



Helping to make your workplace a safe place
www.MySafetyPoint.com

ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

Promoting Workplace Safety

As an employer, you are the person employees look to for guidance. You're the one they rely on to provide safety training.

Workplace conditions are constantly changing, so if you let your guard down and become complacent, a hazard might develop where you least expect it. You can't assume everything's running smoothly just because employees don't complain of safety issues. You have to get out there and see for yourself. It's a big responsibility, but these simple suggestions could help.

In addition, be sure to check out the "Resources" tab on our website to assist with making your job easier. Here you will find a "Code of Safe Practices", a Loss Prevention Program", "Safety Checklists" and much more.

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- **Be Aware of What Goes on in Your Shop**

Take a few minutes every day to conduct a walk-through of the work areas. As you walk around, watch employees working to ensure they are following all safety procedures you have set in place. Make sure they're wearing Personal Protective Equipment if applicable to the job they are performing.

- **Analyze Your Employees Work Routine**

Know each job that is performed in your shop so that you can spot every potential hazard. If a different method will eliminate a hazard, introduce it. Take note of the condition of each work space. Cluttered work areas, such as tools left lying around where somebody could trip over them are a clear hazard.

- **Stress the Importance of Safety Training**

New employee orientation is the perfect time to emphasize hazards and accident prevention. This should then be followed up with monthly safety meetings. Take time to clearly explain all rules and regulations thoroughly. Rules are less likely to be broken or ignored when employees understand why they were established and how they protect workers from injuries and illness.

- **Be Specific**

Generalized statements about working safely can be quickly forgotten. As an employer, you need to be specific about what employees have to do - and how to do it - to protect themselves. If you're worried about employees remembering all the details, provide them with handouts and job aids like checklists, procedural guidelines, and operating manuals.

- **Play It Straight**

Enforce safety standards uniformly and consistently. Don't come down on somebody one day for not following a rule and then ignore the same behavior the next day. If at some point you do have to tell a worker that they did something wrong, explain *why* it's wrong and show them how to do it right.

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- **Reward Good Safety Practices**

Most employees want approval and recognition. When they follow safe work practices or make safety suggestions, let them know you're appreciation. It's easy to focus only on the negative things employees do. Make sure they get credit for the good stuff, too.

- **Be Patient and Listen**

Maintain an "open door" policy and be accessible to employees. You want them to know they can always come to you when they have questions. If they feel you're in a rush to hustle them out of your office, or if you're taking calls or flipping through papers while employees are trying to talk to you, they probably won't come to you the next time they have a question or a problem.

- **Create a Want-To-Work-Safely Environment**

Try to create a safety culture in your shop in which employees do the safe thing not because they *have* to, but because they *want* to. Help them see the value in making safe decisions. Remind them that every single day they may be in a position where they will have to make a split-second safety-related decision. One bad decision is all it takes to get hurt. If you notice employees getting careless, or taking unnecessary risks, put a stop to it immediately. Talk one-on-one with the individuals involved. Hold a safety meeting to review the proper procedures with all employees. Use the situation as a training opportunity to provide additional information to improve work skills and performance. Do whatever it takes to change unsafe behavior. With proper training and encouragement – making the safe decision will be an easy call for your employees.

References: MySafetyPoint Technical Bulletin

For more information on health related issues affecting workers, visit OSHA's Website at www.osha.gov and MySafetyPoint at www.MySafetyPoint.com

Consider this....

According to studies reviewed by the Government Accounting Office (GAO), workplaces with a positive safety culture placed a strong emphasis on safety by encouraging open communication about safety issues, placing a high priority on safety training, and having procedures that prevented breakdowns in workplace safety.

Some researchers concluded that in such environments, workers felt that they could report injuries and illnesses without fear of reprisal or blame from management or fellow workers. For example, employers with proactive policies that *require* workers to report near-miss incidents to help identify hazards and other safety concerns before an injury takes place were more likely to have a positive effect on injury & illness reporting.

If employees do not feel free to report injuries or illnesses, the employer's entire workforce is put at risk. Employers do not learn of and cannot correct dangerous conditions that have resulted in injuries, and injured employees may not receive the proper medical attention they are in need of.

Ensuring that employees can report injuries or illnesses without fear of retaliation is therefore critical to protecting worker health and safety.

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