

Module 15: Safety and Health Programs

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Module Description

Have you ever been injured on the job? Do you know what steps to take in the event of sickness, injury, or death due to your workplace environment? More importantly, do you know how to protect yourself, as well as others, and help promote healthy working conditions? Every year, more than 50,000 workers die from exposure to various hazards in the workplace. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is committed to saving lives, preventing injuries, and protecting the health of workers all across America. This module will show you how to identify workplace hazards and become involved with ensuring healthy and safe working environments.

Module Learning Objectives

At the completion of this module, you should be able to:

- Describe the importance of effective safety and health programs.
- Summarize the common characteristics of exemplary workplaces.
- Explain the General Guidelines of an effective safety and health program.
- Discuss the major elements of an effective safety and health program.
- Name the state programs.
- List consultation services.
- Describe the Voluntary Protection Program (VPP).
- Discuss the Safety Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP).
- Describe the Strategic Partnership Program.
- Apply training and education.
- Utilize electronic information.

Lesson 1: Effective Program Elements

Lesson Focus

This lesson focuses on the following topics:

- Importance of Effective Safety and Health Programs
- Common Characteristics of Exemplary Workplaces
- The Guidelines—General
- Major Elements

Importance of Effective Safety and Health Programs

It has been found that effective management of worker safety and health programs:

- Reduces the extent and severity of work-related injuries and illnesses.
- Improves employee morale and productivity.
- Reduces workers' compensation costs.

Common Characteristics of Exemplary Workplaces

Organized and systematic methods are used to:

- Assign responsibility to managers, supervisors, and employees.
- Regularly inspect for hazards and control the hazards.
- Regularly re-evaluate the effectiveness of existing programs.
- Orient and train all employees to eliminate or avoid hazards.

The Guidelines—General

An effective program:

- Includes provisions for systematic identification, evaluation, and prevention or control of hazards.
- Goes beyond specific requirements of the law to address all hazards.

Written program:

- As the size and complexity of the worksite or process increases, so does the need for written guidance.

- Some individual OSHA standards require a written program be created. Taken in whole, these individual written programs will often form the basis of the facility safety program.

Major Elements

An effective occupational safety and health program will include the following four elements:

1. Management commitment and employee involvement
2. Worksite hazard analysis
3. Hazard prevention and control programs
4. Safety and health training

1. Management commitment and employee involvement

- Management commitment and employee involvement are complementary.
- Management commitment provides the motivating force and resources for organizing and controlling activities within an organization.
- Employee involvement provides the means through which workers develop and express their own commitment to safety and health protection.

Recommended Actions

- Clearly state a worksite safety and health policy.
- Establish and communicate a clear goal and objective for the safety and health program.
- Provide visible top management involvement when implementing the program.
- Encourage employee involvement in the program and in decisions that affect safety and health (e.g., inspection or hazard analysis teams; developing or revising safe work rules; training new hires or co-workers; assisting in accident investigations).
- Assign and communicate responsibility for all aspects of the program.
- Provide adequate authority and resources to responsible parties.
- Hold managers, supervisors, and employees accountable for meeting their responsibilities.
- Review program operations at least annually to evaluate, identify deficiencies, and revise as needed.

2. Worksite Analysis

- Worksite hazard analysis involves a variety of worksite examinations to identify not only existing hazards, but also conditions and operations where changes might occur to create hazards, anticipating hazards before they become obvious.
- Effective management actively analyzes the work and the worksite to anticipate and prevent harmful occurrences.

Recommended Actions

In order to identify all the hazards:

- Conduct comprehensive baseline and periodic surveys for safety and health.
- Analyze planned and new facilities, processes, materials, and equipment.
- Perform routine job hazard analyses supported by checklists, Job Safety Analysis, or Job Hazard Analysis forms.
- Provide for regular site safety and health inspections.
- Involve the facility's Safety Committee in periodic, but regular, site inspections.
- Provide a reliable system for employees, without fear of reprisal, to notify management about apparent hazardous conditions and to receive timely and appropriate responses.
- Provide for investigation of accidents and "near miss" incidents, so that their causes and means for prevention are identified.
- Analyze injury and illness trends over time, so that patterns with common causes can be identified and addressed with an eye towards prevention.

