



INNOVEST SME
Accelerating Small Business



Maintaining Workplace Safety

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*Safety is something that
happens between your ears,
not something you hold in
your hands.*

J E F F C O O P E R

PREFACE

Those who are in management are responsible for protecting the safety of their employees. Workplace safety, however, is the responsibility of everyone in an organization. Companies have legal obligations to meet certain safety requirements, but many go further than the minimum obligations. Safety standards and procedures must be put in place, and everyone needs to follow the standards in order for them to be effective.

*The safety of the people
shall be the highest law.*

CICERO



AN OVERVIEW

Workplace safety is a legal obligation for all organizations. The Occupational Health and Safety Act of 1970 led to further safety requirements in different industries. OSHA is a federal agency that oversees employee safety on a federal level, but there may be tighter state legislation. It is essential that every company understand safety legislation along with the roles and responsibilities the legislation requires. This understanding will help create and implement an effective workplace safety plan.

WORK SAFETY AND HEALTH LEGISLATIONS

Employees are legally guaranteed a safe work environment, and OSHA is the agency that enforces safety regulations. Employers must protect workers from hazards. OSHA defines hazards that are unique to different industries. Generally, hazards include chemicals, equipment, and safety practices. Employers are required to keep records of injuries and illnesses while monitoring potential hazards. There is also a General Clause that requires employers to protect people from all known hazards. This clause is used in cases that are not specifically covered. OSHA oversees workers in state, local, and federal branches of the government as well as those in the private sector.

Workers Not Covered By OSHA:

- Employees protected by other federal agencies
- The self-employed
- Family members of farmers who do not have employees

ROLES & DUTIES

Employers have specific roles and duties to keep their employees safe. Employers are required to discover and change hazardous working conditions instead of only using protective gear.

Other employer responsibilities include:

- Warn employees about hazards using chemical sheets, codes, training, alarms, labels, etc.
- Test air samples and other potential hazards.
- Visibly post the OSHA poster, citations, injury, and illness information.
- Provide exams or medical tests when necessary.
- Record illness and injuries.
- Contact OSHA within eight hours of employee death or three injuries.
- Protect employees who report violations from retaliation.

Employees have a responsibility to report any unsafe conditions to their supervisors. They have the right to report violations to OSHA, which usually result in an inspection. Employees who report violations are legally protected from harassment and retaliation.

SAFETY PLANNING

A safe organization requires careful planning. Once employers understand their legal obligations and have identified the potential hazards, it is necessary to create a safety plan.

An effective safety plan requires four fundamentals:

- **Analysis:** Identify and get rid of any hazards, and reassess regularly.
- **Involvement:** Employees and managers need to be involved in the safety plan.
- **Maintenance:** Keep equipment maintained and train employees how to handle them.
- **Training:** Train employees in safety and hold occasional safety drills.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Tom was in charge of making sure that the paper distribution company he worked for was always a constantly safe environment that was up to code. One day while checking the actual paper, he noticed that a

new dye had been added to the packaging. While he wasn't sure if this would be a risk for any of the employees, he made sure to send out both an employee warning letter and contact the OSHA, or the agency that oversees safety regulations in the workplace. Afterword's, he found out that it was harmless and that the company did not need to change a thing, but he was glad that he took the necessary steps, just in case it could have been toxic or a safety hazard.

*A danger foreseen
is half avoided.*

PROVERB



TYPES OF HAZARDS

Keeping a safe workplace requires employers to identify and deal with hazards. Each industry has its own set of hazards, but there are workplace hazards that are common across organizations. The hazards in this chapter are examples of typical hazards. By identifying and anticipating hazards, employers can prevent injuries and keep employees safe.

COMPUTER WORKSTATIONS

Computer workstations may seem harmless, but repetitive motion injuries such as carpal tunnel and muscular skeletal problems are common due to badly engineered workstations. The elements of a computer workstation need to be set up so that the body remains in a safe, neutral position and injuries are minimized. These elements include: desks, monitors, keyboards, chairs, mouse, telephones, document holders, and wrist pads. There should be enough room in the workstation to move around and take short breaks from tedious tasks.

