



"The Public Interest"

Health/Safety and Environmental Issues

the PASMA way to shared knowledge

Public Agency Safety Management Association

February 28, 2026

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From the Editor: Someone wise once said “we listen to respond, not to UNDERSTAND”. Our profession tends to be highly technocratic in terms of the sciences associated with hazard identification, evaluation and control. Ironically, we tend to apply those same hard skills to our human employees and expect compliance and are surprised when there is not and wonder why. My experiences suggest that we are not always cognizant of the requisite soft skills that will cement the safety message; or ye ole “what’s in it for me” sales theory.

The Human Side of Safety: Essential Soft Skills for EHS Leadership

In today’s complex workplaces, compliance alone doesn’t guarantee safety success. The most effective EHS leaders combine deep technical expertise with the human side of leadership – the soft skills that drive engagement, influence, and lasting culture change. As EHS Recruiter Shelby Kelly explains: “The most successful EHS leaders aren’t just experts in regulations. They’re the ones who can communicate, influence, and inspire people at all levels of the business.”. Below are some essential soft skills for greater EHS impacts.

1. Master communication through active listening.

Clear, authentic communication is the foundation of great EHS leadership, but listening is just as critical. “Strong EHS leaders know that listening is as important as advising. The best leaders create space for everyone to share concerns and ideas,” Shelby says.

How to improve communication:

- Tailor your message to your audience, whether it’s frontline staff, senior management, or contractors.
- Use real stories to make technical data relatable.
- Encourage two-way feedback and act on it to show you’re listening.
- When people feel heard, they become more engaged, report near misses more often, and take greater ownership of the safety culture.

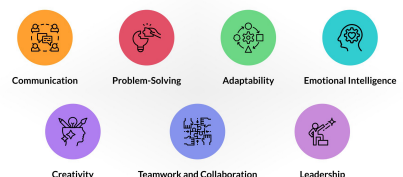
2. Lead with empathy to build trust.

Empathy is the cornerstone of trust and collaboration. Great EHS leaders understand the pressures, motivations, and challenges their teams face. “Managing conflict and understanding people’s motivations allows EHS leaders to turn challenges into opportunities.” Shelby notes.

How to demonstrate empathy:

- Recognize stress and fatigue and, respond with genuine support.
- Promote reporting without fear of blame.
- Build relationships through regular, informal conversations. Trust transforms safety from a set of rules into shared responsibility, creating a culture where safety is owned, not enforced.

Key Soft Skills in Demand



3. Influence through stakeholder engagement.

Technical expertise alone won't create buy-in. Effective leaders know how to influence and engage across all levels, from senior executives to site teams and contractors. “You can have the best safety plan in the world, but if you can't bring people along with it, *it won't succeed.*”

How to build influence:

- Translate safety metrics into business language, highlighting cost savings, productivity, or reputation benefits.
- Align initiatives early with key stakeholder priorities.
- Build coalitions and peer networks to champion change.

Stakeholder engagement ensures EHS strategies are embedded in operations, not just documented on paper.

4. Coach and develop others.

EHS leadership is about empowering others to take ownership of safety.

“Developing your team is non-negotiable. When EHS leaders invest in people, safety culture becomes self-sustaining.”

How to coach effectively:

- Set clear, measurable goals for development.
- Provide constructive feedback and recognize growth.
- Delegate meaningful responsibilities to build confidence.

Teams that grow under strong leadership continually improve performance, driving long-term cultural change.

5. Adapt and lead through change.

The EHS landscape is evolving rapidly, from new regulations to technology shifts and workforce changes. Adaptability and resilience are vital. “The EHS landscape is dynamic. Leaders who stay flexible and empathetic help their teams navigate change successfully.”

How to stay adaptable:

- Communicate the why behind every change.
- Pilot initiatives, collect feedback, and refine your approach.
- Stay visible and composed during challenges.

When leaders show flexibility and transparency, people are far more likely to embrace change.

6. Build emotional intelligence for conflict resolution.

Balancing safety, production, and cost often creates tension. Emotional intelligence allows EHS leaders to manage those conflicts constructively. “Technical skills might get you in the door, but soft skills are what make people want to follow your lead.”

Key EI traits:

- Self-awareness: Know your triggers and communication style.
- Self-regulation: Stay calm under pressure.
- Social awareness: Understand team dynamics and cultural nuances.
- Conflict resolution: Aim for win-win outcomes and shared accountability. Leaders with high EI build stronger collaboration, higher engagement, and a safety culture that thrives on trust, not fear.

