

BULLETIN

NO: 18-02
DATE: January 3, 2018
TO: All Personnel
FROM: David Picone, Battalion Chief, Health and Safety Officer
SUBJECT: **Safety Message** - Leadership Influence on Safety Culture

There are countless examples and studies performed that indicate a direct link between leadership and the safety culture of the workplace.

You are all leaders in title or by example. Please review this message as well as the embedded links with your crew and/or staff.

Refer to bulletin #17-076 for Health and Safety communications descriptions. Once posted, a Safety Message will be reformatted to a Tailboard Safety for ongoing reference.

Please contact the Health and Safety Office at SDFDHealth&Safety@sandiego.gov with comments or areas of improvement. For all other questions contact HSO/Battalion Chief David Picone at 619.533.4466 or dpicone@sandiego.gov.

“Promoting Safe and Healthy Lives”



San Diego Fire-Rescue Department Health & Safety Office

SAFETY MESSAGE

Div/Sec: All Fire-Recue

Issue/Incident:

Date: 01/03/2017

LEADERSHIP INFLUENCE ON SAFETY CULTURE

[Brian Fennessy](#)

Fire Chief

[Chris Webber](#)

*Assistant Chief
Emergency
Operations*

[Kevin Ester](#)

*Assistant Chief
Business
Operations*

[David Picone](#)

*Battalion Chief
Health & Safety
Officer*

Feedback
Suggestions
and/or Reporting
to the OHSC

SDFDHEALTH&SAFETY@SANDIEGO.GOV

Background:

The challenges faced by today's Firefighters and Lifeguards are unprecedented in terms of danger and unpredictability. While training adapts constantly to respond to changes in our work environment, our attitudes and standards towards safety should always remain constant. Each and every member of San Diego Fire Rescue department is a leader in maintaining a robust safety culture. What kind of leader will you be?

Passive leaders are generally those that fail to make decisions important to employee safety, fail to intervene in safety issues, and don't take action until something goes wrong. In a dynamic emergency environment, they aren't looking out for their fellow responders or co-workers. They react to a bad situation.

Transformational leaders emphasize safety over risk taking. They show concern for safety and well-being, lead by example, and ensure their expectations for safe work practices are communicated. During emergency operations, crews have confidence that this leader is looking out for their safety, in turn promoting a better safety culture and increasing productivity. Accidents are avoided by proactive actions and communication.

Countless after action, line of duty death (LODD), and near miss reports have been written and unfortunately will continue to be written. Our profession is inherently dangerous. Whichever leadership path you choose to follow, know that no matter what your rank, position, or status may be within San Diego Fire Rescue, there is always someone looking to you as an influence. It's doubtful that any member of this department who swore to protect life, property, and the environment would say that they wouldn't protect their family serving alongside them. **Clearly, transformational leadership is the only responsible way to operate as a leader.**

"The job" may constantly change, but we ALL can promote a constant culture of safe practices. As leaders, we need to contemplate and discuss every risk taken during routine operations, training, and emergency responses. During incidents, it is imperative that we communicate and correct any unsafe practices. And finally, after action reports, both formal and informal, should put heavy thought into HOW objectives were completed rather than that they were completed. It is up to each and every one of us in the San Diego Fire Rescue Department to be leaders in promoting our safety culture.

References:

US Fire Administration. July 2017

[Leadership Influences on Fire Safety Culture](#)

<http://go.usa.gov/3DTJG>

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