



The State of **Employee Safety** in 2024

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Safety at Work Is a Non-Negotiable for Employees

Employees are looking for more support and better safety communication from their employers.

For the third year, we surveyed 2,000 full-time U.S. employees to understand their perceptions of safety at work. These data and insights arm employers to better deliver on their employees' expectations.

Today's workforce has become increasingly concerned for their safety with the uptick in global threats, including climate change, geopolitical upheaval, and workplace violence. However, many employees believe their employers care more about financial gain than safety. More than a third don't feel prepared to face the growing rate of emergencies at work.

This year, our report also documents differences between managers' (48% of respondents identify as people managers, department heads, VPs, and other business leaders) and non-managers' responses to understand why employees perceive misalignment between their employers' priorities and their own.

Our 2024 survey results validate a trend we've been tracking since 2022: Employees are calling for more training, better safety communication, and greater transparency around their employers' efforts to maintain a safe workplace.



97%

*of employees say
their **physical**
safety at work is
important to them*



Everyone Deserves a Safe Place to Work

Nearly all U.S. employees (97%) believe it is important to feel safe at work, regardless of whether they work from home, in the office, or hybrid. And **79% of all employees place extreme importance on physical safety.**

This significant majority is consistent with our findings from the 2023 Employee Safety Report, which showed that 81% of employees consider their physical safety at work extremely important. And that majority is even greater among women than among their male colleagues (86% vs. 71%).



Why is workplace safety important to you?

Everyone deserves a safe place to work

66%

I shouldn't have to worry about my safety while I am working

55%

It is my employer's duty and responsibility to create a safe workplace

52%

I shouldn't have to trade my safety for a paycheck

51%

I want to trust that I will make it home safely every day

49%

I expect my employer to take care of me and my colleagues no matter where we are working

39%

Employees Face More Emergencies at Work Than Ever

Most employees we surveyed (67%) say more emergencies threaten the workplace than ever. This proportion of employees has increased significantly since 2023 when just under half (49%) said they thought the world had become more dangerous. And these perceived dangers are close enough to home that 87% of employees are worried an emergency will impact them directly.

Employees' rising concerns are, unfortunately, justified. Nearly nine out of every 10 employees have experienced an emergency at work.