Basic Setup

- Room between the desk and chair so legs are not trapped
- Chair supports the lower back
- Feet are flat on the floor

- Top of the monitor is eye level
- The head and neck are level and aligned with the torso
- Shoulders are relaxed
- Elbows are supported
- There is room for the mouse and keyboard
- The wrists and hands are lined up with the forearms

ERGONOMICS

We briefly discussed ergonomics with computer workstations. Ergonomics, in general, is used to make the demands of a job suit the needs of the workers. The science of ergonomics will increase productivity while decreasing injuries in the workplace. Employees are at risk of injury when they engage in repetitive motions, heavy lifting, pushing, carrying, or working with their hands. There are ergonomic standards for each industry. It is essential that employees be trained in proper ergonomics so that they are aware of how injuries can be prevented.

Ergonomic Tips:

- Bend from the knees.
- Lift with your legs.
- Take breaks.
- Exercise.
- Keep weight evenly distributed when seated and standing.

FIRE PREVENTION

Fires can happen anywhere. Every organization needs to invest in fire prevention. The common causes of workplace fires are arson, cigarettes, and electrical fires. Every employer needs to train employees how to prevent fires and act when they do occur.

Tips to Prevent Fires:

- Keep the building clean and clear of debris.
- Make sure that alarms and other safety equipment are in working order.
- Keep fire doors closed.
- Do not smoke in areas not designated for smoking, and handle lighters and matches carefully.
- Teach employees to use fire extinguishers.
- Implement an evacuation plan.

FITNESS & WELLNESS

More employers are taking steps to improve the health and fitness of their employees. It is in an employer's best interest to invest in the wellness of employees. Healthy employees are more productive, take fewer sick days, and cost less in insurance premiums.

Ways to Improve Fitness and Wellness:

- Keep healthy snacks at the office.
- Offer to supplement gym memberships or have workout equipment at the office.
- Support smoking cessation programs.
- Promote nutrition and weight loss programs.

HEAT STRESS

Employees who work in extremely hot conditions are susceptible to heat stress. Heat stress includes heat stroke, heat exhaustion, heat syncope, and heat cramps. Jobs particularly prone to heat stress are factory workers, bakers, miners, fire fighters, construction workers, etc. Heat stress can lead to injuries as people become disoriented or lose consciousness.

Ways to Prevent Heat Stress:

- Drink water and refrain from caffeine.
- Rest in cool locations.
- Take frequent breaks.
- Slowly acclimate to the heat.
- Wear the appropriate clothing.

STRESS

Most Americans identify work as their main cause of stress. Stress, even more than diet, is linked to obesity for workers in sedentary jobs, according to research published in the Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine. Employee stress costs employers money in terms of lost time, productivity, and illness. It is important to teach employees how to manage their stress.

Ways to Fight Stress:

- **Eat well:** Choose fruits and vegetables over salty snacks.
- **Exercise:** This will help you focus as it releases endorphins.
- **Prioritize:** Learn to manage time wisely and balance work and life.

VIOLENCE

Workplace violence accounts for one quarter of work related deaths. Employers are responsible for the safety of employees and a workplace violence prevention program will help to build awareness and save lives. Workplace violence prevention programs teach employees how to identify and diffuse conflicts; manage stress; manage anger; protect personal safety; respect diversity; and report problems.

How Employers Can Prevent Violence:

- **Screening:** Use background checks and reference checks to hire stable individuals.

- **Security:** Implement a security protocol.
- **Mediation:** Help employees find ways to resolve disputes.
- **Balance:** Create programs that will promote work and life balance.
- **Assess:** Hire a threat assessment team to watch for potential violence.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Jerry worked at a paper distribution company. He noticed that more and more people were complaining of injuries such as carpal tunnel in the wrists as well as lower back pain. To address these concerns, Jerry decided to hold a meeting. He found out from the employees that the desks were too short, and forced them to hunch over in the chair, and that contributed to the lower back pain. In addition, they were not following the guidelines for using the keyboard and such, though this too was mainly a result of the lower desks being counters to the good posture of the employees. Jerry found a way for the desks to be elevated, and within time, stopped receiving the complaints after the needs of the employees were met.