3. Hazard Prevention and Control

- Where feasible, prevent hazards through effective design of the job or job site, which are referred to as Engineering Controls.
- Where elimination of the hazard is not feasible, control hazards to prevent unsafe and unhealthful exposure.
- Elimination or control must be accomplished in a timely manner.

Recommended Actions

Establish procedures for timely prevention, correction, or control of hazards, including:

- Engineering controls, where feasible and appropriate.

- Administrative controls such as procedures for safe work practices, which are understood and followed as a result of training, positive reinforcement, correction of unsafe performance, and enforcement.
- Provision for personal protective equipment.
- Provide for facility and equipment maintenance.
- Plan and prepare for emergencies by conducting training and drills, not less than annually.
- Establish a medical program consisting of first aid on site and the structure to access nearby physician and emergency medical care.

4. Safety and Health Training

- Safety and health training must address the safety and health responsibilities of all personnel, whether salaried or hourly.
- Safety and health training is most effective when incorporated into other training about performance requirements and job practices. After all, safety is everyone's responsibility and part of everyone's job.
- Complexity of training depends on size, complexity of the worksite, and the nature of hazards.

Recommended Actions

Conduct safety and health orientations before employees or contractors start work to ensure that all employees understand the hazards to which they may be exposed and how to prevent harm to themselves and others because of exposure to these hazards.

Ensure that supervisors carry out their safety and health responsibilities, including:

- Analyzing the work under their supervision to identify previously unrecognized potential hazards.
- Maintaining physical protections in work areas.
- Reinforcing employee training through continual performance feedback and enforcement of safe work practices.
- Ensure that managers understand their safety and health responsibilities, as described under the management commitment and employee involvement element of the guidelines.

Lesson Summary

As the size and complexity of the worksite or process increases, so does a need for written guidance. Individual written programs often form the basis of a facility safety program.

An effective program includes provisions for systematic identification, evaluation, and prevention or control of hazards and goes beyond specific requirements of the law to address all hazards. It has been found that effective management of worker safety and health programs reduces the extent and severity of work-related injuries and illnesses, improves employee morale and productivity, and reduces workers' compensation costs.

Lesson 2: OSHA Safety and Health Programs

Lesson Focus

This lesson focuses on the following topics:

- State Programs
- Consultation Services
- Voluntary Protection Programs (VPPs)
- Strategic Partnership Program
- Training and Education
- Electronic Information

State Programs

The Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSH Act) encourages states to develop and operate their own job safety and health plans, which OSHA then approves and monitors. There are currently 28 state/territory plans: 22 cover both private and public (state and local government) employment; 4 states/territories—Connecticut, Illinois, Maine, New Jersey, New York, and the Virgin Islands—cover the public sector only.

More Information: Full details and a current [map](#) of state/territory plans.

States and territories with their own OSHA-approved occupational safety and health plans must adopt and enforce standards identical to, or at least as effective as, the federal standards, and provide extensive programs of voluntary compliance and technical assistance, including consultation services.

Consultation Services

Consultation assistance is available upon request to employers who want help in establishing and maintaining a safe and healthful workplace. Funded equally by OSHA and each state, the service is provided at no cost to the employer. Each state, whether a federal plan state, or a state plan state, operates the consultation program for the state. Primarily developed for smaller employers with more hazardous operations, the consultation service is delivered by state governments employing professional safety and health consultants.

Comprehensive assistance includes a hazard survey of the worksite and appraisal of all aspects of the employer's existing safety and health management system. In addition, the service offers assistance to employers in developing and implementing an effective safety and health management system. No penalties are proposed or citations issued for hazards identified by the consultant.