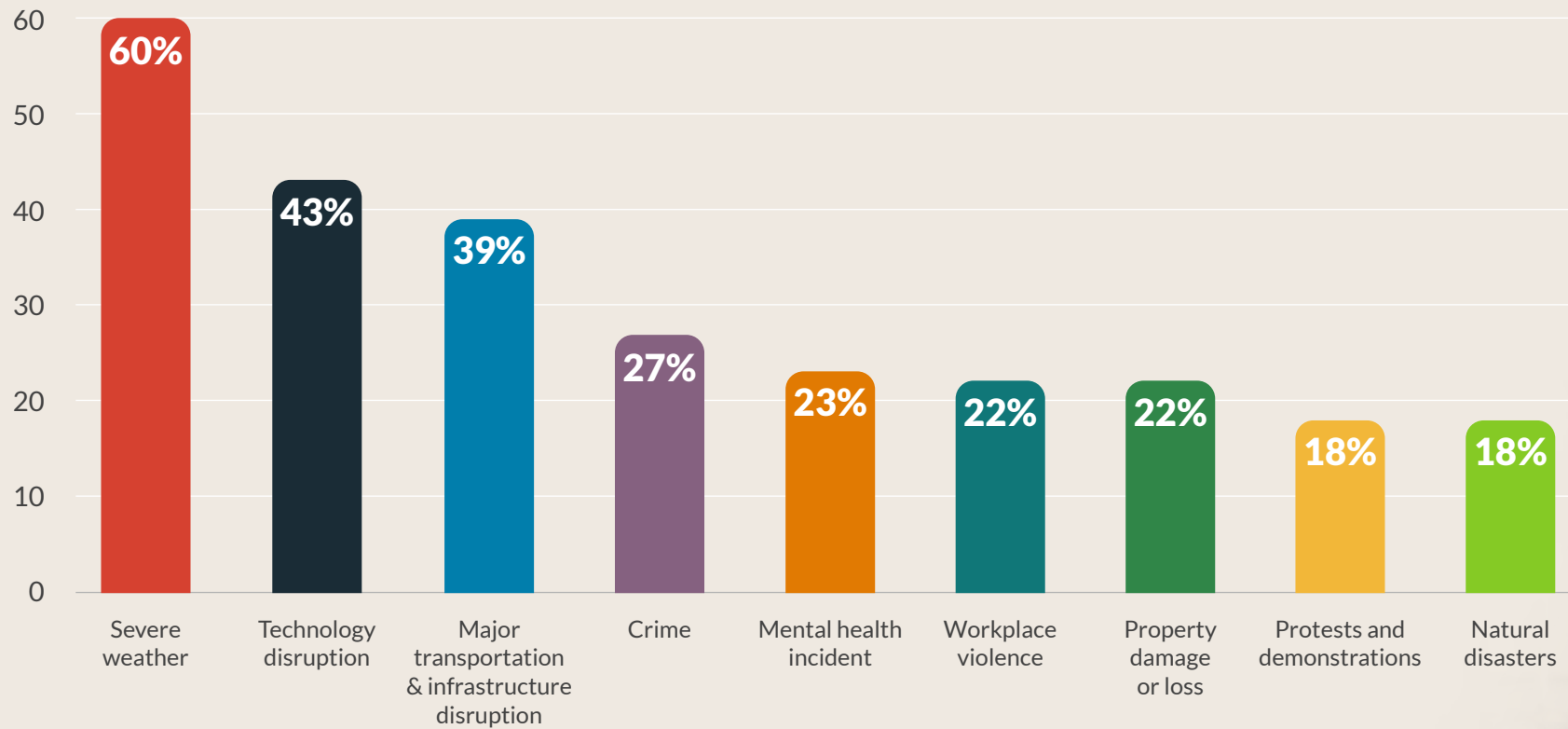
It's not surprising that severe weather has been the most common emergency, impacting 60% of employees. But what may surprise some is that **workplace violence, often considered an uncommon threat, has affected nearly one in four employees.** And that number spikes to almost one in three in industries such as service and hospitality.

Meanwhile, workers across industries are resuming business travel—no longer grounded by the pandemic—and traveling employees are 12% more likely than non-travelers to report emergency experiences, often related to transportation and infrastructure disruptions.



Which of the following emergency scenarios have you experienced while working?

% of respondents (n=2,000)



Nearly 1 in 4
employees have experienced
workplace violence



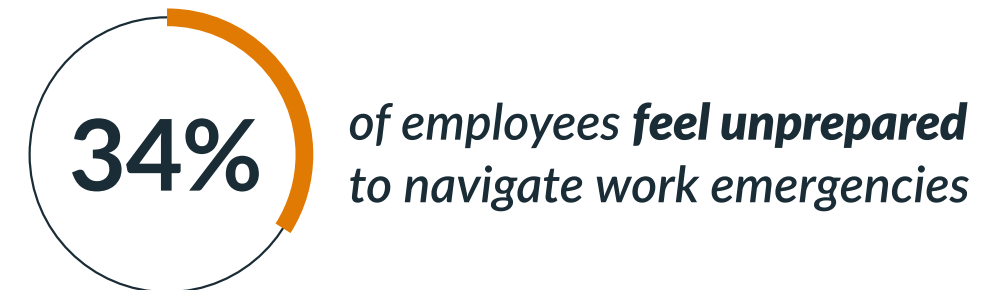


Employees Don't Feel Prepared for Rising Threats

Although two-thirds (67%) of employees believe there are more workplace threats and almost nine in 10 (86%) have firsthand experience with an emergency at work, many still feel unprepared to face a future crisis. Our survey found over a third of employees (34%) feel unprepared to navigate work emergencies.