Putting soft skills into action.

Here are five steps EHS leaders can take right now:

1. Self-assess your strengths and gaps across the six soft-skill areas.
2. Set measurable goals – e.g., regular site walks, coaching sessions, or feedback check-ins.
3. Use storytelling to connect technical data with human impact.
4. Build feedback loops – ask, listen, and act.
5. Model the behavior you want to see – empathy, openness, and accountability.

Technical knowledge builds compliance. Soft skills build culture. The leaders who master both are the ones who create safer, more resilient, and more engaged workplaces. “The most successful EHS leaders aren't just experts in regulations. They're the ones who can communicate, influence, and inspire people at all levels of the business.”

OSHA History Data Mining as a forecasting and preventative measure tool.

The OSHA "[Establishment Search](#)" data base logs employer citation histories since its creation in 1972 and should be used by all Safety and Health professionals in the public sector to identify common risks in their respective departments of other agencies that have already been cited. It should be stressed that once an employer either successfully abates or adjudicates its current citations, the "**history**" itself cannot be erased; meaning that the cited safety order will still be identified on the record. I should also inform you that checking an employer's OSHA or Cal/OSHA history is a MANDATORY pre-inspection activity for every Compliance Officer nationwide. Combining this webpage with one other, "[Frequently Cited OSHA Standards](#)" page the available data could and should be used to perform at least an annual audit of the IIPP and other stand-alone written programs for compliance purposes. With knowledge of this process, one of my most critical class exercises is to introduce and prove the functionality of this data mining to forecast the risk potentials if left unattended. If you don't know your Units NAICS ID, please find it. Remember that Cal/OSHA also has HIGH HAZARD Units that respond solely based on an elevated DART rating for specific NAICS number.

Task 1. Launch the "Establishment Search" site and enter your department (ex. County of Los Angeles Sherriff's Department)

Task 2. Identify every "NAICS" code listed (the request identifies NAICS – 922120 and 922140)

Task 3. Launch the "Frequently Cited OSHA Standards" link, select "California" in the Jurisdiction box and enter each of the listed NAICS Codes to identify that years frequently issued Cal/OSHA Citations for other employers with that same NAICS Code.

Task 4. Carefully read and understand the nuances of the Safety Orders and use to assess degree of compliance, make edits as needed.

OSHA ▾
STANDARDS ▾
ENFORCEMENT ▾
TOPICS ▾
HELP AND RESOURCES ▾
NEWS ▾

Establishment Search Results

Establishment	Inspection Date Range	OSHA Office	Site Zip Code	State
County of Los Angeles Sheriff_s Department	03/04/2021 to 03/04/2026	all	all	all

Note: Inspections which are known to be incomplete will have the identifying Activity Nr shown in italic. Information for these open cases is especially dynamic, e.g., violations may be added or deleted.

Results By Date

Sort by: [Date](#) | [Name](#) | [Office](#) | [State](#)

CSHO Entry dependent on sites primary activity

Results 1 - 9 of 1

[Return to Search](#)

#	Activity	Date Opened	RID	ST	Type	Scope	SIC	NAICS	Violations	Establishment Name
1	1839399.015	07/21/2025	0950641	CA	Fat/Cat	Partial		922120		Los Angeles County Sheriff'S Department
2	1730999.015	02/28/2024	0950643	CA	Unprog Rel	Partial		922120		Los Angeles County Sheriff'S Department
3	1703818.015	10/12/2023	0950643	CA	Accident	Partial		922120	5	Los Angeles County Sheriff'S Department - North County Correction Facility
4	1623713.015	09/21/2022	0950644	CA	Accident	Partial		922110		Los Angeles County Sheriff Department - Training Unit
5	1612099.015	08/02/2022	0950643	CA	Accident	Partial		922120	1	Los Angeles County Sheriff'S Department; North County Recruit Training Unit
6	1603587.015	06/20/2022	0950643	CA	Accident	Partial		922120	2	Los Angeles County Sheriff'S Department; North County Recruit Training Unit
7	1576810.015	02/07/2022	0950641	CA	Fat/Cat	Partial		922120	1	Los Angeles County Sheriff'S Department
8	1574194.015	01/24/2022	0950641	CA	Fat/Cat	Partial		922120	5	Los Angeles County Sheriff'S Department
9	1521032.015	03/23/2021	0950643	CA	Accident	Partial		922140	4	Los Angeles County Sheriff'S Department

HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF BECAUSE

NO ONE WAS LISTENING THE FIRST TIME.

