

The State of Frontline Safety Leadership in Construction

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The construction industry stands on the shoulders of its frontline leaders—supervisors who are tasked not only with building structures, but with safeguarding the people who build them. At Vector Solutions, we conducted a study on The State of Frontline Safety Leadership in Construction to better understand the realities, challenges, and needs of these critical leaders. This national survey captures the voices of 680 construction supervisors from across the U.S., offering a clear-eyed look at where safety leadership is thriving—and where gaps remain.

The results show a committed, capable workforce—but one that often operates without enough training, tools, or support to lead effectively:

- 40% of supervisors want more training around communication & conflict resolution techniques, and 27% have never received formal conflict management training—despite conflict resolution being a regular part of their role.
- 78% of supervisors leading crews with English as a second language struggle to give instructions effectively, and 77% struggle to confirm understanding.
- Nearly half (47%) lack easy access to resources to address mental health or substance use concerns—critical issues in a high-risk industry, but 64% worry that saying the wrong thing could make a worker's personal situation even worse.
- 67% have had to make an important safety-related decision without guidance or support from their company.
- While 79% have completed OSHA 30 Construction Training, 81% want refresher courses to keep up with evolving safety standards.
- 72% believe better worksite management technology would improve both safety and work quality, yet 35% are not currently using safety-tracking tools.

These findings carry powerful implications. They point to an urgent need for more targeted training, better access to technology, and stronger leadership support from the top down. By closing these gaps, the construction industry can better protect workers, retain its most capable leaders, and build a safety culture that's as strong and enduring as the projects it completes. At Vector Solutions, we remain committed to equipping these frontline leaders with the knowledge, tools, and confidence they need to keep every jobsite safe.

Sincerely,

Clare Epstein

Clare Epstein | General Manager, Vector Solutions

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Survey Methodology & Demographics Summary

Supervisors aren't just managing crews and timelines—they're the jobsite's first responders for safety risks, mental health concerns, and more. Yet many feel they're being asked to lead without the training or tools they need. The result: a workforce working hard, but often without the support to stay safe, focused, and resilient.

In this survey, we assessed supervisors' confidence in addressing mental health or substance use issues, on-site safety, and leadership skills like conflict management. We

examined what training they've received (if any) in crisis response, safety, and conflict resolution; whether they feel equipped to keep workers safe; and how technology can help. We identified where they feel unsure—spotting early warning signs, responding in the moment, and seeking guidance—and explored how improved training and tools can strengthen frontline leadership and foster a safer, more supportive culture.



Survey Details

- Survey conducted at 95% confidence, +/- 4% margin of error
- Survey conducted from July 20 - July 28, 2025



Respondent Qualifiers

- Live in the US
- Employed full-time at supervisor level or higher
- Work in the construction industry



680 total respondents

- Male: 78%
- Female: 22%
- Representation: 47 of 50 states (excluding: ID, VT, and WY)



Key Findings



The Weight of Leadership



For Construction Supervisors,

A Hard Hat Is Just
One Of Many That
They Wear



7 in 10

Conduct daily job site safety checks as a
part of their regular responsibilities

63% Resolve team conflict

62% Develop employee training plans

57% Handle safety incidents & near-misses

But Some Are Stepping Into Leadership Roles Without Ever Being Formally Trained



Nearly 1 in 5

(19%) Have not received formal people management training



Over 1 in 5

(27%) Have not received formal conflict management training; **even though 63% say conflict resolution is a regular part of their role**



Those With Training Under Their Belt Have More Confidence Facing Challenging Moments

62%

Of those who have received conflict management training credit it with greatly improving their confidence in tough situations

Still, Plenty Are Asking For More – So What's On The Top Of Their Training Wishlist?



