



OHIO BUREAU OF WORKERS' COMPENSATION'S

10-Step Business Plan for Safety

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10-Step Business Plan for Safety

The primary component of many of the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation's cost-saving programs including 100% EM Cap Program, One Claim Program and Retrospective Rating

The Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC) encourages all employers to implement its 10-Step Business Plan for Safety. In addition, employers who wish to participate in many of the BWC's programs must demonstrate their creation of a 10-Step Business Plan for Safety. In addition to financial benefits of implementing the plan as part of a discount program, all employers who implement a 10-Step Business Plan for Safety can realize its benefits, including improved overall workplace safety and reduction of work-related injuries.

Details on each of the 10 steps are outlined in the following pages. The steps are:

1. Visible, active senior management leadership
2. Employee involvement and recognition
3. Medical treatment and return-to-work practices
4. Communication
5. Timely notification of claims
6. Safety and health process coordination and employer education
7. Written orientation and training plan
8. Written and communicated safe work practices
9. Written safety and health policy
10. Recordkeeping and data analysis

Protect your employees and control your workers' compensation costs by putting these safety steps in place today.

Step 1

Visible, active senior management leadership

Visible senior management leadership within your organization promotes safety management as an organizational value. It is management's responsibility to take the lead in reducing accidents and illnesses.

Things you can do:

- Not only should the top management issue a written safety policy as a core value of the organization, but designate roles and responsibilities in ensuring a safe workplace.
- Establish long- and short-term safety goals for all associates.
- Include safety as an agenda item in all scheduled meetings.
- Regularly review health and safety goals with supervisors and employees.
- Participate in the safety process by joining safety walkthroughs or inspections.
- Model safety attitudes and actions.
- Develop a safety recognition program.
- Track and monitor safety performance as a key component to production.

Active support from upper management and executives sets the tone for the organization and how it views safety.

Step 2

Employee involvement and recognition

Employee involvement and recognition programs afford employees opportunities to participate in the safety management process. By encouraging and enabling your employees to participate, they begin to take ownership of the safety role and can be valuable by providing more “eyes” for recognizing hazards and implementing controls.

Things you can do:

- Establish safety committees or teams with representatives from both management and operations.
- Train employees in hazard recognition.
- Involve employees in conducting department assessments.
- Provide a system for employees to report safety concerns.
- Allow employees to conduct accident investigations.
- Develop a recognition program that encourages accident prevention.

Set reasonable goals for safety improvement and encourage your employees to become part of the safety program. Some things you need to document include:

- Agenda or minutes of Safety Committee meetings.
- Accident or near miss investigation reports with recommendations on preventing similar future accidents.
- Outline results of safety survey.
- Your safety incentive program and tracking of its effectiveness.

Step 3

Medical treatment and return-to-work practices

Early return-to-work strategies help injured workers return to work more successfully. A disability management or post-injury policy should be put in place to help injured workers receive quality medical care at the outset of the injury. The policy should include the following:

- Inform all employees of the procedures to follow for getting quality medical care when an injury occurs. This should include notification of an employer's managed care organization for workers' compensation injuries.
- Report all injuries to supervisor immediately.
- Communicate regularly with injured employees while they are off work.
- Investigate all injuries within 24 hours.
- Develop a transitional-work program or modified-duty program that will allow an employee to return to work in a productive capacity as soon as they are physically able. Consult with an attorney prior to implementing the program.

Step 4

Communication

A program of regular safety and health communication keeps employees informed and solicits feedback and suggestions. Your approach to managing safety and health will include regular verbal and written communication on matters affecting employee safety and health. Communications include:

- Quarterly written and/or verbal feedback to all employees on their accident-prevention performance.
- Process for upward communication and downward communication throughout the organization.
- Communication such as memos, bulletin boards, staff and general meetings.
- Feedback incorporating your organization's overall safety and health performance.

The following ideas can help you design your communication plan:

- One-on-one discussion – the supervisor sits down with each employee on a scheduled basis to discuss safety concerns, suggestions and ideas.
- Informal discussion – inform employees that the accident-prevention coordinator is available to discuss their safety and health questions confidentially.
- Group discussion – provide the opportunity for executives, supervisors, team leaders and employees to discuss safety issues at employee gatherings. Regularly schedule meetings to share information and seek input on safety and health matters.
- Written communication – communicate key information, which can be motivational, developmental or informative, in writing.
- In-house company publications – an in-house company newsletter provides accident-prevention information on a regular basis.
- Safety and health booklets – provide safety and health information to employees.
- Safety alert notices – inform employees of accident causes and how they can prevent them.
- Safety bulletin boards – use for posting safety-related policies, notices, articles, meeting schedules, meeting minutes, memos, etc.

Step 5

Timely notification of claims

Employers must report each claim immediately to their managed care organization (MCO), which will then report the claim to BWC within 24 hours. When an injury occurs, first arrange for medical care for the employee. Secondly, you should investigate and document the facts of the claim, and then report the injury to your MCO.

Reporting claims quickly:

- Demonstrates care and concern for the employee.
- Prevents delays and/or confusion in the claim process.
- Lessens the potential for fraud or abuse.
- Reduces the potential for needless litigation.

The timely reporting of claims allows you to:

- Establish an open line of communication with the injured worker.
- Provide appropriate benefits to the injured employee on a timely basis.
- Develop accurate information to manage the workers' compensation claim.

