



Incorporate Safety into Your Employee Orientation

An effective safety program requires the involvement and participation of all employees. This process begins the first day a new worker is hired. Workers immediately begin to formulate opinions about the organization, management, supervisors and other employees.

How can you communicate your organization's safety policies, practices and procedures to the newest members of your team? Start by incorporating safety and health information into your existing employee orientation process. Safety orientation provides a unique opportunity to make a positive statement about the value the organization places on safety. A well designed safety orientation will provide newly assigned employees with the skills and abilities to safely perform their jobs while they are adapting to the new situation, environment or new job responsibilities.

Take orientation beyond standard discussion of benefit packages, policies, tours and introductions and introduce essential safety subjects. This should then be followed up with department specific job safety information by the team leader or supervisor.

Some suggested safety topics include:

- Organized labor agreements (if applicable)
- General safety rules and policies
- Housekeeping standards
- Proper lifting, hand tool safety, and ergonomic techniques
- Equipment safety
- Process safety management awareness
- Emergency procedures for hazardous weather and fire:
 - o Location of fire extinguishers
 - o Location of nearest exit
 - o Evacuation procedures and where to meet
- Proper clothing on the job and for specific tasks
- Location of MSDS binder with a brief review about MSDS (more detail can be covered during job training)
- How to report accidents, injuries, and near-misses
- Location of all safety supplies/eye wash and shower locations
- General personal protective equipment information and instruction
- General lockout/tagout procedures



- Medical facilities support/first aid
- Medical response procedures-heart attack, bloodborne pathogens, etc.
- Fire prevention and protection
- Access to exposure and medical records

Safety Orientation is a specific type of training that supports goals to improve on-the-job safety performance and every employee should be offered appropriate safety training based on their work environment, job responsibilities and potential hazards. Ongoing training should also be provided to experienced employees that have been transferred or assumed new job assignments.

Safety issues are too important to overlook or leave to casual learning. You need to make sure that everyone within your company has the knowledge and skills to achieve your specific safety goals.

Some helpful resources:

National Safety Council Members-Only Website, <http://www.nsc.org/groups/members>
Occupational Safety and Health Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, www.osha.gov

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