



Employee Training Leads to Improved Safety

Employee training provides knowledge, and as the saying goes, "Knowledge is power." An employee who has received proper safety training has the power and freedom to make an informed decision regarding his or her own safety and health. Without this training, employees must use their own best guess as to how they should perform their jobs.

Safety training involves educating or coaching employees about a certain safety behavior so that they become accustomed to repeating that behavior. Employees must have the education and knowledge necessary to make a safe behavior a habit.

What is proper training? Basically, there are two major steps involved: first, providing the necessary instruction or education, and second, enforcement of the instruction given. This way, the employee will know how to perform a job properly and when to utilize the new training skills. The enforcement activity provides an incentive for employees to make a habit of using their new skills as well.

Training also needs to be more than a simple tailgate or lunchbox meeting. It must consist of more than a supervisor's comment to "be safe" or to "watch out for the open floor." These may serve as reminders or refreshers about things employees have already been taught, but they must not be relied upon as the sole method of training.

Proper training consists of both classroom and hands-on instruction. It also provides employees with the opportunity to ask questions and become familiar with the concepts taught. One of the difficulties with training involves language barriers. There are many employees in today's work force who speak and understand very little English. Employers must not forget their responsibility to non-English speaking employees as well. Top-quality training includes education in the language that employee understands.

- Jerry Geering Darrin Perkins

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