Perhaps adding to this feeling, nearly half of employees (47%) say they don't trust that their employer would notify them if an emergency were to occur that impacted them.

These perceptions and lack of preparedness put your emergency response at risk. Employees who don't feel prepared or in the loop cannot respond to emergencies quickly and effectively, compromising safety and business continuity.



Emergencies Impact Employee Feelings of Safety and Trust

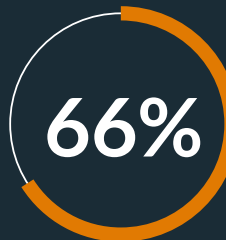
When employees have firsthand experience with emergencies, it significantly impacts how safe and prepared they feel. The 86% of employees who have experienced an emergency at work were almost twice as likely to say they sometimes feel unsafe while working (24% vs 13%).

Instead of feeling like they know what to expect, employees with this personal experience feel less confident. They also tend to feel uncomfortable turning to their employers for support and lose trust at a higher rate than employees who have never experienced an emergency while working.



We asked employees how they would feel if their employer gave insufficient attention to safety

Those who **have** experienced an emergency at work

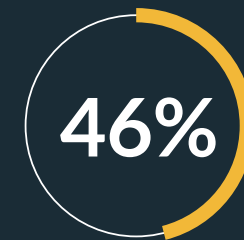


would trust their employer less

92% would take action if their company did not notify them about an emergency

VS.

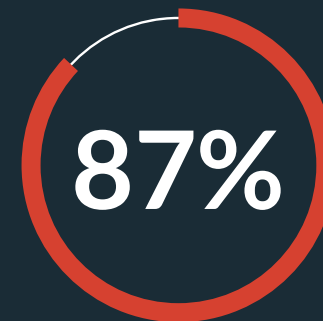
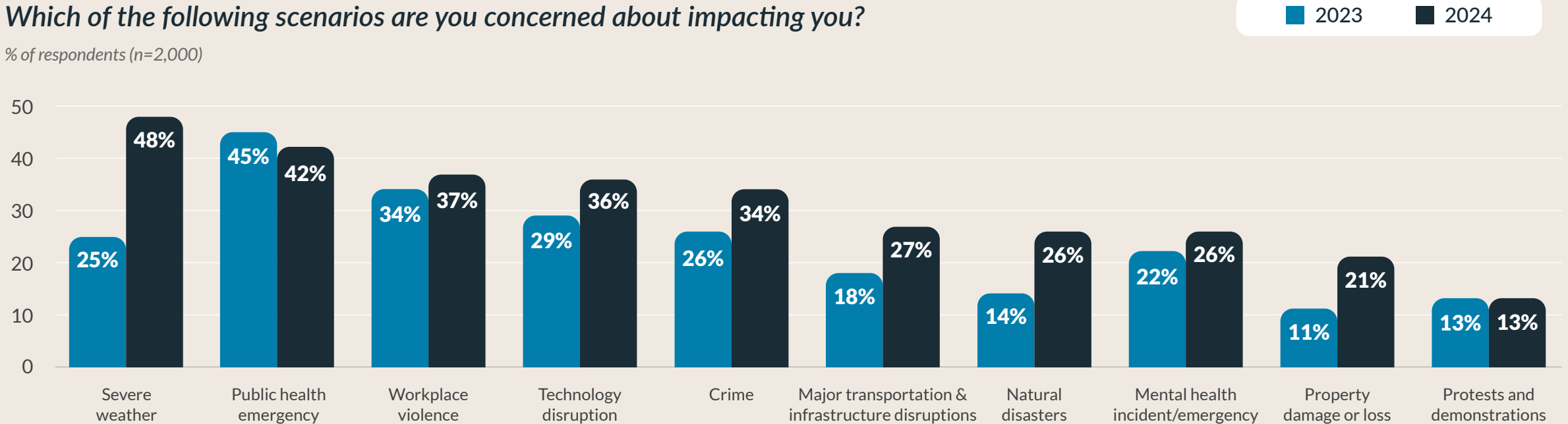
Those who **have not** experienced an emergency at work



would trust their employer less

Which of the following scenarios are you concerned about impacting you?