Solving Communication Challenges

40% of supervisors want more training around communication and conflict resolution techniques



Preventing Safety Risks

38% want more training around correcting unsafe behaviors before incidents occur



Supporting New Workers

36% want more training around mentoring more inexperienced workers, and those in Gen Z were **23% more likely** than those in Gen X to say this

Overcoming Multi-lingual Challenges

Language Gaps Add An Additional

Hurdle To Team
Management



Around 1 in 3

28%

Of support crews speak English as
their second language (ESL)

Causing Communication Needs To Escalate Into High-Stakes Challenges

78%

Of those
leading ESL
crews
experience
*difficulty giving
instructions*

77%

**Struggle with *confirming task
understanding*, and those who
don't believe their company
provides tools to keep teams
safe were 4X more likely to
report this struggle**

75%

Have a hard
time
*addressing
safety
concerns in
the moment*

And Leaving Them Searching

For More Support To Keep Every Worker Safe

78%

Of those leading
ESL crews wish
they had *real-time
translation apps*
to better guide
their teams

While 50%

Want toolbox-talk material in
multiple languages

And 48%

Wish they had *coaching on how to
better engage cross-language teams*

Handling Difficult Situations

Supervisors Bear The Brunt Of Handling Difficult Team Realities Head-On

49%

Find managing worker behavior – like attendance and attitude – a challenging aspect of leading their crew

23%

Say that their team is *not able to perform at a high level under pressure*, leaving supervisors to shoulder even more of the load

And While They Feel Confident

Leading In Times Of Conflict

89%

Feel good about
their ability to
have difficult
conversations
with team
members

93%

Feel equipped to address
performance issues with team
members, and those who receive
clear guidance from leadership on
site culture were **57% more likely**
than those who don't to say this

One In Five Are Handed

Responsibility
Without Instruction

20%

Are not highly confident in their management and leadership skills, and those without adequate support and training were 67% more likely than their supported peers to lack extreme confidence in this area

Sending Them Scrambling

To Make The Playbook On Their Own

16%

Don't have expectations
and guidance from
leadership on what strong
site culture looks like

12%

Don't feel backed by senior
leaders on their team when it
comes to maintaining a safe,
supportive culture

Managing Sensitive Issues



Even Confident Leaders Fear Saying the Wrong Thing



50%

Are highly confident in their ability to recognize early signs of mental health distress on the job



But 64%

Worry that saying the wrong thing could make a worker's personal situation even worse

As More Supervisors Play The Role Of A Mentor And A Therapist For Their Crews



Around 7 in 10

71%

Have been approached by a worker on their crew about personal issues such as mental health or substance use

But While Most Leaders Can Initiate 1:1s On Sensitive Topics

71%

Would talk to a team member privately as a first step if they suspected they were experiencing a personal issue affecting their well-being

13%

Would first report to HR or management. However, in entirely union settings, supervisors are nearly 2X more likely to take this route, reflecting protocols and liability concerns

Too Often, They Lack The Guidance Needed To Do The Right Thing

38%

Of leaders lack documented protocols for addressing personal or mental health issues raised by crew members. Leaders who don't feel invested are nearly 3x more likely to report this gap than those who do

49%

Are concerned about burnout or mental health on their team but don't know how to address it

So They Want More Direction On Spotting Issues Before They Escalate

6 in 10

Want better guidance in spotting
early signs of burnout

63%

Want better guidance in spotting early
signs of emotional distress

55%

Want better guidance in spotting
early signs of substance misuse

As Gray Areas Keep Them From Stepping In – Especially Newer Industry Entrants



Workplace Stigma

33% say *stigma around mental health* makes it hard to address crew mental health or substance concerns, and those in Gen Z were **20% more likely** than average to say this



Fear of Liability

29% cite concern over *legal or liability consequences*, and those in Gen Z were **32% more likely** than average to say this



Inexperience on the Job

22% say it's due to *limited experience and time in the role*, and those in Gen Z were **31% more likely** than average to say this

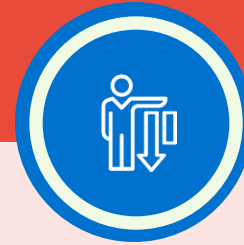
Barriers Around Continued Support Make Intervening Even Harder



Lack of training

22%

say limited training makes it hard to address crew mental health or substance concerns



Leadership gaps

22%

point to limited support from upper leadership and HR

Painting A Troubling Picture

Where Help Isn't Being Offered In Times Of Crisis

Nearly half

(47%) Don't have easy access to tools or resources that could help them handle mental health and substance use concerns in the moment

This is particularly alarming, given that the construction industry has one of the highest suicide rates among any profession

Source: [CDC](#)

The Importance of Safety + Support



When Safety Decisions Can't Wait, Moves Are Made Blindly

67%

Of Supervisors have had to make an important safety-related decision on site without guidance or support from their company