G.W.F HEGEL



...and when it does

EVERY TIME

history
REPEATS ITSELF
the price goes up

Standard	Citations	Inspections	Penalty
Total	14	8	\$35,270
3203(A)(	2	2	\$1,535
3203(B)(	1	1	\$0
3273(A)	1	1	\$315
3314(C)	1	1	\$18,000
3328(G)	1	1	\$210
3401(B)	1	1	\$1,000
3407(A)	1	1	\$1,000
3409(B)	1	1	\$1,000
3410(A)	1	1	\$1,000
34100001	1	1	\$1,000
3650(T)(	1	1	\$210
5162(A)	1	1	\$9,000
6165(F)	1	1	\$1,000

Frequently Cited OSHA Standards Results

NAICS Code: 922120 *Police Protection*
 Establishment Size: ALL sizes

Listed below are the standards which were cited by California OSHA for the 922120 NAICS Code for establishments from 2024 through September 2025. Penalties shown reflect current rather than initial amounts. For more information

Standard	Citations	Inspections	Penalty	Descr
Total	51	12	\$411,480	All Sta
3203(A)(	9	3	\$141,355	--- No
64010009	8	2	\$72,890	--- No
3380(F)(	7	3	\$27,265	--- No
342(A)	3	3	\$15,000	--- No
3380(E)	2	2	\$46,600	--- No
3383(B)	2	2	\$46,600	--- No
3427(A)(	2	1	\$2,250	--- No
5198(D)(	2	2	\$12,085	--- No
5198(L)	2	2	\$1,360	--- No
3203(A)	1	1	\$8,100	--- No
3382(A)	1	1	\$975	--- No
3383(A)	1	1	\$975	--- No
3395(I)	1	1	\$375	--- No
342(B)	1	1	\$0	--- No
3421(M)	1	1	\$8,435	--- No
3427(B)(	1	1	\$8,435	--- No
5144(E)(	1	1	\$450	--- No
5144(F)(	1	1	\$450	--- No
5144(K)(	1	1	\$225	--- No

Some Safety Orders that are mandatory "serious" IAW P&P

SAFETY AND HEALTH Topics w/ SOP or Written Program Requirements

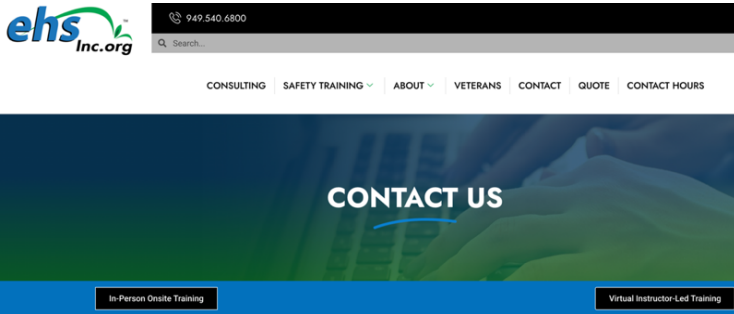
- Injury & Illness Prevention Program (T8 3203)
- Carcinogen Registration (T8 5203)
- BBP/TB (T8 5193 & 5199)
- Hearing Conservation (T8 5095-5099)
- Confined Space (T8 5156-5158)
- Heat Illness (T8 3395 and/or 3203)
- Hazcom (T8 5194)
- PPE (T8 3380-3387)
- Respiratory Protection (T8 5144)
- Chemical Hygiene (T8 5191)
- Lead (T8 1532.1 & 5198)
- Asbestos (T8 1529 & 5208)
- Ventilation & IAQ (T8 5142-5143, 5154.1 & 5154.2)
- Ergo (T8 5110)
- Forklifts / Site Vehicles (T8 3650-3668)
- Hot Work Permit & Welding & Cutting (T8 4794-4848 & 5105)
- Fire Protection (T8 6150, 6184)
- Lockout/Tagout (T8 3314)
- Electrical (T8 2300-2589.2 & 2700-2989.1)
- Machine Guarding (T8 4189-4647)
- Fall Protection (T8 1670)
- Boilers Compressed Air Tanks (T8 454-560),
Elevator Inspection Documents and Valid Permits (T8 300-3146)
- Radiation (ionizing and non-ionizing) (T8 5075-5085)
- Process Safety Management (T8 5189)
- Wildfire Safety Order (T8 1541.1)
- COVID-19 (T8 3205)
- Silica in Gen Ind & Construction (T8 5204, T8 1532.3)