*Be the change you want
to see in the world.*

MAHATMA GANDHI



MANAGERS ROLE

Managers have an important role in workplace safety. They have the responsibility to promote safety by dialoging with employees. Managers must also lead by example. A manager who ignores safety cannot expect employees to follow the rules and guidelines. Managers help drive the corporate culture, so it is essential that they embrace the safety program and help shape it.

PROMOTING & ENFORCING SAFETY STANDARDS

Managers need to promote safety among their employees. There are several methods that managers can use to promote and enforce safety standards.

Methods:

- **Involve employees:** Ask employees for their ideas on improving safety.
- **Provide incentives:** Hold contests where winners have strong safety records.
- **Train:** On the job training and safety seminars are essential to any safety program.

- **Improve morale:** Bored or unhappy employees are more likely to ignore safety.
- **Consequences:** There should be clear consequences for breaking safety protocol, just like any other rule. Consider moving from verbal to written warnings.

ELEMENTS OF A HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM

There are four basic elements in every health and safety program. Organizations can expand on these elements to address specific needs in their own programs.

Basic Elements:

- **Commitment from manager and employee support:** Create clear guidelines based on employee input.
- **An analysis of the worksite:** Identify hazards.
- **Hazard prevention and control:** Remove or control hazards.
- **Training on health and safety:** Address the health and safety of all employees.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Managers, supervisors, and employees are all responsible for workplace safety. A successful workplace program will assign specific responsibilities to individuals. Specific roles and responsibilities will vary

with each organization. There are, however, general responsibilities in most companies.

Leadership: Everyone in leadership positions is responsible for communicating expectations, overseeing safety, and training employees.

Employees: All employees need to obey the safety policies, and report unsafe work conditions, accidents, or injuries.

CORPORATE CULTURE

Corporate culture plays a large role in the health and safety of employees. Employers need to align health and safety goals with business strategies, and create an environment that supports health and safety. Besides safety guidelines, corporate culture can have a positive impact on employee health. For example, companies have successfully offered incentives to help employees quit smoking or lose weight. A culture that promotes communication about health and safety will both improve the quality of life for employees and save money lost to injuries and sick days.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Mary was the manager of a paper distribution company. She realized that the health and safety program was out dated, and so she needed to draft a more current and relevant set of guidelines. Mary began by first questioning the employees on what they thought needed improvement, followed by an inspection of the work site. Mary removed any apparent hazards, and then moved on to establishing a training program to better

educate the employees on the importance of safety. Mary also developed an incentive program that rewarded employees with an outstanding safety record, and made the consequences of not following the safety guidelines clear as to avoid confusion. Mary was able to implement the plan and make the work place much safer.

*Knowing is not enough;
we must apply. Willing is
not enough; we must do.*

GOETHE



TRAINING

Policies and procedures are not enough to improve safety. All employees need workplace safety training. There are different ways to train employees such as onsite, by video, or in meetings. The circumstances will determine which method will be the most effective. Any effective workplace safety program outlines clear expectations for employee training.

REASONS FOR TRAINING

Safety training is a legal requirement. It does, however, prevent accidents and injuries in the workplace.

There are a number of other reasons to train employees:

- Reduces absenteeism and insurance premiums
- Decreases the risk of violating OSHA regulations
- Increases morale and productivity
- Reduces turnover

DEFINITION

There are two types of employee training: on the job (OJT) training and off the job training. Both types of training can be part of a workplace safety

program. On the job training can focus on safety when trainers illustrate techniques that prevent injury. Off the job training typically includes seminars, lectures, meetings, and case studies, which can easily promote safety and occurs off the normal job site.

ORIENTATION

New employees typically go through training and orientation, at least they should. Orientation allows employees to become familiar with the company. It includes information about the chain of command, compensation, policies, safety, benefits, and unions. During orientation, safety rules and regulations should be explained carefully. Most companies have new hires sign that they have read and understand the safety policies and procedures.

ON THE JOB TRAINING

On the job training is the oldest training method, and it is still primarily used to train employees who are not in management. Trainers either work exclusively at training employees, or they are experienced employees who are qualified to teach new hires.

