

**Rick Fineman**

Vice president, risk  
management  
ICW GROUP

**Years in the industry**  
25+

**Fast fact**  
Earlier in his career, Fineman supervised the department that completed all the air monitoring (industrial hygiene) for the workers who cleaned up after the World Trade Center attack

## ■ Q&A

# The challenges of safety culture

### ● **Last year, ICW Group launched Safety OnDemand, an online safety and learning management system. How has the application helped your clients over the past year?**

ICW Group is committed to advancing our digital delivery of services, and our most recent example of this is Safety OnDemand. This service ensures our policyholders maintain access to high-quality safety materials even when our consultants are unable to deliver them on-site, as was the case during the pandemic.

Safety OnDemand went live in the summer of 2020 as a part of an effort to integrate our on-site offerings with remote and self-led services. This helped us continue to deliver risk management consulting seamlessly when in-person visits were interrupted.

### ● **How can companies get their employees to take safety education seriously?**

Providing different modalities for training delivery can help employees access and receive training. If an employer wants their staff to internalize and benefit from the training, we recommend the following.

First, ensure you mention the importance of safety during the interview and selection process to set the right tone from the beginning. Next, incorporate the training into the onboarding and job training process. Instead of only talking about the dangers of a chemical during hazcom training, for example, bring it up when training the employee on how to do the job.

Follow up on training through pop quizzes, fun activities and spot checks. Reinforce the good behaviors and correct the bad. The better you do this, the more your staff will pay attention during training. Finally, treat training as it is intended: a platform to communicate key information so behaviors can be modified. Make sure it is designed to do so – do not simply ‘check the box.’

### ● **The pandemic aside, which emerging employee risk trends should organizations be keeping a close eye on?**

Reinforcing safety will remain a challenge if remote work continues or grows. The risks associated with working from home were brought into mainstream attention during the pandemic and should continue to be addressed. Whether it be safety/ergonomics, workers’ comp, or quality or production risks, the fact that more individuals and roles may become home-based is a risk worth monitoring.

### ● **What should safety culture look like post-pandemic?**

Re-establishing a safety culture will face similar challenges to re-establishing corporate culture as employees return to their workplaces. Habits must be recreated, priorities reestablished, and new controls must be incorporated into the efforts.

This is an opportunity for companies to redefine their safety culture and advance it from where it was. With consistency and commitment, reactive cultures can become compliance cultures, compliance cultures can move to management-led cultures, and management-led cultures can move to an employee-led safety culture.