Step 6

Safety and health process coordination and employer education

Designate an employee as the accident-prevention coordinator. Give that person the responsibility and authority to facilitate organizational safety systems and processes, and ensure that he or she develops the knowledge and skills necessary for creating a safer working environment.

The accident-prevention coordinator does not assume operational responsibility for safety and health, but supports line management, supervision and employees to develop effective safety systems and processes.

Responsibilities include:

- Helping management and employees identify accident prevention and safety and health training needs through perception surveys, interviews, behavior sampling or other similar methods.
- Helping supervisors make changes or develop strategies that improve the organization's safety systems and processes.
- Identifying and communicating new safety and health requirements.
- Compiling injury and illness-related records.
- Tracking progress on safety and health-related projects.
- Working with employees to optimize safe work practices.

The accident-prevention coordinator should be committed to safety and health, employee well-being and have the time, authority and resources to facilitate developing the company's safety systems and processes. He or she acts as the internal consultant, helping the organization make important safety-related decisions.

Step 7

Written orientation and training plan

No matter how safe a work environment you provide, the success of your safety-and-health systems depends upon the managers', supervisors', team leaders' and employees' buy-in of safe work practices. The goal of any safety and health training program is not just to impart knowledge, but also to change behaviors and improve decision making. Through a written orientation and safety training, employees receive information about hazards, procedures, processes and expected behaviors.

Your company safety and health training plan should include:

- Company safety and health policy statement.
- Employee responsibilities.

After your new employees participate in safety orientation, have their supervisors provide them with job-specific safety and health training. Do not permit employees to start a job until they have received instructions on how to perform the work safely.

In addition, it is important to build supervisor and manager competency levels in safety and health. As they emphasize and learn more about effective safety-process management, employees are less likely to be injured or become ill from inherent hazards.

Fully document your safety and health training by including the date, topics covered, instructor's name and the names of employees attending the training session. Have employees answer written questions about the content of educational material you presented. This helps provide a sense of importance to the training, measures understanding and retention of the material and documents the effectiveness of the training. It also provides the opportunity for constructive feedback from the employees. Have each employee in attendance sign the documentation form on the day of completion.

Step 8

Written and communicated safe work practices

Provide all employees with written safe work practices so they have a clear understanding of job requirements and responsibilities. Identify, document and publicize both general and job-specific safe work practices. Provide employees with a copy of the general safe work practices, and have all employees sign a statement indicating they have read and intend to follow the safe work practices.

Examples of general safe work practices expected of employees include:

- Practicing good housekeeping.
- Wearing personal protective equipment.
- Using good ergonomic principles.
- Wearing respiratory protection.
- Using and following lockout/tagout procedures.
- Using and following confined-space entry.
- Using hazard communication.
- Avoiding bloodborne pathogens, if applicable.
- Applying first-aid procedures (if trained).

Job-specific, safe work practices apply to operations that involve recognized hazards and address risks associated with the business. Publicize job-specific safe work practices in the work area.

Safe work practices are essential for any organization because they prescribe the accepted behavior and practices the employer expects of employees. You may use a safety involvement team to develop an employee safety handbook. Ask employees for their input in composing the handbook. Include general, company-wide safe work practices and specific safe work practices that apply to each department, the company's safety policy or a statement on safety as viewed by the top official of the organization in the safety handbook.

Each department manager, leader, etc., will review the safe work practices with his or her employees on a recurring basis, at least annually. To help ensure that safe work practice handbooks are read, have employees sign a statement certifying that they have read it, they are familiar with the safety rules and policies outlined in the safety handbook and agree to abide by them. Retain the signed document in the employee's personnel file.

Step 9

Written safety and health policy

A written safety and health policy signed by the top company official expresses the employer's values and commitment to workplace safety and health.

Give all new hires a safety and health policy document signed by your top executive. Communicate the safety and health policy to all employees and review it with them on an annual basis. The document will include:

- Manager, supervisor, team leader and employee responsibilities regarding the organization's commitment to workplace safety and health.
- Commitment to returning injured or ill employees to work at the earliest opportunity.

A written safety and health policy clearly states the company's commitment to effective safety process management and to providing a safe working environment.

This may seem to be a minor step, but it's often the start in implementing effective safety and health systems and processes. It expresses the commitment to providing and maintaining a safe work environment.

Communicating the organization's commitment to safety is as important as the company's statement on producing quality products. Both statements should be mutually supportive. Consider integrating each statement into one comprehensive policy. Employees would benefit from seeing the integration of safety and quality.

Step 10

Recordkeeping and data analysis

Good recordkeeping is vital in improving health and safety performance. Accurate and detailed records outlining why the accident happened, what process or system needs to be changed to eliminate or reduce the risk of injury, and how to make those changes are the goal of this step.

What you can do:

- Develop Accident Trends – Review your First Report of Injury Forms (FROI), OSHA 300 log or workers' compensation reports to identify trends or clusters of injuries. Look for repeated incidents in a particular department or specific types of injuries (such as cut hands) that are occurring. Use this information to identify opportunities to improve your safety and health process by focusing on these key areas. Develop an Action List that outlines the problems, how to correct them and who is responsible for correcting any problems.
- Establish and Track Leading Indicators – Track your proactive safety activities, e.g. number of safety audits completed, number and types of safety training or discussions, or number of near misses investigated.

All of this information is valuable in improving the safety culture and performance of your organization.