The employer's only obligation is to correct all serious hazards identified by the consultant within the agreed upon correction timeframe. OSHA provides consultation assistance to the employer with the assurance that his or her name, firm, and any information about the workplace will not be reported to OSHA enforcement staff.

Under the consultation program, certain exemplary employers may request participation in OSHA's Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP). Eligibility for participation in SHARP includes, but is not limited to, receiving a full-service, comprehensive consultation visit, correcting all identified hazards, and developing an effective safety and health program management system.

Employers accepted into SHARP may receive an exemption from programmed inspections (not complaint or accident investigation inspections) for a period of two years initially, or up to three years upon renewal.

Voluntary Protection Programs (VPPs)

The Voluntary Protection Program and onsite consultation services, when coupled with an effective enforcement program, expand worker protection to help meet the goals of the OSH Act. The three levels of VPP—Star, Merit, and Demonstration—are designed to recognize outstanding achievements by companies that have developed and implemented effective safety and health management systems.

The VPPs motivate others to achieve excellent safety and health results in the same outstanding way as they establish a cooperative relationship between employers, employees, and OSHA.

Strategic Partnership Program

OSHA's Strategic Partnership Program, the newest member of OSHA's cooperative programs, helps encourage, assist, and recognize the efforts of partners to eliminate serious workplace hazards and achieve a high level of worker safety and health. Whereas OSHA's Consultation Program and VPP entail one-on-one relationships between OSHA and individual worksites, most strategic partnerships seek to have a

broader impact by building cooperative relationships with groups of employers and employees.

These partnerships are voluntary, cooperative relationships between OSHA, employers, employee representatives, and others such as trade unions, trade and professional associations, universities, and other government agencies.

Training and Education

OSHA's area offices offer a variety of information services, such as compliance assistance, technical advice, publications, audiovisual aids, and speakers for special engagements. OSHA's Training Institute in Arlington Heights, IL, provides basic and advanced courses in safety and health for federal and state compliance officers, state consultants, federal agency personnel, and private sector employers, employees, and their representatives.

The OSHA Training Institute also has established OSHA Training Institute Education Centers to address the increased demand for its courses from the private sector and from other federal agencies. These centers are nonprofit colleges, universities, and other organizations that have been selected after a competition for participation in the program. There is a Federal Education Center in each of the 10 Federal Regions.

OSHA awards grants to nonprofit organizations through its Susan Harwood Training Grant Program in order to provide safety and health training and education to employers and workers in the workplace.

The grants focus on programs that will educate workers and employers in small businesses (fewer than 250 employees) about new OSHA standards or about high-risk activities or hazards. Grants are awarded for one year and may be renewed for an additional 12 to 24 month period, depending on whether or not the grantee has performed satisfactorily. Emergency drills and training should occur at least every 12 months.

OSHA expects each organization awarded a grant to develop a training and/or education program that addresses a safety and health topic named by OSHA, to recruit workers and employers for the training, and to conduct the training. Grantees are also expected to follow up with people who have been trained to find out what changes were made in order to reduce the hazards in their workplaces as a result of the training.

Electronic Information

OSHA has a variety of materials and tools available on its [Website](#). These include e-Tools, Expert Advisors, Electronic Compliance Assistance Tools (e-CATs), Technical Links, regulations, directives, publications, videos, and other information for employers and employees. OSHA's software programs and compliance assistance tools walk you through challenging safety and health issues and common problems to find the best solutions for your workplace.

Lesson Summary

OSHA awards grants to nonprofit organizations to provide safety and health training and education to employers and workers in the workplace. It expects each organization awarded a grant to develop a training and/or education program that addresses a safety and health topic, to recruit workers and employers for the training, and to conduct the training. Grantees are also expected to follow up with people who have been trained to find out what changes were made to reduce hazards in their workplaces as a result of the training.