% of respondents (n=2,000)



of employees are concerned about experiencing a work emergency

Safety Is a Strong Motivator for Retention

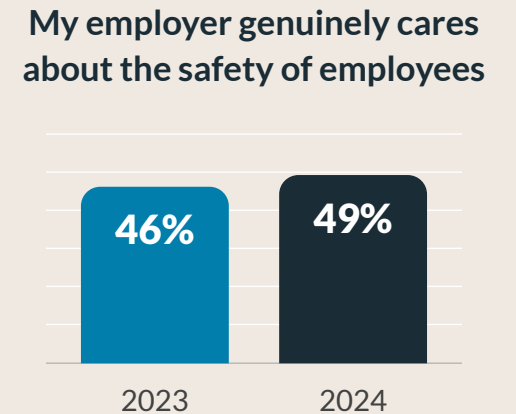
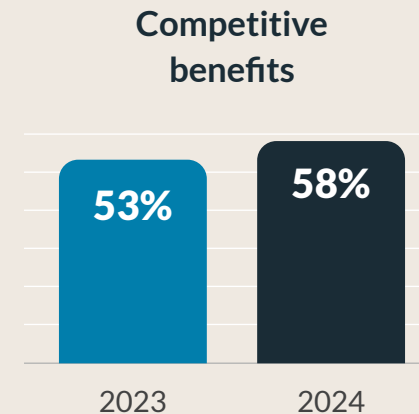
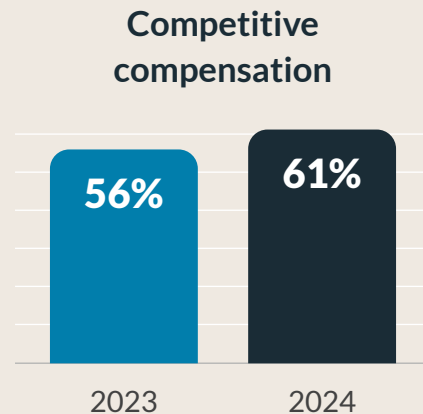
With trust on the line, perceptions of safety also influence retention. In every survey over the last three years, we have asked employees what would motivate them to stay with their employer long-term, and safety still ranks above everything except pay and benefits.

These top three motivations are even more important in 2024.



What would *motivate* you to stay at the company long-term?

% of respondents (n=2,000)



When you invest in your employees, your employees are more likely to be invested and engaged in the organization.
The more you know about what employees need to feel safe and prepared, the more effective your efforts become.

Safety Is a Competing Priority for Businesses (Or Is It?)

While employees value safety above all else, they perceive their employers' priorities in a very different light. **Employees believe their employers prioritize productivity, profits, and reputation over safety.**

This disconnect poses a significant risk to employee engagement and trust. Fortunately, safety commitments do not have to come at the expense of the company's material success. When the business is prepared for emergencies and safety incidents, you can better protect your resources, including employees, and safeguard operations.

Safety is not a competing priority: A strong safety culture makes your business more resilient overall.

77% of employees believe company reputation is extremely important to their employers, but only ***61%*** believe safety is equally important.





How important is each of the following to you? To your employer?

■ To you? ■ To your employer?

% of employees reporting extreme importance (n=2,000)

Feeling physically safe at work



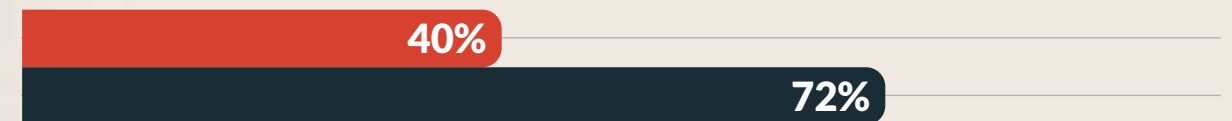
Feeling productive at work



The company's reputation



The company's bottom line



Employees Want Better Mental Health Support & Resources

Like physical safety, workplace mental health support is a top priority for nearly all (94%) employees—and 62% of respondents say it is “extremely important” to them. We found that women and younger employees of all genders are more likely to prioritize mental health. Younger employees also report mental health incidents at work more often than their older colleagues, likely due to greater awareness of mental health issues and support systems.

