

Employee Involvement in Safety



Employees are an organization's most valuable asset. It is employee performance that ultimately drives productivity and overall success. If employees are unable to perform their tasks due to injury or illness, the effects can be devastating.

By law, employers must provide employees "a place of employment free from recognized hazards" and "must comply with the occupational safety and health standards issued under the OSH Act."

The goal is to move beyond basic compliance and embrace the notion that safety and health is as important as any other aspect of business. This is achieved by developing a more formalized safety and health program or management system, which incorporates company-specific initiatives focused on reducing injuries, illnesses and fatalities.

According to the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), there are four elements critical to an effective program: management leadership and employee involvement; workplace analysis; hazard prevention and control; and safety and health training and education. Buy-in and support from employees is a key element of success. To be effective, all organization members—from hourly workers to executive management—must embrace the initiative and their specific role as outlined in the plan.

TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR ORGANIZATION'S SAFETY PROGRAM:

- Read, understand and comply with all OSHA standards and the safety and health rules and regulations set forth by your organization.
- Know your specific roles and responsibilities. Make every effort to perform tasks to the best of your ability. Arrive at the worksite every day with a level of awareness appropriate to the potential hazards posed during the workday. You must be conscious of your environment to avoid injury.

- Be proactive. Identify, analyze and report hazardous situations and make recommendations for controlling the hazards.
- Support co-workers by discussing potential risks while on the job. Provide feedback to help eliminate hazards.
- Always use appropriate personal protective equipment for the task you are performing.
- Report job-related injury or illness to your employer. Promptly seek treatment if necessary.
- Take an active part in safety activities, discussions, committees and training.
- Read all available safety materials provided by your company (pamphlets, posters, bulletin boards, etc.)
- Contact your supervisor/safety manager with any questions or concerns. Share your own ideas and experiences.

Remember, your involvement matters. You are the front line worker, the one in contact with potential hazards, and the one who will ultimately implement safety and health practices. The more effort you put into your safety and health program, the more effective it will be for all employees involved.

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