

COMMUNICATING WITH EMPLOYEES ABOUT SAFETY



Effective health and safety programs are active, living programs, with an ongoing involvement by both management and employees. Research shows that effective programs include the following components:

Visible Management Commitment to Health and Safety

- Ensuring that all levels of management lead by example.
- Actively encouraging employees to report health and safety problems or concerns.
- Actively soliciting employee input on how to address hazards.
- Following up on concerns that are reported.
- Following up when employees do not follow safety rules and procedures to find out why and to provide additional training.
- Providing a fair system to ensure safety rules are followed.

A System and Culture of Employee Involvement in Identifying Hazards and Solutions for Hazard Control

- Employees have extensive experience with the hazards in their workplace and can help determine which hazards are of greatest concern as well as suggest ideas for addressing these hazards
- Employees are more likely to act safely when they have contributed to identifying and addressing the hazards in their workplace.



Communication with Employees About Safety

There is a system, such as a health and safety committee, tailgate meetings or suggestion boxes, for communicating with your employees about safety and for encouraging them to speak up about workplace hazards without fear of reprisal. Employees receive information about the safety program and safety issues related to their jobs (including about any chemicals they use).

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Training

Training is one of the most important elements of any Injury and Illness Prevention Program. It allows employees to learn their job properly, brings new ideas into the workplace, reinforces existing ideas and practices, and puts your program into action. An effective Injury and Illness Prevention Program includes training for both supervisors and employees. Training must be conducted in the language and manner trainees understand.

What Health and Safety Training is Required?

The IIPP standard requires that training be provided to all workers on the hazards in their workplace when they start working for their employer, whenever they are given a new job assignment, and whenever new procedures and equipment are introduced.

Another Cal/OSHA training standard that affects most workers is Cal/OSHA's Hazard Communication standard, which requires training on any chemicals to which employees may be exposed. To find out which training requirements affect your employees, go to www.dir.ca.gov/dosh/dosh_publications/TrainingReq.htm, or contact the WOSHTEP Resource Centers.

How Should Health and Safety Training be Conducted?

You may need outside professionals to help you develop and conduct your required training program. Help is available from the Cal/OSHA Consultation Service, the Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation (CHSWC), the Labor Occupational Health Program (LOHP) at UC Berkeley, the Labor Occupational Safety and Health (LOSH) Program at UCLA, the Western Center for Agricultural Health and Safety at UC Davis, your workers' compensation insurance carrier, private consultants and vendor representatives. Use the WOSHTEP tool, *Employee Training Record*, to monitor which employees have had health and safety training, the dates of training, and the topics covered.