Steps for Training:

- Show how to safely perform a task.
- Review the steps.
- Show the student again.

- Allow employee to perform part of the task.
- Help the employee perform the task.
- Watching the employee perform the task.
- Allow the employee to work alone.

SAFETY MEETINGS

Safety meetings are meetings that all employees attend. The purpose of the meetings is to remind people about safety regulations, and introduce changes to regulations, equipment, or procedures. Meetings need to occur regularly, and the topics should cover recent safety problems and safety goals. Each organization will need to adapt safety meetings to fit its needs, but there is a general outline.

Outline:

- Topic
- Date
- Old Business
- Accident Statistics
- Reports and analysis
- New Business

PLANNING AND CONDUCTING A TRAINING SESSION

Training sessions take time to prepare. It is just as important to try to make any mandatory training sessions engaging, as it is to make them informative. Every teacher needs a lesson plan, and the same is true of safety training. Trainers need to consider their audience and bring the appropriate materials (such as videos) with them.

Lesson Plan Outline:

- Title
- Session goals
- Key points
- How it relates to the company
- Questions and answers

Before you conduct a training session, prepare the room. Make sure there are enough seats and the lighting and temperature are comfortable. It is also important to make sure that you have all necessary equipment and enough paperwork for the participants.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Sara was the manager of the training program at a paper distribution company. Although it was legally required, Sara felt the need to go above and beyond the basic mandatory training. Not only did the program keep the employees safe, it also increased morale and productivity

among them as well. The company had a reduced absenteeism rate and reduced insurance premiums. The training was done in stages, starting with orientation of a newly hired or acquired employee and ending with the regular mandatory safety plan updates. These updates allowed employees to ask questions and voice concerns and opinions in regards to their own safety. This made the company a safer and healthier place to work for everyone.

*Stress is nothing more
than a socially acceptable
mental illness.*

RICHARD CARLSON



STRESS MANAGEMENT

Stress is uncomfortable, but it can also be dangerous. Stress and depression can cause serious health problems. The actions that people take to combat stress such as smoking, drinking, overeating, and under eating can make any stress-related health problems worse. Stress management is an important part of workplace safety that far too many people ignore.

ALTERING

Often, the stressors in life are unavoidable. We have to go to work, pay the bills, and run errands. When you cannot avoid stressful situations, alter them. This typically involves finding ways to make situations more bearable by changing behavior and communication.

Strategies:

- **Communicate:** Respectfully express your frustrations; unexpressed feelings build stress.
- **Compromise:** Try to find middle ground in a conflict.
- **Assert yourself:** Do not allow other people to control your life.
- **Manage your time:** Plan out your time, and try to stick to the plan.

AVOIDING

Sometimes we create our own stress. If you really think about your stressors, there are probably some that you can avoid. Do everything you can to avoid stressful situations and improve your mental health.

Strategies:

- **Say “no”:** Do not over commit yourself. If you cannot handle a project, don’t take it.
- **Avoid certain people:** End stressful relationships, or limit the amount of time you spend with stressful people.
- **Change your environment:** Avoid or adjust activities that cause stress.
- **Limit your tasks:** Cut out some activities to save time.
- **Converse carefully:** Avoid controversial topics that are likely to cause arguments.

ACCEPTING

We all have to accept less than ideal situations. We cannot control everything, but there are ways to reduce our stress in difficult situations.

Strategies:

- **Change focus:** Focus on what you can control rather than what you cannot. This is particularly true of other people.

- **Stay positive:** Look for the opportunities in difficult situations.
- **Express yourself:** Share your feelings with friends, family, or a therapist.
- **Move on:** Forgive others to let go of negative emotions that cause stress.

RELAXATION TECHNIQUES

There are different relaxation techniques you can try. Everyone is different, and you need to find the method that works best for you. It is important to choose healthy ways to handle stress rather than unhealthy options such as drinking, smoking, and overeating.

