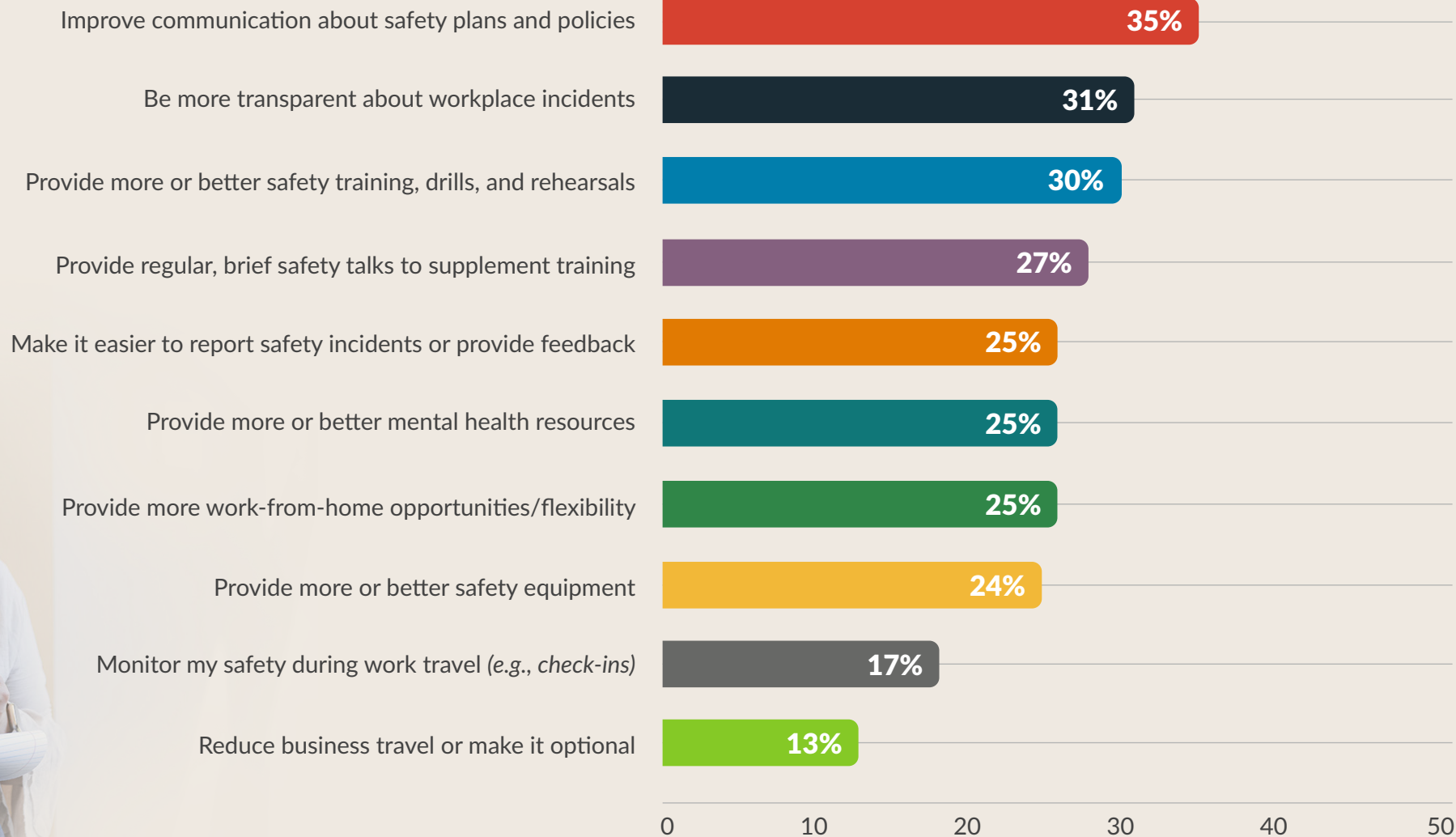
Considering each of the top five most common employee requests involve more information and participation (next page), it's clear that workers want to be involved in their organization's safety programs. Being open about workplace safety incidents, rather than sweeping events under the rug, will build trust with your workers as they gain a greater understanding of how to stay safe and productive at work.