Employees who consider mental health extremely important

Women

67%

Men

56%

Gen Z

69%

Millennial

66%

Gen X

59%

Boomers+

55%

While employees are increasingly concerned about workplace emergencies, they are looking to their organizations to improve support and resources for mental health. Almost half of respondents (48%) would grade their employers’ focus on mental health a “C” or worse.

Specifically, we found that employees want more communication about their organizations’ actions to prioritize mental health. **Communication about mental health ranks No. 1 among the safety actions employees want more of.**

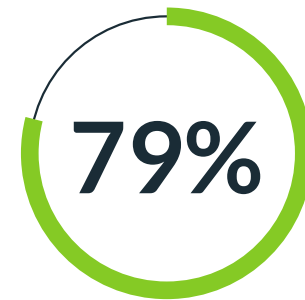




Some Priorities Shift as Employees Move Up in Seniority

Our 2024 iteration of this research revealed compelling differences in priorities, perceptions, and behaviors when comparing those in management roles and non-manager employees.

Specifically, our research shows that as employees take on more leadership responsibilities, their consideration of company-focused priorities increases. Managers and non-managers disagree on the importance of productivity, mental health support, the company's reputation, and the bottom line. **However, employees at every level agree that safety ranks above all else.**



*of all survey respondents—from non-managers to executives—rate **physical safety at work as extremely important***

How important is each of the following to you?

% of managers and non-managers reporting extreme importance (n<2,000)

Managers Non-managers

Feeling physically safe at work



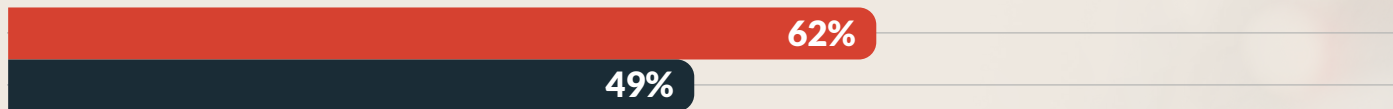
Feeling productive at work



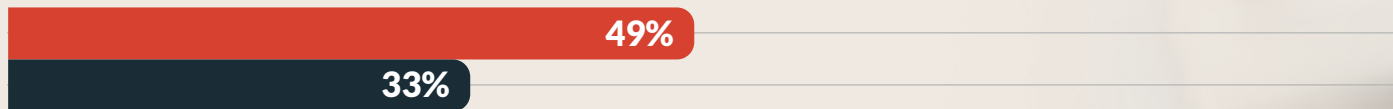
A work environment that supports mental health



The company's reputation



The company's bottom line



Managers Are Poised to Champion Workplace Safety

We also found that managers are more optimistic about their employers' safety efforts. Nearly half (48%) of managers report their employer made more effort to ensure safety in the past year than in previous years, and only a third (32%) of non-managers report feeling the same way.

When asked if their employer has made more effort to ensure safety in the past year



In the workplace, managers have better insight into company policy and decision-making and are often intermediaries between high-level decision-makers and the rest of the employees. In this position, managers have a marginally better grip on safety procedures.

A narrow majority of managers (54%) say they would know who to contact if they were experiencing a safety incident or emergency at work, compared to only 44% of non-managers. Additionally, 59% of managers feel extremely comfortable reporting a safety hazard or concern at work versus 50% of non-managers.

Managers are also well-positioned to keep tabs on what employees care about and want to see from the company's safety efforts and supportive resources. So, they are poised to make safety policies more accessible to employees and ensure their employees' voices reach decision-makers.

Unfortunately, most managers are unprepared to successfully train and protect their people.



What Is Holding Managers Back From Keeping Their People Safe?

