

Fundamentals of a Safety Program

Creating a safe, healthy work environment for you and your employees is important. A culture of safety can help reduce your costs and minimize injury to you, your employees, the general public and lessen damage to property.

We know that injuries and illnesses lower productivity and may lead to absences, both of which reduce profits. This four-point safety program, developed by OSHA, can help you protect your workers and profits. With multiple safety programs already available, pull from every resource to customize your company's program.

Point 1: Management Commitment and Worker Involvement - Your safety and health attitude is reflected by your workers. You demonstrate the importance of your safety and health program through your actions. If your actions show that you consider safety and health to be an important, integral part of your operations, your workers' actions will reflect this. Communicate your program clearly to all of your workers and involve them in the formation of your program. They may offer unique ideas that can eliminate or minimize hazards and increase productivity. This involvement can cement their commitment to the safety and health program. Consider forming a joint worker-management safety committee. Committee participation can maintain worker interest in the program.

Actions you can take include:

- Post program information where all workers can see it and give all workers and new hires a copy
- Personally take part in accident analysis to show your concern. Obey safety rules and require your supervisors obey them
- Let workers use their special knowledge by making hazard inspections, doing safety training, and helping to analyze accidents
- Make adherence to your safety program part of everyone's work duties
- Budget enough time, personnel and money and to implement hazard controls
- Reward workers who follow the program; train/correct those who do not due to lack of knowledge or stubbornness. Review the program's effectiveness yearly and make changes as needed

Point 2: Worksite Analysis - Learn what hazards are present on your premises and jobsites

Actions you can take include:

- Ask your insurer, the local chapter of the National Safety Council, a private Loss Control Consultant, or OSHA to visit your premises or jobsite to help you identify hazards. This is especially important when changes occur. Involve employees in completing periodic hazard inspections
- Encourage workers to report hazards immediately; thank them and do not criticize them for reporting
- Look at past accident/illness records to identify trends which may need special prevention efforts. Do a thorough analysis of each accident/illness to identify the root cause

Point 3: Hazard Prevention and Control - Implement actions to eliminate or minimize hazards

Actions you can take include:

- Establish safe work practices, make sure all workers understand and follow them
- Enforce safe work practices. If needed, develop disciplinary measures with the help of the employees.
- Perform regular equipment maintenance to prevent breakdowns and unsafe conditions
- Plan for emergencies and conduct emergency drills

- Provide necessary first aid materials and training and designate a nearby hospital or clinic to treat injured/ill workers

Point 4: Train Workers, Supervisors, and Managers - You should train all of your personnel at the initiation of your program. You should also train new hires before they begin their work assignments. Train workers before they begin new work assignments or when tasks or hazards change. Provide refresher training. Instruct workers to avoid starting any task that looks unsafe. Combine safety and health training with job training, so workers will learn only the safe, healthy way of doing their assignments.

Actions you can take include:

- Train your workers and have them demonstrate understanding of the training by completing a quiz or demonstrating the safe way of performing an assignment
- Pay special attention to training new hires and workers beginning new assignments; they may be more likely to become injured or ill because the work is unfamiliar
- Train supervisors and managers to recognize hazardous conditions and unsafe acts and how to correct and/or discipline workers
- Train supervisors and managers how to hold all personnel accountable for adherence to your program

Once implemented, you should maintain written records showing who was trained, dates of training, content of training, and quiz results. Have workers sign, showing they attended training and received a copy of your program. Keep these records in case you need to provide proof of an injured or ill worker's training.

Implementing your safety and health program can reduce the chance of injury or illness. It can also increase your productivity and profit, not only because fewer workers miss work, but also because the safe, healthy way of doing things is often faster. Involving your workers can increase their loyalty to you as well as their commitment to your program. you can show even more concern for your workers by expanding your program to offer safety and health advice for off-the-job activities,.