



8 Steps to Create an Effective Workplace Safety Training Program

Investing in workplace training is money well spent. Employers with effective safety and health training programs benefit from fewer workplace injuries and claims, better employee morale, and lower insurance premiums. Following are eight steps recommended by OSHA for the development and implementation of an effective safety-training program.

HOW TO CREATE AN EFFECTIVE TRAINING PROGRAM THAT MEETS OSHA GENERAL INDUSTRY REQUIREMENTS

1. Determine What Safety Training is Needed

Employers should first ask themselves if training could solve the problem at hand. If problems stem from employee performance, rather than the workplace environment itself, training is the most effective way to remedy the problem.

When evaluating employee performance issues, it is important to assess the type of issue to determine the best approach. Training programs are most effective at addressing an employee's lack of knowledge about proper procedures or equipment usage.

2. Identify Workplace Safety Training Needs

The next step is to correctly identifying the specific training required to address the knowledge gap. This process includes identifying the specific information that an employee needs to know to perform the job safely.

A proven method for determining the depth of training required is to conduct a Job Hazard Analysis. This process documents each step of a task while

identifying and analyzing possible safety hazards along the way. The organization can translate high-risk activities into a prioritized training plan by taking the time to assess the process.

3. Identify Safety Training Goals and Objectives

Once training needs have been clearly identified, it is important that learning goals and objectives are set. What should participants be able to do differently or more effectively? Learning objectives must be clear and measurable, making it possible to evaluate the training at a later date. Training content should be based on workers' most important needs. Training objectives should precisely spell out the desired skill or behavior using specific, action-oriented language.

4. Create a Sound Training Program

Training "best practices" reveal four important characteristics:

Accurate. Training materials should be prepared by qualified individuals and updated as needed.

Credible. Training facilitators should have a general safety and health background or be a subject matter expert in a health or safety field.

Clear. Training programs must be clear and understandable to the participant. If an employee does not speak or comprehend English, instruction must be provided in a language that the employee can understand.

Practical. Training programs should present information, ideas and skills that participants see as directly useful in their working lives.

Source: OSHA 3824



5. Develop Workplace Safety Learning Activities

Employers should consider which methods, materials, and resources will be needed to most effectively convey the message. The type of training chosen (group, one-to-one etc.) should be selected keeping the audience and specific skill set in mind.

Ideally, learning activities will include opportunities for employees to demonstrate the skills and knowledge they have learned in the training. These activities should directly apply to the employee's actual job and include lessons arranged in sequential order according to the job process.

6. Conduct Safety Training

Training should be presented in a clear and organized fashion. To maximize learning, provide the trainees a training overview. Ensure that the training is related to the employee's experience. Then follow up by reinforcing the lessons learned. To keep employees interested and motivated in learning, allow trainees to participate and practice their new skills along the way. Participation in discussion and hands-on practice encourages new information to be retained, and real life examples to be incorporated into the discussion.

7. Evaluate Workplace Safety Training Program Effectiveness

After training is conducted, it is vital to evaluate its effectiveness in accomplishing defined goals. There are three ways to conduct an evaluation:

- Ask the trainees for feedback via questionnaire or informal discussions. This will provide a quick review of initial value and learning outcomes.
- Follow up with supervisors and their observations about employee behavior before and after the training. This shows whether the training had a noticeable outcome.
- Evaluate workplace data to examine if long term there is a trend toward reduced incident or near miss rates. This will be the bottom-line indicator of a training program's success rate.

8. Improve the Safety Training Program

Based on the training program feedback, look for ways to improve future training sessions. A critical re-examination of all the steps of a job and in training will determine what gaps existed in the training program. Items to revisit include:

- The method chosen to determine if there is a better way to conduct the training.
- The presentation of training materials to determine if it was effective for the audience chosen.
- The key concepts and skills that were highlighted. If there was a gap, it may be beneficial to review the Job Hazard Analysis to identify any missing components or any new steps added to the process since the training was developed.
- Revise training as improvements are identified.

Creating an effective workplace training program requires care and planning but will reward your organization and employees with a safe and productive workplace.

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