Techniques:

- Meditation
- Exercise
- Spend time in nature
- Spend time with pets
- Garden
- Connect with friends
- Take personal time

USING ROUTINES TO REDUCE STRESS

Routines can reduce stress when in times of change. Everyone needs a sense of normalcy, and routines can provide this. Routines can, however, create more stress when we adhere to them religiously. It is important to create healthy routines in life but not panic if you alter them.

Examples of healthy routines:

- Morning routines
- Family time
- Date night
- Guys'/girls' night out
- Exercise

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Tim had been harboring far too much stress that was related to his work. He decided to go through some steps to help dull or eliminate the stressors in his life and place of work. He first tried to alter things he couldn't change, like his lack of time. He tried different time management techniques until he found one that best fit him. Next, he realized that some things he needed to just accept. While work was demanding, it was also rewarding, and therefore worth the extra stress. Finally, he avoided stress whenever it came his way. People that annoyed him or requests that were too much he simply avoided, that way he could deal with what he was already managing without adding on to the list. In this way, Tim was able to handle his stress.

*Nothing good ever
comes of violence.*

MARTIN LUTHER



WORKPLACE VIOLENCE

Homicide is the fourth leading cause of workplace fatalities. While incidents of homicide and workplace violence have dropped in recent years, it is still a risk that safety programs need to address. Everyone should know how to identify workplace violence and address it if it does happen.

WHAT IS WORKPLACE VIOLENCE?

Workplace violence is any type of aggression. It is any physical or emotional threatening behavior. It is not just physical violence; emotional abuse also counts as workplace violence. Sabotage also classifies as workplace violence. Violence typically escalates at work. For example, someone will make threatening jokes before resorting to physical violence. It is important to identify actions that are threatening and can become violent.

IDENTIFYING

There are different behaviors that indicate a person may resort to workplace violence. Employees, employers, vendors, and customers are all capable of violence, and companies are obligated to protect their employees from violent behavior. Everyone in the workplace should be familiar with behaviors that indicate violence.

Indicators:

- **Acting Out:** People express anger in inappropriately.
- **Irresponsible:** People do not take personal responsibility.
- **Self-centered:** People do not care how their actions affect those around them.
- **Mixed Behavior:** People say one thing and do another.
- **Inflexible:** People will not take direction.
- **Avoidance:** Employees lie, drink, or take drugs.
- **Extreme Behavior:** People do not act like themselves.
- **Odd Behavior:** People have poor social skill or obsessions.

ADDRESSING

It is essential that potentially violent behavior be addressed before it escalates. Always document questionable behavior and discuss it with the employee. Do not attack the individual personally. Simply address how negative behavior affects work, and ask what is causing the changes. Remember that people have bad days, and singular incidents are not necessarily an issue. You should, however, address continual or escalating problems.

If you know of any personal challenges that your employee is facing, offer training, counseling, or both. Monitor the behavior and if it does not improve, it may be necessary for a problem employee to leave. Make

security aware of any troubled employees who leave an organization. Employees who are paranoid, antisocial, or preoccupied with weapons should always be watched carefully.

IMPLEMENTING A WORKPLACE HARASSMENT POLICY

A workplace harassment policy will help reduce workplace violence. A workplace harassment policy should reflect the legal definitions of harassment as well as the company values and ethics. Every organization needs to establish anti-harassment policies and procedures. Policies issue rules that all employees must follow, and they establish who is responsible for enforcing those rules. Policies make clear the difference between acceptable and unacceptable behavior. There are four basic steps to create workplace harassment policy.

Drafting Policies:

- **Identify risks:** Assess the risks in your organization.
- **Create policy:** Create policies based on the risks and laws.
- **Approve policy:** Review and approve a policy.
- **Evaluate policy:** Evaluate the effectiveness of a policy and make necessary changes.

Once the policy is created, make sure all employees are aware of it. Hold meetings, and have employees sign that they understand the policy and will abide by it. This makes them responsible for their behavior.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Bob needed to draft an effective workplace harassment policy for a paper distribution company. He first needed to identify the risks involved, such as violence or lawsuits. After that, he created a policy that would address all of risks, as well as accommodate any and all laws regarding the matter. He then presented the policy for review and approval, while finally implementing it fully. After that, Bob evaluated the progress and effectiveness of the policy, and made any changes that would improve upon it. This strategy made for an effective workplace policy, and a safer work place.

