

# New research uncovers the key to promoting safer workplaces

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Motivated employees who take initiative at work could hold the key to

making Australian workplaces safer, new research involving Curtin University researchers has found.

The research, published in the European Journal of Work and Organisational Psychology, examined the role of [safety](#) in the [workplace](#), what motivates an [employee](#) to initiate safety-related change in their jobs, and the [positive impact](#) this has on an organisation.

Co-author Professor Mark Griffin, Director of the Future of Work Institute based at Curtin University, said safety in the workplace was more than simply following the rules, yet organisations often responded to risks with more rules and stricter compliance requirements.

"Employers need to not only ensure that their employees are compliant with the safety rules and procedures in place, but instead take initiative and act proactively when faced with challenging situations that may put other colleagues at risk," Professor Griffin said.

"Our research showed that employees who were compliant with the safety rules in an organisation, but did not take initiative, were less likely to be effective when it came to dealing with risks and hazards in the workplace."

Co-author ARC Laureate Fellow Professor Sharon Parker, from the Centre for Transformative Work Design at Curtin's Future of Work Institute, said employees played a critical role in helping stem the disturbing level of [work](#)-related accidents and injuries around the world.

"Most employees have the skills, expertise and local knowledge to prevent problems and accidents in the workplace, but we wanted to understand why only some will go the extra step to initiate better overall safety," Professor Parker said.

"Our research also showed that employees who took ownership of situations, had strong capabilities and a future-focused outlook were more likely to make changes that improved [workplace safety](#) when they faced a potential difficulty or stressful event."

**More information:** Matteo Curcuruto et al. Proactivity towards workplace safety improvement: an investigation of its motivational drivers and organizational outcomes, *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology* (2019). [DOI: 10.1080/1359432X.2019.1572115](#)

Provided by Curtin University

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