

Don't ignore safety and health training

A well-planned safety training program can protect employees

Safety and health training provides specific instructions to employees so they can perform their jobs in a safe and healthful manner. Safety and health training also is intended to impart knowledge so workers can identify workplace hazards and initiate changes themselves. Creating interest, commitment and awareness is the challenge those involved in training must successfully meet.

Orientation

Begin safety and health training during orientation, when a person is transferred to another department, or when an employee is learning a new job. Cross-training can be extremely important for your safety and health when employees are temporarily transferred to other departments.

Each supervisor should have a procedure for educating workers about the department's safe work practices and for following up to ensure the success of the education process. Although a good safety orientation program can help shape a new employee's perspective on job safety, supervisors often neglect to take advantage of this opportunity.

An effective technique often used during orientation involves following a check list containing specific items for discussion. Supervisors may find using a checklist especially helpful.

A well-planned and well-executed safety orientation creates the foundation for each individual's future safety and health performance. Each supervisor should ensure new employees receive a copy of specific safe-work practices and procedures. The supervisor also needs to ensure the new employee understands the safe-work practices and procedures.

Source: The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation, Safety Industry Manual

Steps to conducting effective job-safety training

- Explain the objective of the safety training and the reason why the training is important to the employee. A person's interest in learning will increase the likelihood that he or she will understand why the training is important and what's in it for him or her.
- Break down the total job or procedure into specific parts and identify each key step. You can use this breakdown as a detailed outline to help guide workers through a job or procedure. By understanding how safety integrates into each step of the job, workers learn to perform their work safely and correctly. Job safety analysis (JSA) training is a method you can use for this breakdown.
- Demonstrate the proper way to do the job or procedure. Merely explaining how to do a particular task safely is usually insufficient. Do one step at a time, pausing to emphasize the key points before proceeding. Encourage the employee to ask questions at each stage, making sure he or she fully understands.
- Ask the trainee to perform the job or procedure, describing at each step, not only what he or she will do, but also why. By letting an employee recite and perform the job, you will learn if the person understands and can perform the task safely.
- Return periodically to see how the worker is doing and to see if he or she has questions or problems. The follow-up process is an essential element, because early identification and correction of improper work procedures will help an employee develop safe and efficient work habits.

Supervisors should continue safety and health training on a regular basis. Regular training might include monthly safety and health meetings, regular personal safety contacts, safety training related to changes in work processes or procedures, or safety training related to the nature of the work and safety compliance, such as hazard communication, lock-out/tag-out, confined spaces, fire safety and emergency procedures.



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