



Achieving Safety Excellence

There's no question, effective safety management provides a competitive business advantage. It starts with a personal commitment to safety. This involves not only commitment to safety as a value, but commitment to factors that integrate that value into the corporate culture. While no prescriptive approach to safety excellence exists, there are four essential characteristics to consider: management leadership, employee involvement, measurement systems and a continuous safety improvement process.

Management Leadership

The most important characteristic of safety excellence is providing management leadership and commitment. Leadership must demonstrate a strong, genuine, continuous, and personal commitment to safety. Leaders must:

- Communicate a vision
- Integrate goals for addressing safety, health and environmental concerns into the business
- Define roles and responsibilities
- Require accountability from all employees
- Allocate resources to support programs
- Conduct assessments to support changes
- Take proactive measures

Employee Involvement

The second most important characteristic is meaningful employee involvement. Employee involvement incorporates activities that proactively identify hazards as an important component of an effective safety management system, including the use of job safety analysis, physical hazard inspections, employee safety training, safety meetings and job safety observations.

Employee involvement includes the following concepts:

- Management commitment that is visible and consistent
- Individual development and capability (training)
- Individual involvement and influence
- Constant and varied communications
- Interdependent work processes and systems (integrated organization for safety)
- At-risk behavior auditing
- Recognition and reward

Measurement Systems

The foundation for safety excellence is based on the premise that to be able to manage something, a measurement system needs to be in place. Measurements should include both proactive, process oriented measures and reactive, or failure-based measurements. The emphasis is on establishing safety as a corporate value that guides decision-making on a daily basis.

Once you understand what is required to achieve safety excellence in your organization, you must determine exactly where you are in the process and how your organization and employees are currently prioritizing safety into your business practices.



Continuous Safety Improvement Process

The Continuous Safety Improvement Process is the final characteristic of an effective safety management system. It's a framework for applying a safety management system on a continuous basis. It's a process-oriented approach that emphasizes contributions to long-range, permanent solutions:

Phase 1: Gain management commitment and involvement (Vision and leadership)

Phase 2: Establish a baseline (Snapshot of "as is")

Phase 3: Set goals (Where we "should be")

Phase 4: Implement strategies (Close the gap between "as is" and "should be")

Phase 5: Review and adjust (Reach for where we "could be")

Extracted from the National Safety Council Safety & Health Code of Ethics Resource Guide, 2002

For additional information:

National Safety Council, Members-Only Website, www.nsc.org/groups/members

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