

## Safety Program (Injury and Illness Prevention): Zenith's Guide to Developing an Effective Program

### INTRODUCTION

Some may ask "Why do I need a safety program anyway?" There are two main reasons:

First, safety programs are effective if written and instituted properly. Second, it is morally right and a financially wise business practice to prevent injuries.

There may be specific state requirements regarding your safety programs. The following comments are being provided as a guideline of the minimum elements that should be included to have an effective program. We suggest you check with the individual states in which you do business for any specific requirements.

### PURPOSE

This guide reviews the elements that make up an effective program. You will have to shape each element to fit your company's structure and culture.

Things to remember as you develop your program:

Your program's effectiveness is not measured by length. Keep it short, simple and to the point.

If you need assistance, Zenith has a staff of trained safety professionals to help you through this process. Please call your local Zenith office.

Once you have completed your program, you should review it annually and make changes as needed. You should also review your program if you have significant changes (e.g., process, substances, number of employees).

Here are the elements to consider developing for your program. Check off your progress as you complete each one:

### WRITTEN PLAN

Your program should be in writing and include the name(s) of the person(s) responsible for implementation of it. You should have a written policy statement to show employees that you are serious about their safety. Keep it brief. For example:

*The health, safety and well being of our employees and visitors are of prime importance to the success of our business. It is our goal at (Company Name) to provide a safe and healthful environment for all employees and visitors.*

*Effective immediately, (name or title of responsible person) is appointed as Safety Coordinator. (Name or title of responsible person) has full responsibility, authority and accountability for all company health and safety programs. His/her objective is to coordinate all health and safety activities in the operation to prevent illnesses and injuries and to ensure compliance with safety standards.*

*In addition to the Safety Coordinator, each of us has a duty to recognize, report and act on unsafe or unhealthy situations before they lead to injury or illness. You have a responsibility to yourself, your family, and fellow employees.*

The safety policy statement should be signed by the company president, CEO or owner.

### DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

This section defines the duties and responsibilities for each member of the company. The following should be used as a minimum:

- The Safety Coordinator is responsible for planning, directing, monitoring and controlling the safety program.

- The Supervisor must effectively execute the safety program and hold employees accountable.
- The Employee is responsible for working safely and following established procedures.

## **SAFETY PROGRAM RECOGNITION AND ENFORCEMENT**

All employees will be held responsible for following safe work practices. The following methods are used to ensure compliance:

**RECOGNITION:** management recognizes employee actions that promote safe working conditions and behaviors.

**ENFORCEMENT:** Any violation of safety rules, procedures or failure to comply with assigned responsibilities should be considered for disciplinary procedures.

Reference:

- Risk Management Bulletin - Positive Reinforcement: The Best Safety Tool (RMB122)

## **SAFETY COMMUNICATIONS**

You should communicate the program and responsibilities to your employees. Verbal communications are often most effective. Employees should also have a means to communicate with management. The following methods can be used:

**SAFETY MEETINGS** are an effective means of communication and can be conducted in the following ways:

- **New Employee:** New employees should be provided with safety training prior to beginning work.
- **One-on-one:** Individual communication sessions can be held for clarification or reminders of particular safety issues and hazards.
- **Other:** Supervisors are given the responsibility of holding regular meetings to address and safety issue or relevant topic.
- **Safety Committee:** The committee meets on a regular basis and includes managers, supervisors, crew bosses and designated employees.

**POSTED AND DISTRIBUTED INFORMATION AND MATERIALS** are methods of distributing safety information. These may include use of posters, flyers, paycheck stuffers, etc.

## **ANONYMOUS NOTIFICATION BY EMPLOYEES**

Employees are encouraged to report any unsafe condition or behavior and should not be required to provide any self identifying information.

Reference:

- Risk Management Bulletin - Safety Committees (RMB125)

## **HAZARD RECOGNITION AND CONTROL**

### **INITIAL**

A system should be established to make sure the hazards are identified and control measures are in place.

### **ONGOING**

The following methods are used to continually identify and correct hazards. addressed and controlled. You should consider the following so that hazards are identified and corrected effectively and promptly:

### **INSPECTIONS**

Regularly scheduled inspections should be conducted to observe people, equipment, materials and the workplace for the purpose of identifying unsafe acts and/or unsafe conditions. A checklist customized to your operation should be used to guide the process and document the effort to ensure corrective action is taken.

Reference:

- Risk Management Bulletin - Safety Inspection (RM126)
- Document hazards following each accident investigation, inspection, employee notification, etc.
- Prioritize each hazard and take corrective action. Base your priority on the severity of the hazard and frequency of exposure.
- Document the date of corrective action.

## PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE

A preventative maintenance and inspection program is in place for equipment and vehicles. Appropriate actions are taken to correct hazards or deficiencies identified.

## INCIDENT INVESTIGATIONS

All incidents should be investigated regardless of severity. The incident itself may have been preventable. The purpose of an investigation is to:

- Determine the causes of the incident. Take care to let the injured employee(s) and witness(es) know that you are not attempting to place blame. You are on a fact-finding mission.
- Identify what can be done to reduce the chances of a similar accident happening again.
- Take corrective action and monitor the results.

Reference:

- Risk Management Bulletin - Incident Investigations (RMB101)

## EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Just as you train someone to drive a car, so should you train employees on how to perform their job efficiently and safely. Job-specific training should be given by you or your supervisors. You do not need to be "certified" in most cases. First aid and CPR training are examples of exceptions.

Provide training when you:

- First hire employees (include both general and job-specific training)
- Transfer employees between departments, or assign new responsibilities
- Change or implement new processes, substances or equipment
- Uncover special hazards (e.g. confined spaces, emergency action plans, lockout, etc.) or hazards that were previously not noticed

Providing training is nothing more than making sure your employees know how to do the job correctly and effectively. Quality and productivity may improve as well as safety.

Reference:

- Risk Management Bulletin - Employee Training: A Guide for Employers (RMB108)

## RECORD KEEPING

Record keeping is where many programs fail. Many companies perform all of the necessary elements but are unable to show compliance because they keep few, if any, records. The length of time records must be maintained varies from state to state. In order to keep things simple, we recommend you keep safety documentation centralized.

- Policy statement/disciplinary policy
- Safety meetings
- Inspections
- Accident investigations
- Hazard correction

Reference:

- Risk Management Bulletin - Safety & Health Related Recordkeeping (RMB 162)

## CONCLUSION

You can order the references cited in this guide from the Workers' Compensation Media Guide located in your Zenith service kit. Or, you can order them by calling your local Zenith office directly. The use of forms is not required, but they can facilitate some activities, and are useful for documenting your efforts. Some are available from Zenith media guide, or you can utilize forms from other sources. You may decide to make your own.

Remember, keep the program short, simple and specific to your business. As changes occur, the written plan should be modified accordingly.

For further information or assistance, contact your Zenith Safety & Health Consultant.