



Elements of a Successful Safety and Health Program

Nobody wants accidents to happen in their business. A serious fire, a permanent injury or the death of an employee or owner can cause the loss of profit or even an entire business. To prevent such losses, you don't have to turn your business upside down. You may not have to spend a lot of money, either. You do need to use good business sense and apply recognized prevention principles.

There are reasons why accidents happen; something goes wrong somewhere. It may take some thought to figure out what went wrong, but an accident always has a cause. Once you know why an accident occurred, it is possible to prevent future incidents. You will need some basic facts and perhaps some help from others. You will also need a plan to prevent accidents in the future.

Not all dangers require an accident to cause harm. Worker exposure to toxic chemicals or harmful levels of noise or radiation may happen in conjunction with routine work as well as by accident. You may not realize the extent of the exposure or harm that you and your employees face. The effect may not be immediate. You need a safety and health management plan that reduces the risk of health hazard exposures and accidents.

It is not difficult to develop such a plan; it should address the types of accidents and health hazard exposures that could happen in your workplace. Since each workplace is different, your program should address your specific needs and requirements.

FOUR ELEMENTS OF A GOOD SAFETY AND HEALTH PROGRAM:

There are four basic elements to all good safety and health programs. These are as follows:

1. **Management Commitment and Employee Involvement.** The manager or management team leads the way, by setting policy, assigning and supporting responsibility, setting an example and involving employees.
2. **Worksite Analysis.** The worksite is continually analyzed to identify all existing and potential hazards.
3. **Hazard Prevention and Control.** Methods to prevent or control existing or potential hazards are put in place and maintained.
4. **Training for Employees, Supervisors and Managers.** Managers, supervisors and employees are trained to understand and deal with worksite hazards.

Regardless of the size of your business, you should use each of these elements to prevent workplace accidents and possible injuries and illnesses.

Developing a workplace program following these four points is a key step in protecting you and your workers' safety and health. If you already have a program, reviewing it in relation to these elements should help you improve what you have.

Following this four-point approach to safety and health in your business may improve efficiency and help you reduce insurance claims and other costs. While having a safety and

health plan based on these four elements does not guarantee compliance with Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) standards, the approach will put you on the right track toward full compliance and beyond.

It will certainly give you a way to express and document your good faith and commitment to protecting your workers' health and safety.

This approach usually does not involve large costs. Developing a health and safety protection plan does not have to be expensive and generally does not require additional employees, especially in smaller businesses. Safety and health can be integrated into your other business functions with modest effort on your part.

The key to the success of a safety and health plan is to see it as a part of your business operation and to see it reflected in your day-to-day operations. As you implement the plan and incorporate it into your business culture, safety and health awareness will become second nature to you and your employees.

Source: OSHA

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Provided by: Colburn Group 3001 West Big Beaver Road, Suite 302 Troy, MI 48084

248-643-4800 u <http://www.colburngroup.com>