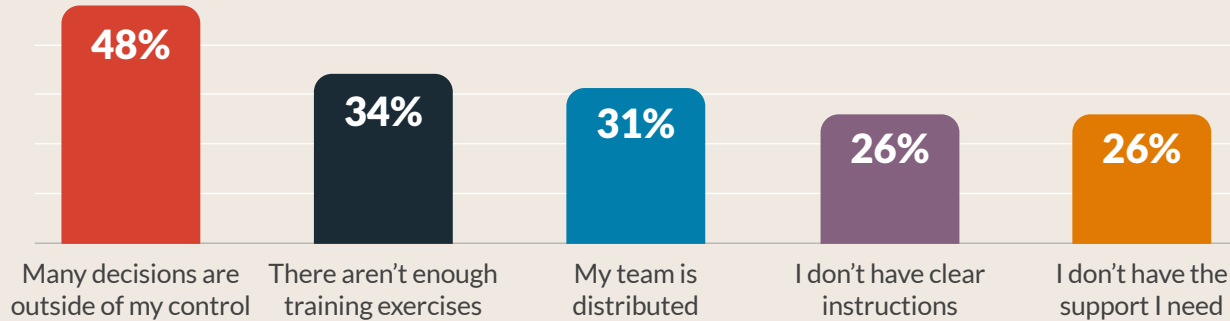
Managers cannot be responsible for training and protecting their people alone. Two-thirds of managers report that their ability to keep people safe is limited in some way, and most of their limitations relate to inadequate support from higher-level leaders.



*of managers say they **are limited** in keeping their employees safe*

What limits your ability to keep your team safe?

% of managers (n<2,000)



Considering that just over half of managers feel comfortable following safety procedures themselves, it is evident that employers need to do more to enable leaders. **If managers are to bridge the critical safety-perception gap, they need:**



Plans and policies that make sense to employees



Sufficient resources to train and guide employees



Transparency around changes that impact their efforts



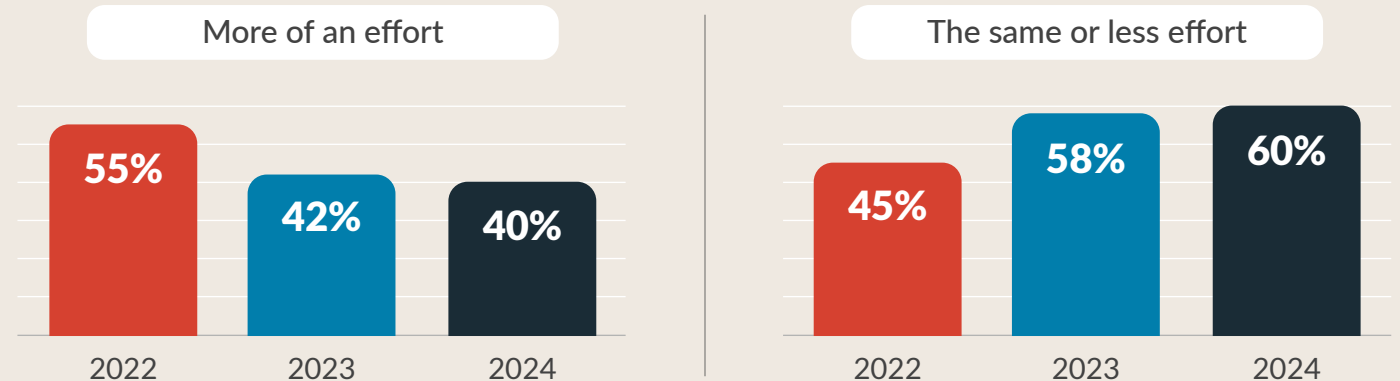
Employees Feel Like Safety Efforts Are Stagnating



For the third consecutive year conducting this survey, we saw a decline in employees' perceptions of their employers' efforts to keep them safe. More employees report their employers are making "about the same amount of effort" or "less effort," and fewer report "more of an effort" to ensure a safe working environment.