With Pressure To Drive Results

Putting Teams In Harm's Way



45%

Have felt pressured to
prioritize project deadlines
over safety on the job

In 2024, 33% of industrial workers
admitted they also felt pushed to
prioritize productivity over safety –
making it clear this pain point is even
sharper in construction

Source: [Vector Solutions](#)

And Even When Dangerous

Risks Are Spotted,
Next Steps Aren't
Always Clear



Around 2 in 5

(39%) Have noticed a potential safety risk on the job but didn't know what to do about it, and those in Gen Z were **37% more likely** than average to say this

The Impact of Training and Technology



Compliant Safety Training Is Standard, But It's Only Meeting The Minimum

79%

Have completed OSHA 30 Construction Training as formal safety training becomes a standard expectation for supervisors

67%

Credit OSHA 30 training with giving them a stronger hand in managing crew safety, and those at organizations made up of more than 1,000 workers were **72% more likely** than average to say this – showing that those managing safety at scale view it as essential

As Safety Isn't Static, And Supervisors Want To Keep Learning

81%

Of supervisors say they would benefit from refresher courses to stay current on evolving safety standards and best practices

Safety-Tracking Technology Is An Essential Tool That Not Enough Have Access To

35%

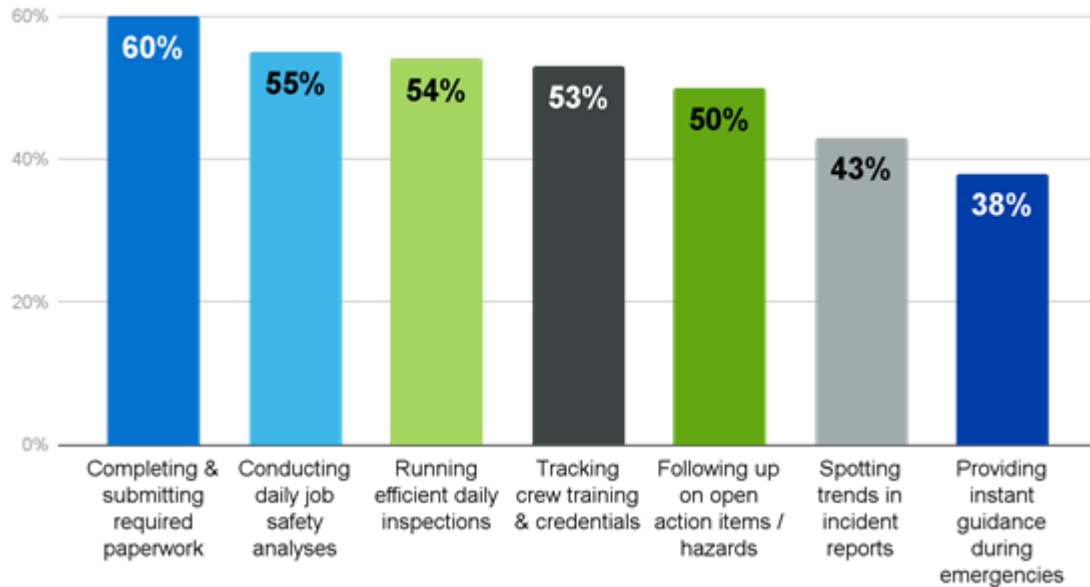
Are not using technology and software to track safety tasks like inspections, incident logs, and training records

Organizations that partner with Vector Solutions experience 30%- 61% fewer incident rates and can save up to \$1M annually.

[Read Report](#)

For Those Who Use It, It's A Positive For The Whole Jobsite

Those using software to track safety tasks say the tech helps them with:



Causing Adoption Anxiety To Fade

Once Its Benefits Become Felt

95%

Of those who use technology and software for safety task tracking feel at least somewhat confident in using it effectively

Better, Faster Tech Is In High Demand

72%

Say that better worksite management technology would improve both safety and work quality onsite

59%

Say it would help them catch safety issues earlier

And

54%

Say it would help them respond faster to incidents

And Supervisors Can Stay A Step Ahead With Convenient, Accessible Tools

81%

Say having a mobile-friendly tool for inspections and reporting would dramatically improve their ability to catch and fix safety issues before they turn into hazards

