

Risk *topics*

Company Safety Policy

Employee attitudes can have a significant impact, good or bad, on a company's loss experience. Controlling the actions of employees and the overall work environment can help prevent accidents and injuries. Because management's attitudes are generally adopted by employees, management must establish these controls. Therefore, in any organization, the safety program's foundation must be built upon management support. This support will encourage the success of the program.

Management support can be demonstrated by a written and publicized safety policy statement. This policy communicates the message that safety is a key element in the welfare of the organization. An effective policy sets the tone for a safe work environment and, thus, makes everyone's job easier from top management to employees. As such, top management can more easily organize a program around its safety objectives, supervisors can implement and enforce company policy and safe work procedures, and employees will more readily follow those expected safe work practices.

Safety Policy Elements

The safety policy should be written to address the unique needs of each organization. However, as a guideline, the

following elements should be part of, or stated within, any safety policy:

- Importance of protecting employees, the public, and company operations.
- Precedence of safety over saving time or taking shortcuts.
- A statement indicating that every attempt will be made to create a safe work environment and reduce the potential for accidents.
- The company's intention to comply with safety laws, ordinances, and accepted standards of safe work practice.
- Signature of the company president.
- Publicity.
- Line management's responsibility and accountability for the safety program.

Developing the Policy

The first step in developing the policy is to assess the organization's true attitude toward safety. The policy will be ineffective if it lacks management's sincerity. To make the assessment, management

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must determine if it believes its ultimate responsibility is to prevent injuries and that all injuries can and should be prevented. Management must be willing to make an investment in employee safety and train employees to perform safely.

Employees should be encouraged to participate in the safety program and understand their own responsibility for preventing injuries. Encouraging employee participation lets them know that management cares about them and their concerns. It makes them an integral part of the program, which in turn, lends itself to a more complete acceptance of the overall safety commitment.

Management must also believe that preventing accidents can save money and, in the long run, is a good business decision. Staying in business with healthy employees leads to increased production, profitability, and longevity.

Sample Policy Statements

The following are short excerpts from a few sample company safety policies:

- “Your company expects that your work will be carried out with a high degree of concern for all involved and that the work will be both safe and productive.”
- “It is the policy of this organization to conduct all operations in a manner that will prevent injuries to persons and damage to or loss of property.”
- “This organization will endeavor to maintain a safe and healthful place to work. We will provide safe working equipment, necessary personal protective equipment, and in the event of injury, provide first aid and medical service.”

- “The company believes in the importance of the individual employee. Employee safety is to be the first consideration in the operation of the business.”
- “Our objective is a safety and health program that will reduce the number of disabling injuries and illnesses to a minimum, not merely in keeping with, but surpassing the best experience of other operations similar to ours. Our goal is ZERO accidents and injuries.”
- “You are the key to a successful safety program. I assure you that I am totally dedicated to a meaningful safety effort and to this end, my door is always open to you for your ideas and suggestions.”

These are just a few excerpts taken from several safety policies. Each of these is in no way a total policy statement. Keeping in mind the elements of a Company Safety Policy, however, they should be helpful to management in developing their own policy.

Publicizing the Policy

Once a safety policy is established, it should be publicized and implemented throughout the company. A variety of methods can be used to communicate the policy and to make employees aware of the company's expectations of them as a result of the policy. These include such media as bulletin board displays, pamphlets, letters, payroll stuffers, and employee meetings. Supervisors can also discuss the policy with their employees and explain how it applies to them.

Summary

The responsibility for the company's safety performance ultimately lies with top management. This responsibility must extend through the various levels of management to reach the employees. Top managers must ensure the full acceptance of this responsibility and hold all employees accountable for safe performance. The best way to meet this objective is to clearly define the company's intention to maintain a safe and healthy work environment. A properly written and publicized safety policy, showing management's support, offers just such a tool to communicate this objective.

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