



Safety Week Highlights



The purpose of Safety Week is to prepare us to respond to emergency events like fires or tornados, among others. Many of us had an opportunity to participate in the third annual Safety Week at 7430 Louis Pasteur. Our activities included building tours that highlighted safety features (fire extinguishers, exits, equipment to help people with limited mobility exit the building, etc.), classes on driving and office safety, and fund raisers for the State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC). We had a great turn out at all the events and have raised over \$480.00 for the charitable campaign to date.

Here are some pictures of our activities.



Bryce Houlton teaches correct use of a fire extinguisher.



Diane Herrera and Norma Garza make Frito Pies.



Rose Falcon (SECC Coordinator) shows off the profits from the Frito Pie/Chile con Queso fundraiser.



Katherine Velasquez submitted a picture of her prize winning Go-Kit.



Students learn CPR for infants.

Office Safety and Ergonomics

One of courses we offered during Safety Week was Office Safety and Ergonomics. It is easy to forget that offices can be dangerous places to work, but there are many things you can do to protect yourself from office related injury. Here are some important tips for your work station:

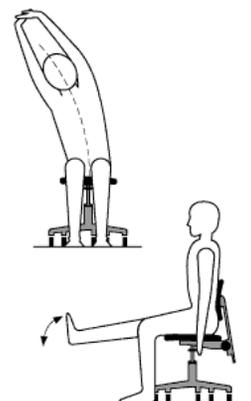
- ✓ Adjust your chair height so your elbows are at the same level as your desktop.
- ✓ Adjust the seatback for good support. Use a lumbar pillow if your chair doesn't provide enough support.
- ✓ If your feet don't comfortably reach the floor, use a footrest or lower your keyboard and chair height.
- ✓ Position the monitor so the top of the screen is at or below eye level.
- ✓ With your elbows at desk level your wrists should be straight. Using a wrist rest may help. You can also adjust your armrests.
- ✓ Keep the mouse next to the keyboard.



It is also important to take a micro-break every half hour.

- ✓ Move your shoulders in a circular motion first backward, then forward.
- ✓ Point and flex your feet.
- ✓ Straighten and bend your legs at the knee.
- ✓ Close your eyes for a few seconds and then focus them on something in the distance to prevent eye strain.

These simple strategies can help you avoid work station-related injuries.



The Survey of Employee Engagement

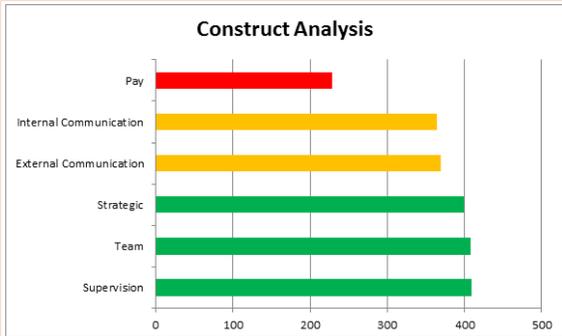
Thank you for participating in the Survey of Employee Engagement (SEE). The survey was conducted last spring and focuses on the key factors that motivate employees to work toward fulfilling the vision and mission of our agency. The framework of the survey consists of a series of questions that measure how we function, the work climate, potential barriers to improvement and organizational strengths.

Of Region 8's 117 employees, 100 of you completed the survey. Our high response rate indicates that you have a strong investment in our organization, want to see it improve, and have a sense of responsibility towards DSHS. Region 8 had the second highest participation rate in the Division of Regional and Local Health Services!

Constructs

The survey addresses 14 constructs that drive organizational performance and engagement: supervision, team, quality, pay, benefits, physical environment, strategic, diversity, information systems, internal communication, external communication, employee engagement, employee development and job satisfaction.

The highest scores for Region 8 were supervision, team, and strategic and the lowest scores were pay, internal communication and external communication. All of the Region 8 scores, except pay, were above 350. A score of 350 or above indicates that employees view the issue more positively than negatively and scores of 375 or higher indicate areas of substantial strength. Scores below 325 are a source of concern. Region 8 only had one score below 325: Pay.



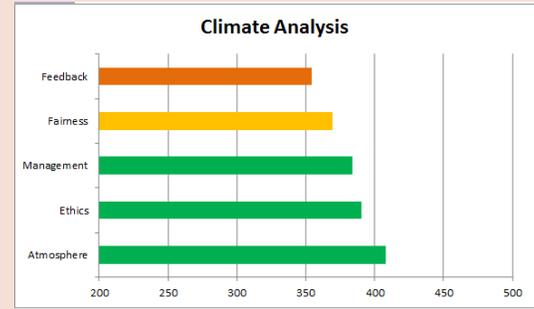
The high score on the supervision construct indicates that you view your supervisors as fair, helpful and critical to the flow of work. The team score shows that you see your work groups as effective, cohesive and open to the opinions of the members. A high score for strategic means that you view DSHS as able to quickly relate its mission and goals to environmental changes and demands.

The low score for pay may indicate that you believe pay levels are not appropriately set to work demands, experience and ability. Although the internal and external communication constructs were the other two lower scoring constructs for Region 8, neither is below 350. Our scores for these two constructs are in the average range. For internal communication, this suggests that you do not feel that information arrives in a timely manner and that it is difficult to find needed facts. It also means that we need to modernize our communication technology. For external communication, average scores show that we need to improve tools and processes for communicating with our customers.

Climate

The work climate determines how efficient and effective we are. The appropriate climate is a combination of a safe, non-harassing environment with ethical employees who treat each other with fairness and respect. The climate areas are: atmosphere, ethics, fairness, feedback and management. As with the constructs, scores above 350 suggest that you perceive the issue more positively

than negatively. Scores of 375 or higher are areas of substantial strength. Scores below 325 are areas of concern.



Feedback is important in organizational learning because it provides the necessary data in which improvement can occur. **Fairness** measures the extent to which you believe that equal and fair opportunity exists for everyone in Region 8. **Management** means that the climate presented by the Region 8 management is accessible, visible and effective at communicating. **Ethics** is the foundation of building trust where employees are ethical in their behavior and feel that ethical violations are handled appropriately. **Atmosphere** means that the organization is free of harassment.

Please take some time to think about this information and what it means for Region 8. Send your suggestions for improvement or change to your supervisor or manager. We want to use these results to improve Region 8 and make it a better place to work.



The State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC) will end October 30th. If you have not yet received an SECC Authorization Form and wish to donate please contact our local SECC Coordinator Rose Falcon at Rosalinda.Falcon@dshs.state.tx.us and she will be happy to get one to you. Please ensure all forms are submitted to Rose by Oct. 30th.

A heartfelt thank you goes out to all of you who have either submitted an authorization form or have participated in one of our fundraising activities.



2014 All Staff Meeting - December 10th

Please mark your calendar to reserve December 10 for Region 8's 2014 all staff meeting. Once again, we will hold the meeting at the Christopher Columbus Society Hall at 201 Piazza Italia from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. If you are new to Region 8, this is an annual event where all the staff gather to hear an interesting speaker, enjoy lunch and participate in a white elephant gift exchange. If you would like to help plan this event, please send an email to gale.morrow@dshs.state.tx.us.

If you have something you would like published in an upcoming newsletter or an idea for a story, please send it to gale.morrow@dshs.state.tx.us. We'd like to hear about your ideas.