Building a Safety Culture



Spending More Time And Energy On Their Efforts As Keepers Of Safety Culture

96%

Feel personally responsible for creating a safe and supportive culture on their jobsite

95%

Say their leadership on site directly reduces the risk of accidents, injuries, and conflicts

96%

Feel their crew trusts them to handle safety and wellbeing issues fairly

And When Training Is Built On

That Foundation, Nearly Every Crew Member Benefits

93%

Say that structured supervisor training leads to *fewer safety incidents*

91%

Say that it *improves crew satisfaction and morale*

92%

Say that it *leads to better problem solving and improved performance*

Which Makes Ongoing Support A Defining Factor In Longevity

61%

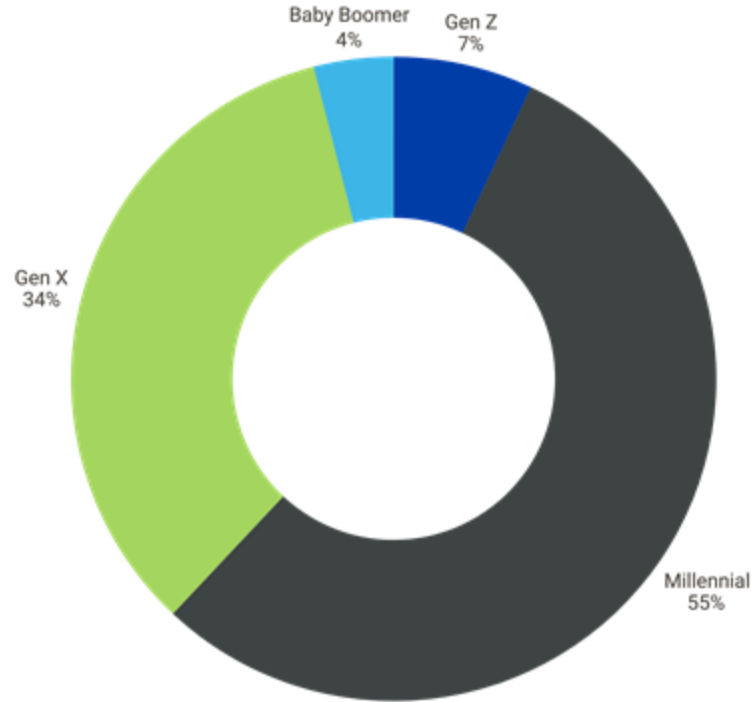
Say support from their senior
leaders has a big influence
on whether they remain in
their role