40% of employees believe safety training should be mandatory and regular.

40% of employees would feel unsafe at their workplace if their employer didn't notify them about a safety incident.



What could your employer do to make you feel like they care about your safety?

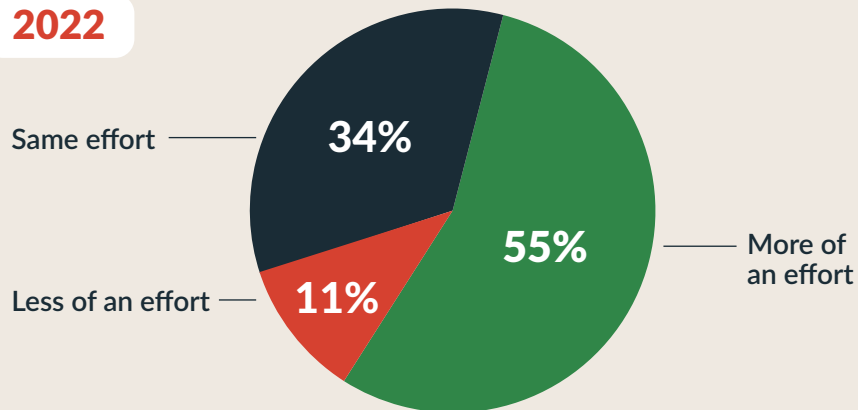


Employers Are Not Meeting Employee Expectations of Safety

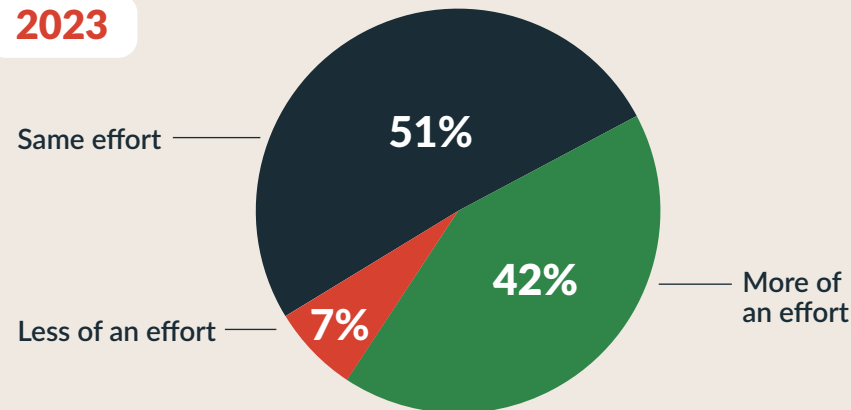
Unfortunately, our research found employers have a long way to go to demonstrate they are keeping up with the safety priorities of their workforce. With the increase in perceived threats—both internal and external—employees are looking to their organizations to prepare them and also to help them feel safer. But many workers are being left behind entirely by employers who aren't making the effort to improve protections.

In the past year, how much effort has your organization made to ensure your safety?

2022



2023

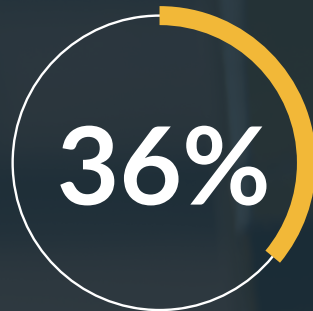


This lack of organizational focus on safety is leading to less-prepared employees.

Workers who reported their employers are making less of an effort are 22% less likely to know what to do during an emergency.

And despite 42% of respondents saying their organizations have made more of an effort to keep them safe during the past year, only 25% think their employers' safety efforts have been very effective. To change employees' perceptions of safety in the long term, employers will need to rethink how they demonstrate effort and how they show their values are aligned.

When we asked employees about their employers' safety efforts...



of employees believe their employer makes an active effort to improve safety awareness and training.



of employees believe their organization follows through on promises to improve workplace safety.



of employees believe their feedback is taken into account when safety policies are created or updated.

