# [2. OWNER'S ROLE IN CONSTRUCTION SAFETY (RS190-1)](https://www.construction-institute.org/the-owners-role-in-construction-safety)

**Report Summary:** This study examined the role and inﬂuence of owners in terms of construction safety and focused on the owner’s involvement in safety management as demonstrated through the selection of safe contractors, inclusion of safety requirements in the contract, and active participation in safety during project execution. The overall conclusion is that owners set the tone for safety performance on a project and that improved safety performance is possible through the use of the following speciﬁc owner practices:

* Careful selection of safe contractors
* Contractual safety requirements
* Proactive involvement in project safety practices
* Establishment of and funding for a safety recognition program
* Active participation in safety training and orientation and verifying personnel’s comprehension of the training
* Assigning a full-time safety representative to the construction site
* Designing for safety

**Key Takeaways:**

## (1) Set contractual safety requirements.

## (Project Phase: Detailed Scope)

* Specify safety personnel: Require the contractor to assign at least one full-time safety representative to the project.
* Approve safety personnel: Obtain resumes of key safety personnel for owner approval.
* Mandate training: Ensure that all workers involved in the project receive specified minimum training.
* Obtain contractor’s safety plan: Require the contractor to submit a comprehensive site-specific safety plan.
* Obtain CEO endorsement: Require a safety policy signed by the contractor's CEO.

## (2) Carefully select contractors.

## (Project Phase: Detailed Design and Procurement)

* Evaluate past safety performance: Review the contractor’s total recordable incident rate (TRIR) for previous projects.
* Assess safety staff qualifications: Evaluate the qualifications and experience of the contractor's safety staff.
* Review the project management team: Assess the qualifications and commitment to safety of the contractor's project management team.
* Examine the contractor’s safety program: Evaluate the overall quality and effectiveness of the contractor's safety program.
* Include stringent safety requirements in contracts: Incorporate specific safety requirements in contracts to emphasize the owner's commitment to safety.

## (3) Become involved proactively in the safety practices of projects.

## (Project Phase: Construction through Operate Facility)

* Set safety expectations: Establish clear safety objectives, including zero-injury goals, from the project outset.
* Emphasize the safety program: Impose stringent requirements for contractor safety programs, emphasizing emergency plans, daily job safety analysis, and substance abuse programs.
* Monitor safety metrics: Regularly track near-miss rates, safety inspection records, and injury statistics to maintain a proactive stance on safety protocols.
* Include contractor injuries: Maintain records of contractor injuries alongside project safety statistics to foster accountability and improve safety performance.
* Implement safety recognition: Institute behavior-oriented safety recognition programs and contribute funds to incentivize safe practices among workers.

## (4) Establish and fund a safety recognition program.

## (Project Phase: Construction through Operate Facility)

* Define program objectives: Clearly outline the goals and objectives of the safety recognition program, with focus on incentivizing safe behavior and promoting a positive safety culture.
* Allocate budget: Allocate sufficient funds to support the implementation and operation of the safety recognition program and ensure that resources are available for rewards and incentives.
* Promote participation: Encourage active participation from all project stakeholders, including workers, supervisors, and management, to maximize the effectiveness of the program.
* Evaluate and adjust: Regularly assess the effectiveness of the safety recognition program through feedback and performance metrics, and make adjustments as needed to enhance its impact on safety outcomes.

## (5) Participate actively in safety training and orientation and verify workers’ comprehension of the training.

## (Project Phase: Construction through Operate Facility)

* Conduct comprehensive training: Deliver thorough safety training and orientation sessions that cover all relevant topics and hazards to ensure worker preparedness.
* Verify worker understanding: Administer tests or quizzes post-training to confirm workers’ comprehension and to reinforce key safety protocols.
* Provide refresher courses: Offer periodic refresher training to reinforce safety knowledge and address emerging hazards.

## (6) Assign an onsite full-time safety representative.

## (Project Phase: Construction through Operate Facility)

* Designate a dedicated representative: Appoint a full-time safety representative to oversee on-site safety protocols and ensure compliance with established standards.
* Facilitate communication: Foster open lines of communication between the safety representative and the project team and subcontractors to address safety concerns promptly.
* Enforce safety policies: Ensure that the safety representative actively enforces safety rules and procedures to maintain a secure work environment.