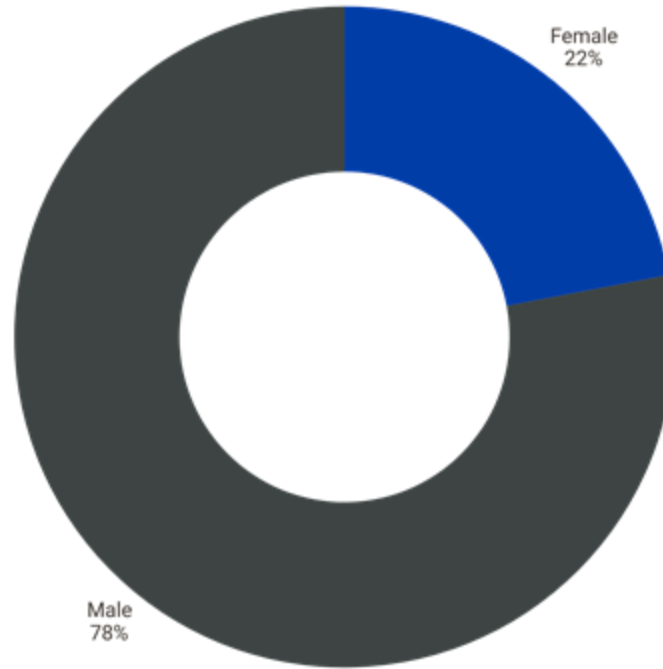
Demographics



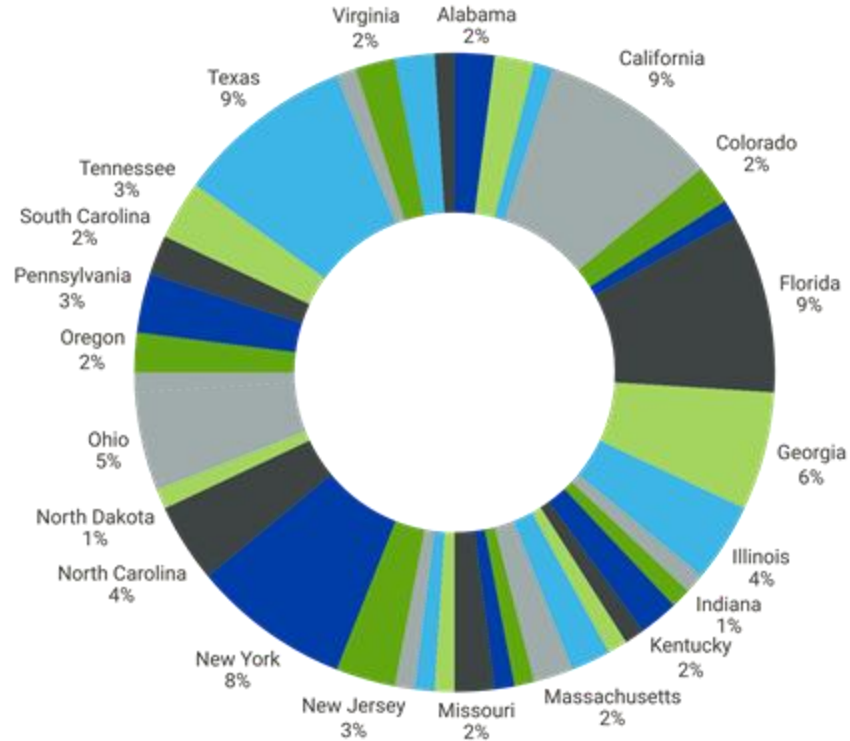
Age



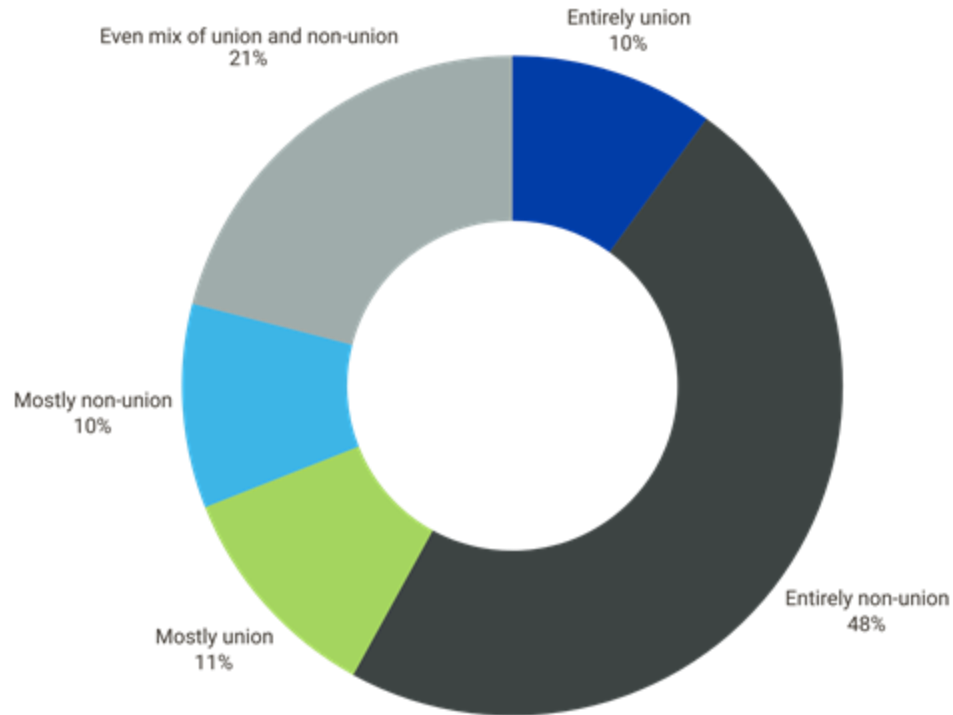
Gender



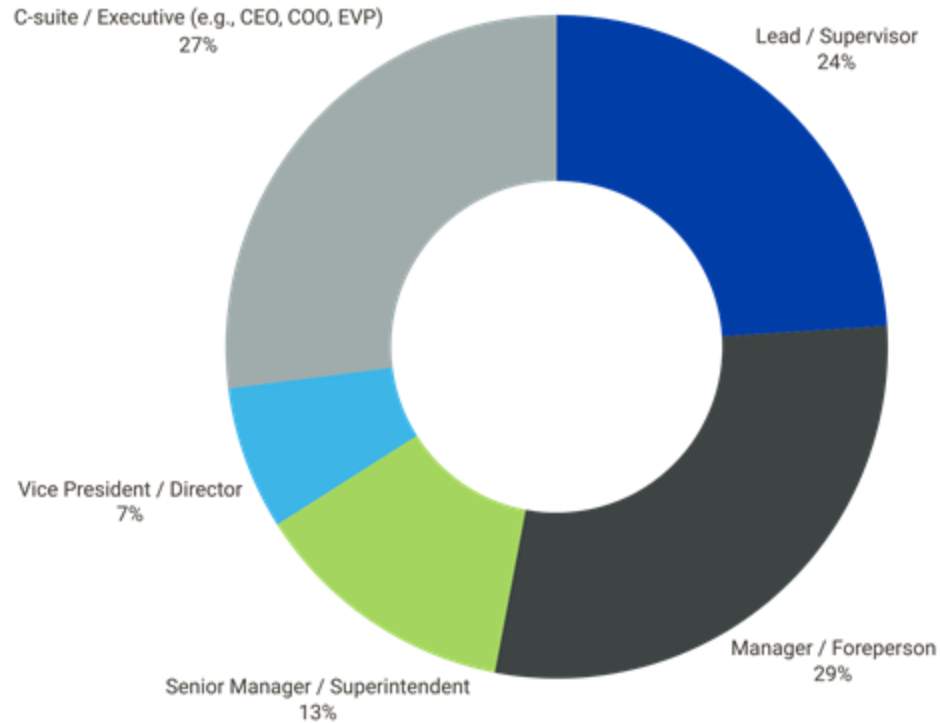
State



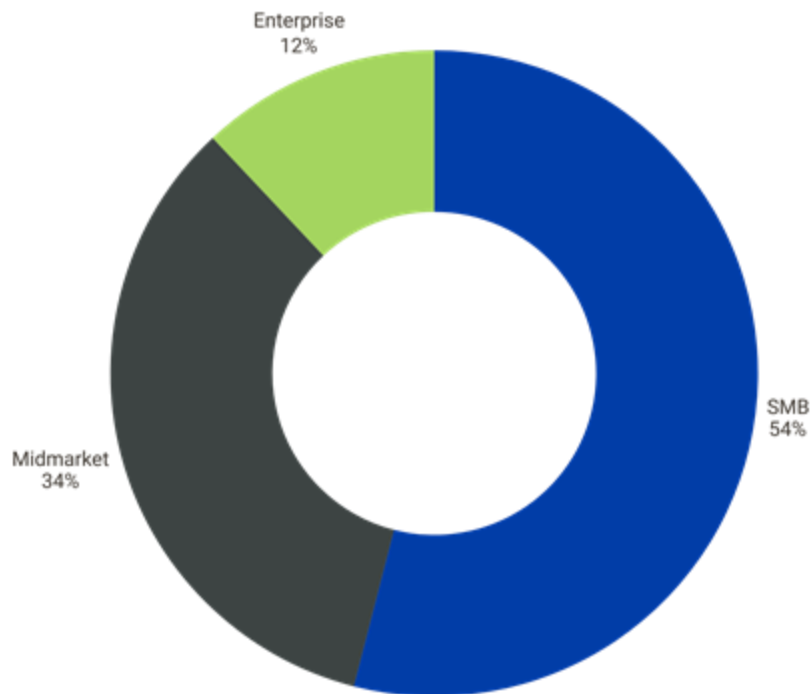
Labor Environment



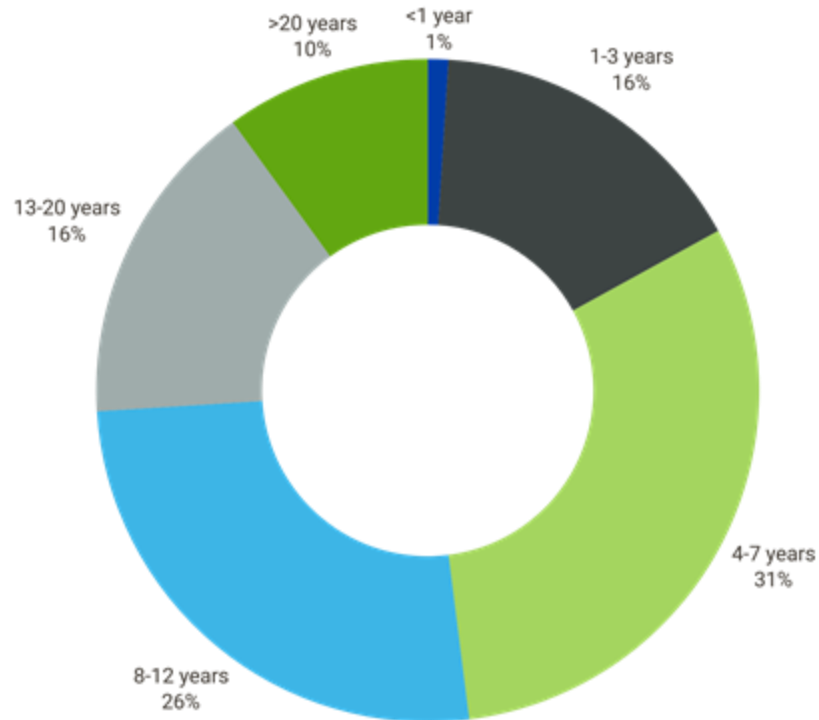
Role



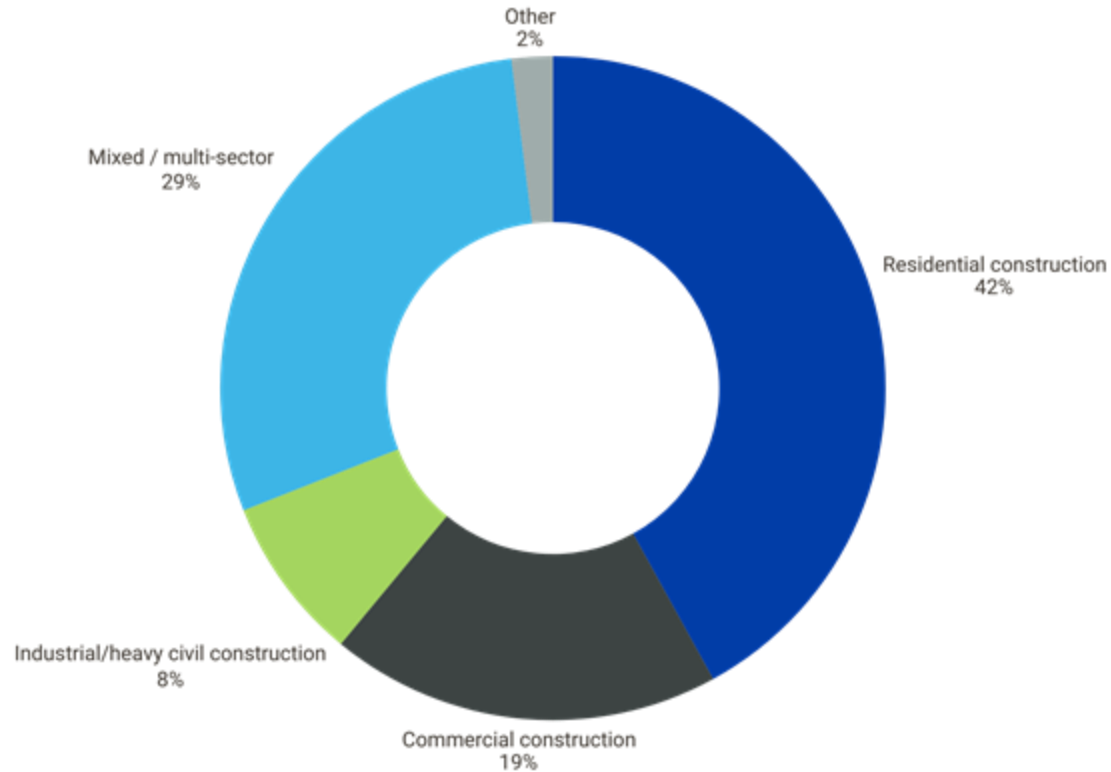
Business Size



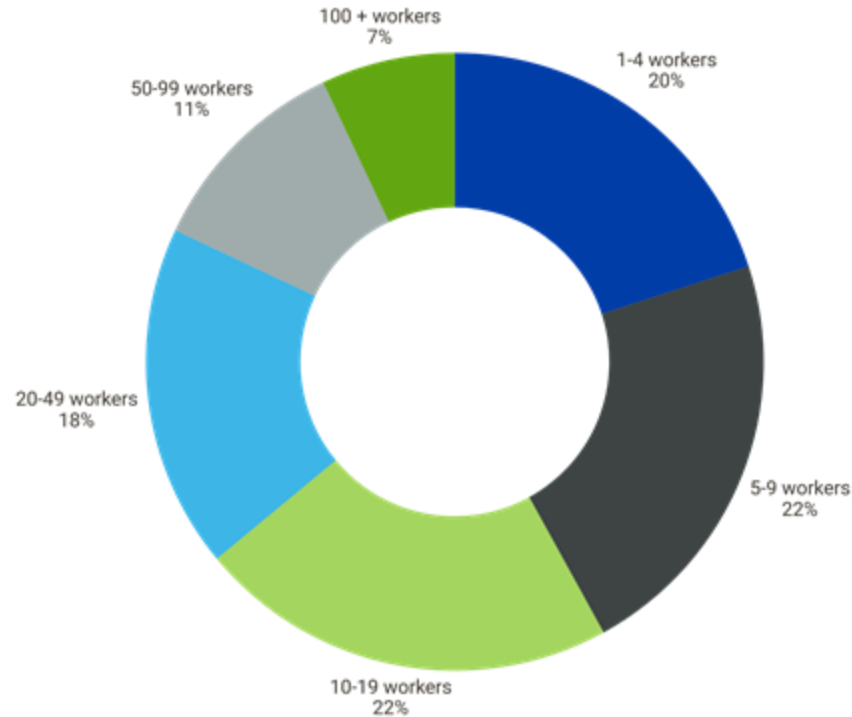
Years in Management



Workplace Setting



Workers Supervised