Training and Communication Boost Preparedness

According to the workers we surveyed, the most impactful ways to demonstrate you care about safety are also the most effective ways to prepare your people to stay safe in an emergency. **When we asked employees what their employer could do to make them feel more prepared, they pointed to the following:**

39% Regular updates on safety incidents and protocols

37% Offering tips on how to stay safe

37% Sharing who is responsible for emergency procedures

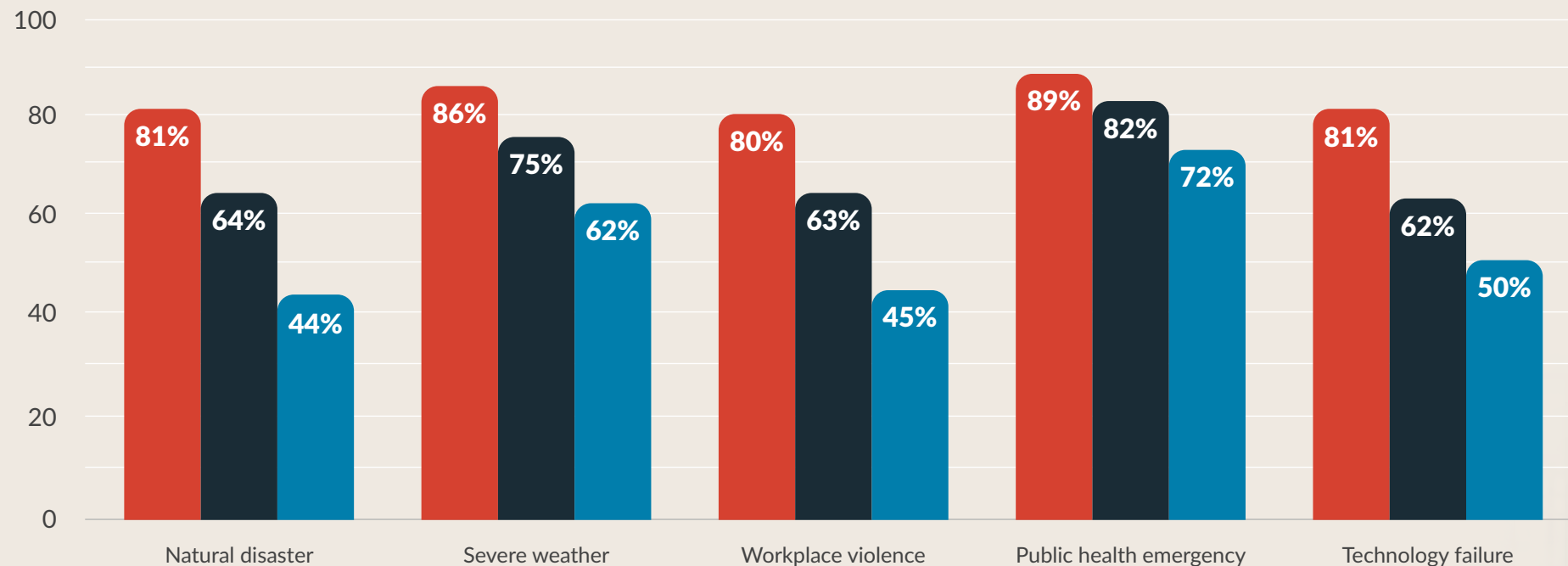
36% Providing a direct line of communication in emergency situations

Of the workers surveyed, 42% also said safety training makes them feel more prepared for potential emergencies. And employees who receive mandatory safety training feel up to 29% more prepared than those who never received training—up from 25% last year. Our research also found a strong correlation between the frequency of safety training offered and employees' ability to navigate a crisis, highlighting that the more often training is offered, the more equipped employees feel.



Percentage of employees who feel prepared for specific emergencies

Frequent mandatory safety training can nearly double feelings of preparedness.



Frequency of mandatory training

- Once every month or two
- Once per year
- Never



Business Continuity Depends on Employee Safety

While an increasingly severe threat landscape and uncertain economic outlook have created greater risk and volatility for businesses, our research highlights the peril of deprioritizing safety.

When asked how they'd respond if their employer failed to keep them informed during a life-threatening emergency (such as those covered in this report), 40% of respondents said they would feel unsafe, and one in four (26%) said they would start looking for new employment opportunities.