*Truth is confirmed
by inspection and delay,
falsehood by haste
and uncertainty.*

TACITUS



IDENTIFYING YOUR COMPANY HAZARDS

A safe work environment can only be attained when the hazards are known. It is important to inspect the workplace regularly for any changes and to make sure that the policies and procedures are being followed. Regular inspections make employers aware of deficiencies so they can prioritize them. Inspections also help evaluate how effective the current policies are.

CONDUCTING AN INSPECTION

An inspection team needs to conduct regular safety inspections. The company should have a checklist with typical company hazards available to make this process easier. Inspectors keep an eye out for different hazards. These will vary with each organization, but common hazards include the following:

- Environmental: noise, temperature, electricity, radiation, etc.
- Chemical: gas, toxic liquids, dust, etc.
- Biological: bacteria, virus, parasites, etc.
- Safety: equipment, work practices, work conditions etc.
- Ergonomics: repetitive movements, posture, workstations etc.

PRIORITIZING DEFICIENCIES

When hazards are identified, it is important to prioritize the company deficiencies. The inspectors should create a report that recommends priorities based on what they observed. There are typically three hazard priorities: A, B, C.

Prioritizing Deficiencies:

- A: Chief: Demands immediate attention.
- B: Serious: Needs short-term action.
- C: Minor: Needs long-term action.

REPORT & FOLLOWING UP

Reports need to include the inspector's observations and recommendations. It should also assign follow up procedures. The report includes:

- Location
- Date
- Whether it is a repeat offense
- Priority
- Recommendation

The follow up includes:

- Responsible party
- Action taken
- Date

Example:

Observations				
Location	Hazard	Repeat Y/N	Priority	Recommended Action
Follow up				
Responsible Party	Action Taken	Date		

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Tina was assigned to inspect a paper distribution company for any hazards that the employees may be exposed to. While it didn't have very many, it did need to address the ergonomic hazards that the employees were facing such as posture, repetitive movements, and some workstation deficiencies. After filing the report and giving the company time to make the necessary changes, Tina returned to a follow up inspection that showed a large decrease in potentially hazardous things the workers were going through, and the company passed the inspection with flying colors.

*He that is a drunkard is
qualified for all vice.*

WELLINS CALCOTT



DRUG & ALCOHOL ABUSE

Many people suffer from addictions to drugs and alcohol. Employees who abuse alcohol or drugs are more likely to make decisions that are not safe. Substance abuse increases sick time, decreases productivity, and leads to accidents. Employers need to address alcohol and drug abuse to protect the company and their employees.

FOR EMPLOYEES

Employers can help create a drug-free workplace by implementing a substance abuse program with a policy on drugs and alcohol. The policy will explain to employees what is prohibited and the actions that will be taken for violating the policy.

What a Policy Includes:

- Any substance that alters performance is not allowed
- Reasons for policy
- Consequences
- Behavior at company events
- Drug testing parameters

- Resources for help
- Confidentiality

FOR MANAGERS OR SUPERVISORS

Managers and supervisors are responsible for implementing the policy, keeping employees informed, and observing behavior. It is essential that managers understand the substance abuse policy and their roles and responsibilities. They should not attempt to diagnose alcohol or drug abuse, and they should never attempt to treat the problems.

Responsibilities:

- Explain policies.
- Observe behavior.
- Document unsatisfactory behavior.
- Recognize signs of substance abuse.
- Address the problem.

WHEN TO ADDRESS

A substance abuse policy should help prevent inappropriate behavior at work. Unfortunately, some employees may still abuse alcohol or drugs at work. Managers should be careful when addressing this topic, and not accuse every employee who looks a little tired of being addicted to drugs

or alcohol. Every manager should be trained to recognize the behavior caused by different drugs and how it is diagnosed.

Managers need to keep a paper trail of odd behavior and use the facts to confront the individual. Do not attack the employee personally. It is important to discuss work performance. Follow the policies governing drug testing, and refer the employee to resources for help. It may be necessary to terminate an employee who has substance abuse problems.