A photograph of three construction workers in a factory or industrial setting. They are wearing hard hats and safety vests. One worker is holding a tablet, and the other two are looking at it. The image has a blue overlay.

About Vector Solutions



Vector Solutions for Construction

Enhancing Safety, Compliance, and Workforce Readiness



Vector Solutions for Construction is a leading provider of training, compliance, and performance management solutions. Our industry-specific solutions help reduce safety incidents, close critical skills gaps, build stronger leaders, and improve productivity by embedding safety into daily workflows, automating compliance reporting, and equipping supervisors and crews with the training and tools they need to work confidently and proactively. [Take the First Step Today](#)

Health & Safety Training

Ensure your workforce is OSHA compliant with our comprehensive safety training programs.

[Learn More](#)

EHS Management

Optimize your environmental, health, and safety processes with our robust EHS management solutions and reduce incident rates by 30%

[Learn More](#)

Professional Development Training

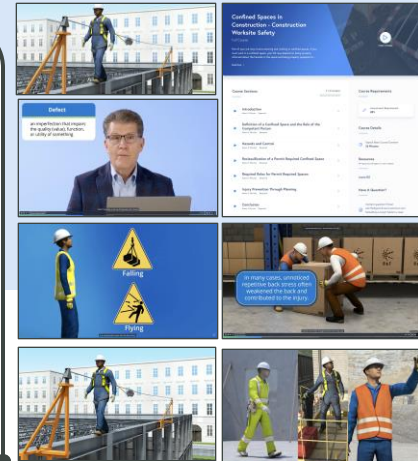
Strengthen critical leadership skills to navigate workplace challenges with confidence and build a strong crew.

[Learn More](#)

Learning Management System

Assess employee competencies, automate compliance, assign courses, and track progress to drive consistency across your organization.

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