TEAMSTERS
Safety &
Health FACTS

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OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY AND HEALTH PROGRAM GUIDELINES

The development of a Safety and Health Program should consist of elements of applied safety and health practices that are successful in protecting the safety and health of employees. Employees should be required to participate in all phases of the program, with the employer responsible for ensuring a safe and healthy work place. An effective program seeks to identify, evaluate, and prevent workplace hazards, specific job hazards, and potential hazards that may arise from foreseeable conditions.

Although compliance with OSHA standards and the law is an important objective, a good program looks beyond specific requirements of OSHA to address all hazards. A good safety and health program intends to prevent all injuries and illnesses, whether or not compliance is at issue.

Major Elements:
Employers should enact the following four elements for an effective occupational safety and health program.

(1) Management Commitment and Employee Involvement
Management commitment provides the motivating force and the resources for organizing activities within an organization. Employee empowerment enables workers to develop and express their own ideas for commitment to safety and health protection, without fear of retribution.

- Clearly state a worksite policy and goals on safe and healthful work conditions, so that all personnel at the site and elsewhere, understand the importance the priority of safety and health in relation to other organizational values.

- Provide visible top management involvement in implementing the program.

- Provide for and encourage employee involvement in the structure and operation of the program, and in decisions that affect their safety and health.

- Provide adequate authority and resources to responsible parties so that they can meet assigned responsibilities.

- Review the program at least annually to evaluate success.

(2) Worksite Analysis

Worksite analysis involves a variety of worksite examinations to identify not only existing hazards, but also conditions and operations in which changes might occur to create hazards.

- Do routine job hazard analyses.

- Conduct comprehensive baseline worksite surveys for safety and health.

- Provide for regular site safety and health inspections.

- Provide for a reliable system for employees, without fear of reprisal, to notify management personnel about conditions that appear hazardous and to receive timely responses.

- Provide for investigation of accidents and "near misses" incidents.

- Analyze injury and illness trends over time to identify and correct dangerous patterns.

(3) Hazard Prevention and Control

Hazard prevention and control is triggered by a determination that a potential hazard exists. When eliminating the hazard is not possible, hazards should be controlled to prevent unsafe and unhealthy exposure. Elimination or control is done in a timely manner, once a hazard is recognized.

- Elimination and control of hazards can be attained by using engineering techniques, administrative procedures, work practices, and personal protective equipment.

- Provide for facility and equipment maintenance.

- Plan and prepare for emergencies and conduct training drills for response teams.

- Establish a medical program that includes the availability of first aid on site and of a physician and medical care nearby.

(4) Safety and Health Training

Safety and health training addresses the safety and health responsibilities of all personnel concerned with the site, whether salaried or hourly. It is most effective when incorporated into other training about performance requirements and job practices.

- Ensure that all employees understand the hazards to which they may be exposed to and how to prevent harm to themselves and others from exposures to these hazards.

- Training should be reviewed to address effectiveness.

OSHA advises employers to institute and maintain an occupational safety and health program. OSHA encourages employees to become involved in their establishment's occupational safety and health program. An effective program should produce polices, procedures, and practices that recognize and protect employees from occupational safety and health hazards.