

TIPS FOR CREATING A BETTER
SAFETY PROGRAM

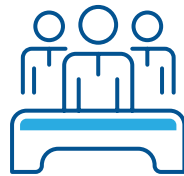


Construction Safety Management is an integral part of any construction company. It should be comprehensive, documented, and ingrained in all employees from the firm's leadership to all its workers.

It's simply not enough to assume your employees are working safely on a jobsite. Any Safety and Loss Control Program should focus on upstream risk avoidance and the activities that produce risk. A successful Safety Program is not static; rather it is a continuous improvement process. While it might seem daunting to develop your company's Safety Program, **it can be accomplished by following these 3 steps:**



Step 1: Develop a Safety Manual



Step 2: Create a Safety Committee



Step 3: Conduct Safety Meetings





Step 1: Develop a Safety Manual

It's crucial to have a comprehensive Safety Manual that guides employees. All of your Safety Management activities will revolve around this Manual. If your Safety Manual does not contain certain items, your company can be cited (in most states) by OSHA. Your Safety Manual should be explicit and leave nothing to chance. **Every Safety**

Manual needs to include:

- Assignment of Responsibilities
- Employee Safety Communication System
- Inspection Schedules/Frequency
- Record Keeping & Documentation Expectations
- Accident Investigation Procedures
- Method for Ensuring Employee Safety Compliance
- Unsafe Working Condition Correction Procedures
- Health & Safety Training for Operation Risks

It might seem obvious, but any employee not complying with your company's Safety Manual could be putting your company at risk.

In addition to the above required elements, there are often overlooked components that add value to any Safety Manual. These include:

- Crisis Management Plan
- Return To Work Program
- Substance Abuse Policy
- Occupational Health Policy

Crisis Management Plan

The construction industry faces a greater risk of accidents and disasters (i.e. structural failure, severe weather, terrorist/bomb threats, etc.). Such disasters can be life-threatening and can affect your employees, suppliers, and even the general public.

A Crisis Management Plan addresses critical steps to take in the event of an unexpected crisis at the jobsite. It will identify the Crisis Response Team and when/how to contact them. Additionally, this plan should include mock drills that must be scheduled regularly and be customized to the jobsite. These drills must be reviewed and updated yearly, at a minimum.

Document all incidents. The date, time, incident, the work that was being done, the employees who were working, safety measures that were taken, and how the emergency was handled, should be documented in detail. If possible, record interviews with any employees who witnessed the incident. When appropriate, press releases should be issued. Such transparency can save a company's public image. By creating a Crisis Management Plan, you can save your company time, money, and its reputation.

Return to Work Program

An employee injured on the jobsite, often cannot return to their exact role immediately. By establishing a Return to Work (RTW) Program, your company returns that injured employee to the workplace as soon as they are medically able. The RTW Program places the injured employee in another role (i.e. administrative), while they heal. There are many benefits to a RTW Program. It retains experienced workers, reduces turnover, and lowers your Workers' Compensation costs.

Substance Abuse Policy

As a construction firm, your employees face risks every day. Adding alcohol or illegal drugs into the mix spells disaster. They contribute to absenteeism, loss of productivity, theft, poor decision-making, high turnover, and accidents. Your employees deserve a safe, healthy, and productive work environment. A policy of maintaining a workplace free of drugs and alcohol is a great start. Before anyone is hired, they should go through a pre-employment drug test consistent with your state laws. If there is an accident while on the job, the employee should be required to take another drug test. Be sure this is clearly stated in your Safety Manual. This helps your company identify if someone under-the-influence caused the accident. These measures will send a clear message to all.

Occupational Health Policy

In addition to accidents, construction workers face many hazards on the job that can affect their health. Exposure to harmful materials (i.e., asbestos, lead, gases, etc.), frequent loud noise, stress and fatigue, environmental element exposure, and inadequate working conditions just to name a few. Your Safety Manual must provide unmistakable direction on how to prevent these hazards.



Step 2: Create a Safety Committee

A Safety Committee should have members from all levels of your company. It takes teamwork to effectively carry out a Safety Program. The Committee's responsibilities are to identify the safety best practices, implement them, and ensure they are followed. Each member should be accountable for specific activities. The Committee should meet either monthly or quarterly (at a minimum). They should also hold training sessions to educate managers, supervisors, and workers. Members should review the progress of the Committee at least annually. This will identify progress and deficiencies so the Committee's efforts can be further refined as necessary with the ultimate goal of an accident-free workplace.



Step 3: Conduct Safety Meetings

Jobsite safety meetings are a great way to build a "Safety First" culture. All Prime Contractors should meet before starting a project and review the Safety Program of the jobsite. Important topics to review include, fall protection, safety responsibility, hazards specific to the jobsite, etc. Contractors should also review the Code of Safe Practices (COSP) and the Wrap-Up Loss Control Manual (if the project is a Wrap-Up). The Manual will provide specific requirements for the project, such as the project scope. It's also a great idea to get the jobsite workers to brainstorm safety improvement ideas. This feedback can boost employee morale as well as workplace safety.



These 3 steps will set up any construction firm for success in developing its own Safety Program. The benefits are far-reaching, including, low turnover, cost savings, positive company reputation, and most importantly healthy and happy employees.

Over the years, Turner Surety and Insurance Brokerage, Inc. (TSIB) has developed many “Best Practice” recommendations for our clients to fit both corporate and project-specific safety plans. If you are looking for help in building a new Safety Program, enhancing your existing program, or just looking for some additional safety training, give one of our Risk Consultants a call. We can help you build a “Best in Class” Safety and Loss Control Program to fit your needs and company culture.

SAFETY BEST PRACTICES

- Safety Committee
- Nothing Hits the Ground
- Handrails at Any Height
- Ladders Last
- Full-time Material Manager on Project
- Job & Daily Hazard Analysis (JHA/DHA)
- Implement a Predictive Safety Solution System
- Weekly Safety Training for Staff
- Strict Worker Removal Program for Violators
- Principal Meetings After Every Incident
- Project Clean-up Every Night
- Worker Sign-off (No Injury) Every Friday



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