Why knowing your working units NAICS code is critical

[FY 2025-26 Cal/OSHA High Hazard Unit](#)

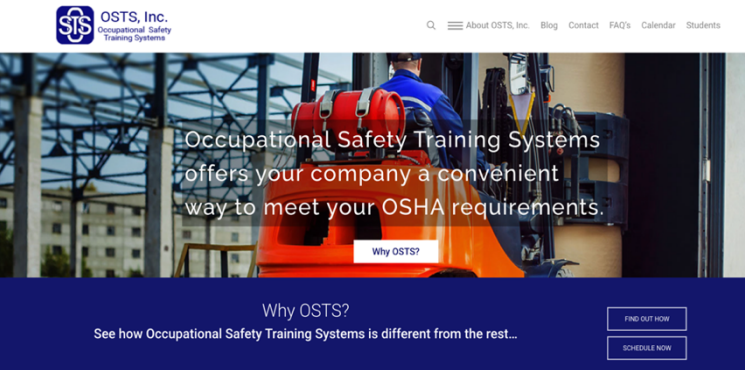
See their home page and understand their mission and rules of engagement!!

A warm and sincere thanks to some of our past Affiliate Members who have supported our Mission and Events throughout the years...in no specific order they are:



Corporate Office

23161 Lake Center Drive, Suite 220
Lake Forest, CA 92630
Corporate Office:
949.540.6800

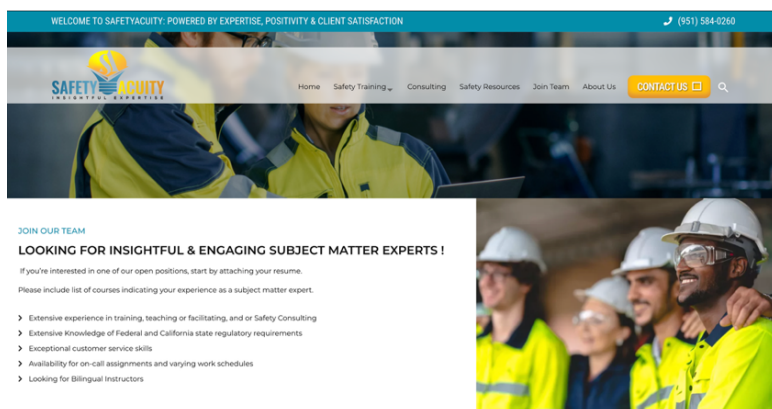


O.S.T.S. Inc.

Occupational Safety Training Systems
Training Facility
14650 Central Ave.
Chino, Ca. 91710
P: 877-404-OSTS (6787)



Chabot Las Positas OSHA Training Institute Ed. Centers
5860 Owens Drive, 3rd Floor , Pleasanton, CA 94588
Phone: 866-936-6742



SAFETYACUITY

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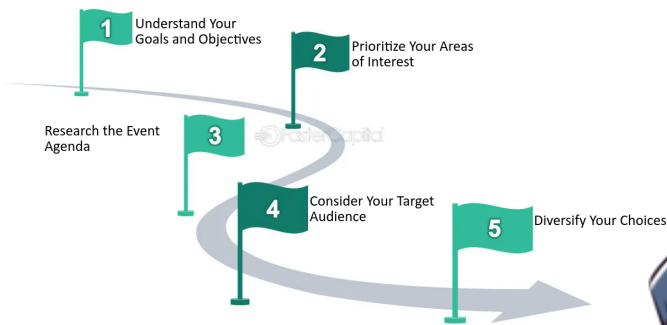
www.safetyacuity.com

....and now

A small reminder: Not all of us have resources to help in matters of the Informal Conference nor the Actual Appeal, so if you have not yet visited the [“Appeals Board”](#) home page, this link provides some interesting information that will certainly help in your efforts to find mediated settlements that may downgrade or vacate a citation and most certainly will reduce the penalty. When you’re investigating this site, please consider the hyperlinks listed under the heading “Decisions”. They will be of tremendous use to you in knowing how Administrative Judges as well as the entire Board views their mission. A note of caution, despite some of the CSHO messaging, the “Informal Conference” **IS NOT** the beginning part of the Formal Appeals Process. They are separate and distinct. I strongly urge all readers to read the Cal/OSHA P&P on both these topics. P&P C-20 Informal Conference. P&P C-23 Appeals.

Stay informed and we’ll see you at the March meeting and please bring a Colleague, some questions and let’s discuss at the round table.

Choosing the Right Roundtable Topics



We can talk, collaborate and improve