During a crisis, your business has an opportunity to both exceed employee expectations and strengthen your organization's safety culture. What's more, our survey shows that there are real-world consequences at stake for retention, productivity, and reputation if safety isn't taken seriously. By investing in a solid foundation of risk awareness, transparent communication, and inclusive training, your employees will feel like their concerns are taken seriously, and your organization will be more resilient in the face of emergencies.

If your company did not alert you in the event of an emergency at work, which describes what you would do?

I would feel unsafe to be at my workplace

40%

I would flag my experience for HR

33%

I would start looking for other job opportunities

26%

I wouldn't recommend my place of work to a friend who is interested in a job

24%

I wouldn't take my job as seriously or work as hard

14%

I would encourage my colleagues to start looking for other job opportunities

12%

I would take legal action against my employer

11%

I would write about the experience on an employer review site

10%

I would post about the incident on social media

10%

I would report the incident to a news media organization

9%

Key Takeaways for 2023

1 A positive safety culture shows your employees you prioritize their well-being above all else.

Establish a work environment that aligns with employee priorities around safety. By creating a positive culture, your employees are always clear about what you're doing to advance safety objectives and what they can do to support the same.

2 By monitoring the evolving threat landscape, you can protect your workers wherever they are.

Ensure you can monitor emerging threats around all business locations, including remote employees and traveling workers, so you can quickly alert anyone who might be at risk. The sooner you and your people are aware of nearby threats, the better the chance of a quick and effective response.

3 Equip your business travelers with situational awareness and clear communication pathways.

Make sure your traveling workers know exactly who to reach out to and how in case of an emergency. Enable them to play an active role in their safety and make informed decisions by providing pertinent safety information about travel locations in advance of work trips.

4 A comprehensive safety program includes mental health support.

Answer the call for better mental health support by integrating comprehensive benefits, open communication, and a safe work environment that reflects your employees' top concerns. These commitments to holistic safety and employee wellness also help to destigmatize mental health struggles in the workplace.

5 Employees want more transparent communication and better safety training.

Establish frequent mandatory safety training that gives employees the tools and techniques to stay safe at work. Integrate training with a clear safety communication plan that leans on reliable two-way messaging technology.



Methodology | **Sample:** Total: N=2,079

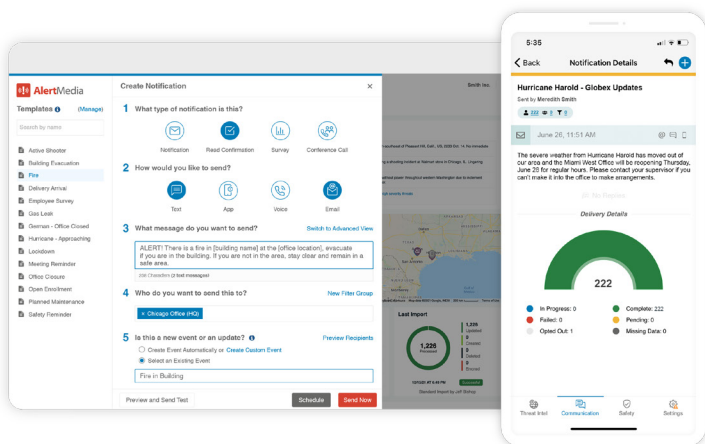
- U.S. Residents
- Employed Full-Time
- Ages 18-80
- Nationally Representative

Please note:

- Results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results.
- In this study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 2 percentage points from the result that would be obtained if interviews had been conducted with all personas in the universe represented by the sample. The margin of error for any subgroups will be slightly higher.



The Industry Leader in Employee Safety



Thousands of organizations—including DHL, JetBlue, Coca-Cola Bottling, and Walmart—in more than 130 countries rely on AlertMedia's award-winning two-way multichannel messaging system, threat intelligence, and business travel risk management to protect their business and people through all phases of an emergency.

With AlertMedia, you can stay in touch with your employees no matter where they are working. Our system empowers you to:

- Identify threats to your people and operations all around the world
- Notify employees quickly and easily about critical events
- Monitor locations of traveling and remote employees



Learn how AlertMedia can help you protect your employees wherever they are working.

sales@alertmedia.com // 800.826.0777 // alertmedia.com

REQUEST A DEMO