IMPLEMENTING A “NO TOLERANCE” RULE

A “no tolerance” rule regarding alcohol and drugs is being embraced by more and more organizations. This usually requires drug testing as proof that the policy has been violated. It is usually wise to speak with a lawyer before drafting a drug testing policy. No tolerance may mean that the employee who violates the rule is terminated immediately. Some companies choose to refer their employees to treatment once, and terminate employment after a second positive. The point is that substance abuse is not ever allowed to continue in the workplace.

What to Include in a Drug Testing Policy:

- Legal requirements
- Disability discrimination provisions
- Collective bargaining agreements
- Who is tested
- When tests occur

- Drugs tested
- Testing procedures
- Frequency of tests
- Actions taken

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Gary knew that substance abuse within the workplace could do a number of things like increasing the sick time of employees and hinder their decision making skills, so he decided to create a policy on drugs and alcohol for the paper distribution company. It lists the substances that were not allowed, the reasoning behind the policy's creation, the consequences for using any of the listed substances and a list of resources that could help any employee suffering from substance abuse and addiction. The policy was approved, and was implemented before the first infraction, thus promoting the continued record of a drug and alcohol free workplace.

*The trodden path
is the safest.*

MAXIM



WRITING THE SAFETY PLAN

Once you have identified the different hazards that your organization faces and you understand the legal safety requirements for your business, you can draft a safety plan. We have already addressed the basic elements of a safety plan, but it cannot be stressed enough that managers and employees must be involved in order for a plan to be successful.

MANAGEMENT INVOLVEMENT

Managers are an essential part of a safety plan, and their role must be discussed. Employees need to know who to turn to with safety concerns and managers must understand their responsibilities to promote safety. This will prevent confusion and ensure that everyone understands his or her role.

Example:

Managers are responsible to provide written health and safety guidelines to all employees.

RESPONSIBILITY

Managerial responsibility will vary according to the needs of each organization. There are, however, basic responsibilities that most managers share:

- Property maintenance
- Involve employees in the program
- Conduct safety surveys
- Meet safety goals and objectives
- Address employee concerns

EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

Managers need employee involvement. Employees need to follow safety rules and help improve the rules and regulations when necessary. The safety plan must address employee involvement. Typically this involves the following:

- Adhere to policies and procedures
- Evaluate safety of personal workstation and equipment
- Report unsafe work conditions
- Report accidents or injuries

FOLLOW THROUGH WITH ACCIDENT INVESTIGATIONS

Anytime an accident happens there needs to be an investigation. The safety policy should include a section on accident investigations. Investigations need to address the following information:

- Who is responsible for the investigation
- How it will be investigated

The investigation itself needs to answer the following questions:

- Who was injured?
- Where did it happen?
- What is the injury?
- What caused the injury?
- Which hazard is responsible?

A corrective action may be necessary, depending on the findings.

TRAINING OF EMPLOYEES

Employee training should also be addressed in the plan. It is important that employees understand who will be training them and why.

Basic Training Information:

- Name and title of person responsible for the training
- Topics covered

- Who will perform the training
- Frequency of training
- Information about training records

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Jordan was writing a safety plan for a paper distribution company, and he wanted to be sure of a few things before sending it in for approval. Firstly, he confirmed with the management about their key role in the plan. They would be responsible with everything from property maintenance and employee involvement to meeting the safety goals and addressing any concerns the employees may have. Employees would be expected to not only adhere to the policies and procedures laid out in the plan, but also to report unsafe working conditions to management and report any accidents or injuries. This would ensure that employees could turn to their managers with any concerns and thus feel safer. The plan passed and was very effective, and Jordan felt happy that he could help keep people safer.

*You make progress by
implementing ideas.*

SHIRLEY CHISHOLM



IMPLEMENT THE PLAN

Managers and employees need to work together to successfully implement a safety plan. In order for this to happen, the roles and responsibilities must be clear. Employee representatives and committees have a clear role that will help implement the safety plan, and evaluate the plan for necessary changes.