The healthcare, education, and service/hospitality industries have seen the most reports of declining safety efforts, putting both employees and the communities they serve at risk.

How do employees perceive their employer's level of safety effort in the past year?

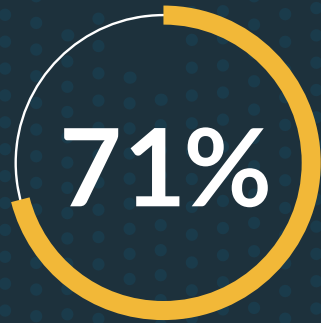


% of respondents (n=2,000)

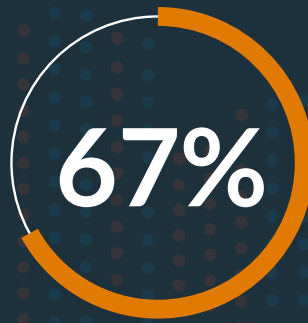
When Safety Is Not a Priority, Morale and Mental Health Suffer

In an age of doing more with less, employers and their employees are having to navigate rising workplace threats with fewer resources. And our report reflects cascading impacts.

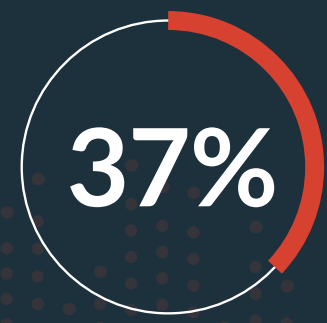
Of the employees who say their organization has put less effort into safety in the past year:



*reported losing trust in
their employer*



*reported a decreased desire to
remain with the organization*



*reported their work environment
affects their mental health*

Whatever the limiting factors may be—when employers are not committed to ensuring a safe workplace, the implications go beyond employees' physical well-being. Psychological safety is a complex but necessary consideration, and it requires a fundamental understanding of what employees want and need.

Employees Want Better Communication From Their Organization

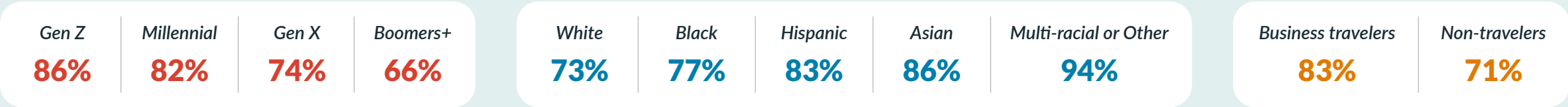
We asked employees for actionable feedback to help improve safety at their organizations. Most employees (76%) think their employer’s communication needs improvement, and they want to hear more about the available resources and the emergencies that might impact them.

When you are integrating your team’s feedback, it’s critical to embrace the fact that your employees are not a monolith. Not all employees are equally vulnerable (depending on

their gender identity, racial background, generation, disability, or other factors), and not all employees have equal access to communication channels. When you aim to support diverse needs and personal risks, you build a more robust safety foundation overall.

Clear and comprehensive communication is one of the most impactful tools to create a more equitable safety program.

% of employees who think their employer’s safety communication needs improvement



of employees think their employer’s safety communication needs improvement



How could your employer improve communication?

% of respondents (n=2,000)

Inform employees of the training available and which is mandatory

52%

Use a consistent communication channel during emergencies

50%

Provide frequent updates on efforts to maintain a safe workplace

48%

Provide frequent updates on changes to safety protocols and procedures

45%

Share how the organization is prioritizing employee mental health

43%

Involve senior leadership in regular safety meetings and training

37%



Which safety actions do you want your employer to do more of?

Keep employees informed of efforts to prioritize mental health

44%

Provide regular updates on efforts to maintain a safe workplace

42%

Provide updates on changes to safety protocols and procedures

42%

Train employees to respond to safety incidents and emergencies

41%

Conduct emergency drills and exercises to prepare employees

40%

Give regular safety talks to supplement comprehensive training

40%

Test communication channels ahead of incidents and emergencies

40%

% of respondents (n=2,000)

How Employers Can Improve Perceptions of Safety Work

The best way employers can reinforce their commitment to safety is by communicating more effectively about safety procedures and resources.

