Written Employee Safety Program – Part IV

This series began in April, with each HR Answers issue covering a different element of an effective employee safety program. Implementing a written employee safety program is a sure way to impress an OSHA inspector. Documentation is always a must.

Training is one of the most important elements of any injury and illness prevention program. It allows employees to learn their jobs properly, brings new ideas into the workplace, reinforces existing ideas and practices, and puts your program into action.

7. Safety And Health Training And Instruction

This portion of your program probably requires the most ongoing activity by managers and supervisors. As you review your own training programs, remember that training is to be conducted for both supervisors and employees.

You may utilize outside professionals to help you develop and conduct some specific training. However, outside trainers should be considered temporary. When you consider that part of the task of training is to monitor the effectiveness of the formal training and to evaluate whether employees need additional training, it is clear that an outside person cannot accomplish that. Ideally, sessions conducted by outside sources should be treated as train-the-trainer for key employees who can in turn conduct the training needed on an on-going basis (new employees, refresher, etc).

Your program should, at a minimum, provide training and instruction:

- To all employees when your program is established (if you have employees who have not gone through a training session, schedule one now!)
- To all new employees (before they start working).
- To all employees given new job assignments for which training has not been previously received.
- Whenever new substances, processes, procedures, or equipment are introduced to the workplace and present a new hazard.
- Whenever new personal protective equipment or different work practices are used on existing hazards.
- Whenever you or your supervisors are made aware of a new or previously unrecognized hazard.
- For all supervisors to assure they are familiar with the safety and health hazards to which employees under their immediate direction and control may be exposed.
- As periodic refresher training, especially for equipment operators.
- To be effective, your training program needs to:
  - Let supervisors know they are the key figures responsible for the safety planning, training, and monitoring employees’ work performance.
  - Let employees know that a job is not to be undertaken without instruction on how to do it properly and safely.

OSHA Targets Ski Areas

Every year the Bureau of Labor Statistics publishes the DART rate by industry. DART stands for “Days Away, Restricted or Transferred” and it represents the number of days an injured employee is unable to return to regular duties. Based on these rates, OSHA then compiles a list of high-hazard industries. With a DART of 7.4, skiing facilities have been identified as a high-hazard industry and placed on OSHA’s 2008 Secondary Inspection list.

Free consultation services may be available to you from state agencies. Typically a comprehensive survey is conducted to identify deficiencies and steps to be taken to make the appropriate corrections. In some cases, voluntary participation in one of these consultation programs may qualify your organization for an exemption from the compliance arm of OSHA. Check with the OSHA offices or the Department of Labor, Safety & Health for your state to see if you can take advantage of such a program.

Quote of the Day: “Price is what you pay. Value is what you get.”

–Warren Buffett

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