SELECTING AN EMPLOYEE REPRESENTATIVE

Employee representatives may also be a Union health and safety representative, if your company works with unions. The employee representative accompanies OSHA inspectors. They may also accompany the company inspectors. Employers do not choose employee representatives. The safety committee or other employees choose the representative.

IDENTIFYING ROLES

Safety plans require employees to take on different roles. Safety committees are not used in all organizations, but they can be instrumental in implementing safety plans. They help educate both the employers and employees about safety. Safety committees are important to developing a safe culture, and they perform other functions.

Safety Committee Roles:

- Review the safety plan
- Perform inspections
- Recommend training
- Review accident reports
- Develop procedures
- Monitor for compliance

ASSIGNING RESPONSIBILITY

The general responsibilities of employers and employees have been addressed in the safety plan, but problems require individuals to take responsibility. For example, an inspection that results in a report that requires action should specify who the responsible party is. Managers and committee members have a great deal of responsibility, and everyday tasks, such as training, may be assigned to trusted employees who are capable of handling the task.

FOLLOW THROUGH

Having a plan in place is not enough. You need to follow through with the plan. Review your health and safety plan regularly to make sure that the necessary changes have been made, and they are effective. An action plan will help you follow through with your new safety plan.

Action plans:

- **Goals:** Define your (SMART) goals for the safety plan
- **Responsibility:** Assign different responsibilities.
- **Timeframe:** Determine how long it should take.
- **Barriers:** Consider barriers and how to work with them.
- **Communication:** Determine who will communicate the progress and how often.

PRACTICAL ILLUSTRATION

Jared was a member of the safety committee, and needed to call a meeting to implement the newly approved safety plan. First they voted on an employee representative to accompany the company inspector and the OSHA inspectors. They confirmed their positions in the safety committee to make sure that they would be dedicated and effective. After the implementation of the plan, if any problems arose, they would assign the responsibilities to individuals within the committee that could add that to their normal everyday responsibilities such as training. They continued to maintain and alter the plan to stay up to date with current regulations and were able to make the work environment safer for everyone.

*Precaution is better
than a cure.*

EDWARD COLE

CLOSING THOUGHTS

- **Anonymous:** Safety is a cheap and effective insurance policy.
- **Benjamin Franklin:** He that's secure is not safe.
- **Herman Kahn:** Deterrence itself is not a preeminent value; the primary values are safety and morality.



Rick Chisholm made history when he single-handedly changed the professional Audio Visual industry by breaking all the rules and capitalised over 50% market share in Australia with very little capital, no partners, mergers or lenders and set up the first franchise operation of its kind in the world in the late 1990's and early 2000's.

As a 7x founder of companies and 30x businesses such as Innovest, AI Machine, Lightsounds, LSW, Light Emotion with revenue in excess of \$300 million and having employed more than 1,000 staff over the last 35 years. Rick is known as the Start-Up and SME Guru and is Author of a number of books including Business Success for Life. Unlike many mentors, he actually walks the talk and has a number of businesses under management in such areas as Automation, Events management, Importing, Distribution, Retailing and E-commerce.

His BIG passion is Business Education empowering Businesses Owners through knowledge and skills. Whilst Rick has experienced great success, he has also endured many failures. Rick has faced and overcome the exact same challenges you are facing now.



Tala Chisholm is an SME specialist who has owned and managed several small to medium sized businesses in the last 20 years, several of which were eventually sold. She has extensive experience in the fields of retail, franchising, licensing, dealerships, education, importing, distribution and consulting.

Her expertise lies in building and implementing customised cross-platform database and software solutions for businesses, automation, IT, web marketing, advertising, graphic design, business administration, process refinement and implementation. Her business experience ranges from bricks-and-mortar Giftware retailing to highly technical fields such as Security, CCTV, Entertainment Lighting and Audio sales, hire and installations as well as e-commerce.

Throughout her career she also trained and mentored Franchise business owners as well as internal division managers. Some areas of training included retail operations, management practices, business strategy, accounting, cash-flow, marketing, customer service and IT. She has also headed up the drafting of Operating Compliance Manuals for Franchise operations and implementation of all the elements involved.



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