

SAFETY CASE STUDY

At EJ Ajax, making safety the top priority benefits employees and the bottom-line.

Employees at EJ Ajax, a small metal fabrication company headquartered just north of Minneapolis, trust that the company values their personal safety above everything else. Safety is at the heart of the company's culture. But this culture is not just built on lofty language or empty promises inserted into press releases and brochures or on the company's website.

Metal fabrication is known in the safety community as a dangerous trade, and when EJ Ajax says its willing to place safety above the bottom line, it means it. The safety culture of the company can be seen in its actions every day and it is bringing positive results.



This culture is grounded in a series of policies and actions that ensure that the goal of safety is fully realized. For new employees, apprenticeship training includes more than 100 hours of safety training, with 10 additional hours of on-going safety training required each year. New hires are also provided with all the equipment they need to work safely; everything from prescription safety glasses to steel-toed work boots and ear protection, with more specialized equipment provided to other employees based on the work they do.

Every employee in the company is empowered to play an active role promoting the safety culture. All workers have the authority to shut down any machine or operation at any time if they are concerned about its safety. At weekly continuous improvement meetings, topics related to safety are always discussed and every member of the company attends.

While EJ Ajax will always be willing to put safety above the bottom line, the company is proud to prove that safety and financial success can go hand in hand. Money saved in workers compensation premiums positively impacts the bottom line. A reputation for safety helps the company attract skilled workers to remain competitive. And all told, safe workplaces filled with skilled workers mean on-time deliveries and consistent quality of service for customers.

As a local small-business operating right here in Minnesota, EJ Ajax offers a close-to-home example of how to do safety right. The company's co-owner, Erick Ajax, was the keynote speaker at the state's 2011 Safety and Loss Control Conference. We must look to safety leaders in our communities and in the private sector as we look to reach the state's workplace safety goals.



EJ Ajax's employees are key players in the company's safety commitment.

The safety culture at EJ Ajax is bringing results:

- The company went 21 years without a **lost-time injury!**
- The company has won many awards for excellence in safety, such as being the first metal fabrication company in Minnesota to achieve OSHA MNSHARP (Minnesota Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program) status.

“Worker safety is one of our company’s highest ethical responsibilities. In a company where all employees know one another and many have worked together for decades, the emotional and psychological toll of workplace injury is unacceptable.”

- Erick Ajax, co-owner, EJ Ajax & Sons

**Building a culture where safety is everyone's priority.
We can do it too. Learn more at mn.gov/MnSAFE.**