Based on what employees care about, here are five ways employers can demonstrate they care about safety:

- 1 Improve communication about safety plans and policies
- 2 Provide more or better mental health resources
- 3 Provide more or better safety training, drills, and exercises
- 4 Be more transparent about workplace safety incidents
- 5 Make it easier to report safety incidents or provide feedback

Key Takeaways for 2024

1 Increase preparedness efforts to match growing risks

Invest in preparedness and emergency response planning, and train your employees so they can effectively navigate the rising number of threats they may encounter in the workplace. When employees feel prepared, they can act quickly to protect themselves and their peers to mitigate harm.

2 Align safety initiatives with employee priorities

Review your safety efforts and resources to ensure they cover your organization's highest vulnerabilities and the areas employees have voiced as most important. Employees will be more engaged and responsive when their feedback informs critical decisions about their safety.

3 Establish clear and reliable two-way communication

Implement a solution to keep everyone on the same page before, during, and after emergencies. Optimize your two-way communication pathways to ensure equitable access and a seamless feedback loop, especially when safety is on the line.

4 Empower your managers to keep their teams safe

Provide ample resources, training, and instruction to managers so they have what they need to protect themselves and the people they lead. With support, managers can act as safety champions to expand the safety team's reach without additional headcount.

5 Create a psychologically safe workplace for all employees

Foster an environment where employees feel empowered to report hazards, voice concerns, and seek safety improvement. When all employees feel comfortable speaking up, issues can be resolved more quickly, and the whole organization becomes safer.



Methodology

The AlertMedia Employee Safety survey reached 2,000 Americans ages 18–80 who are employed full-time at a U.S.-based employer. The survey was conducted online between December 1, 2023, and December 15, 2023. The study has a margin of error of +/- 2.2%.

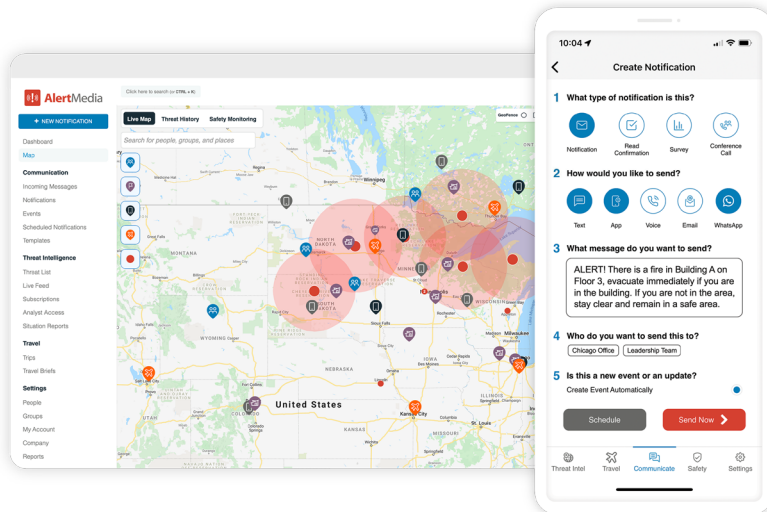
The results of any sample are subject to sampling variation. The magnitude of the variation is measurable and is affected by the number of interviews and the level of the percentages expressing the results.

In this particular study, the chances are 95 in 100 that a survey result does not vary, plus or minus, by more than 2.2% 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

To protect your employees against rising workplace safety concerns, you need a world-class emergency communication system. The AlertMedia platform helps you keep your employees safe, informed, and connected when it matters most. With fully integrated Threat Intelligence and Travel Risk Management, you'll be able to monitor, detect, and respond to threats wherever your employees are. [Schedule a demo](#) to learn why thousands of leading organizations around the world trust AlertMedia for their employee safety needs.



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