



Preparing and Implementing a Safety Plan

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Help your organization write, implement, and review a safety plan

Preparing and Implementing a Safety Plan

Writing a Safety Plan

Elements of the Plan

Now that you have a safety committee, you can write a safety plan. Typically, you will want to include the following elements.

Organizational Policy

What is the organization's view on safety management? Who are the key players in the safety culture? A statement from the CEO or president on why safety is important may also be useful.

Hazard Identification

This section addresses the following questions:

- What hazards have been identified?
- How are these hazards resolved?
- When will hazards be reviewed?
- How will they be addressed?

Emergency Response Plan

When a safety incident occurs, how should workers respond?

Regulations

What codes and standards does the organization operate by? Be sure to refer jurisdictional and federal codes as well as industry or organization-specific codes.

Communication Plan

How will employees be notified of safety changes and issues? What safety materials will be available in the workplace (i.e., posters, videos)?

Ongoing Process

How will the safety plan be reviewed and updated? What audits will be performed?

Employee Involvement

What part do employees play in safety (i.e., safety committee options and personal responsibilities)? What disciplinary actions will be taken as a result of safety violations?

Training

What safety training will be offered? Is it mandatory or voluntary? Make sure you include the Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How.

Investigation and Documentation Process

When an incident happens, how will it be documented and investigated?

Toolbox

What tools are available to employees to help with the safety process? Where are they located? These tools can include:

- Location of physical tools, such as accident investigation kits or first aid kits
- Reporting process
- Whistleblower protection
- Suggestion box

Appendix

References to additional, related policies, such as a disaster response plan, harassment policies, or emergency response plans, may be appropriate.

Additional Tips

Some other tips to keep in mind:

- Once a draft has been written, have several people from different areas of the company go through it. This will help you make sure you have covered all of the bases.
- Make sure the plan is readable. Use clear, concise language rather than jargon and big words.
- You may want to have the plan translated into languages other than English depending on your worker demographics.
- Choose the correct format. While a paper copy is a good idea, you may also want to post it on the company website or provide it in other formats.
- Supervisors should go over the plan with employees on a regular basis to make sure they read and understand it.

Implementing the Plan

Getting Started

Now that the safety plan has been written, it's time to implement it. Where do you start?

- Go over the plan with all employees.
- Put the plan in place immediately.
- If there are many changes to be made, they may have to be implemented slowly. Start with the biggest hazards.
- Set a good example by modeling safety yourself.

Empowering Employees

Employees must be empowered to make safety changes at work in order for your safety culture to be successful. Ways that you can do this include:

- Ensure employees are involved in the safety committee and safety activities
- Ensure each employee understands their responsibilities for safety
- Leaders should set a good example by modeling and encouraging safety
- Safety procedures should be communicated clearly, consistently, and frequently
- Assign safety tasks to employees
- Recognize employees for work well done
- Correct behavior immediately

Remember, your safety culture will only be a success if it is accepted and adopted by your employees.

Test Your knowledge

What challenges do you predict as you move forward with your safety plan?

What solutions might you suggest for these challenges?

Incident Management

Case Study

The goal of a safety culture is for no incidents at all. However, we are dealing with human beings, machinery, and an inability to behave predictably and safely in all instances. Let's look at how to respond to a mock incident.

Disaster!

Inside a meat packing plant, 20 workers are all performing various tasks involving heavy machinery. Suddenly, a scream echoes through the factory. George, the foreman, has gotten his arm caught in one of the meat packing machines. Panic erupts: one worker turns to stare and gets caught in the conveyor belt; another worker trips and falls as he tries to run from the scene; yet another worker falls into the vat that they have been cleaning out. No one has called for help and the scene is in complete chaos.

Test Your Knowledge

What would you do?

Responding to Incidents

We suggest the following steps when responding to an incident:

T	Take control of the situation.
A	Assess safety hazards.
K	Keep yourself safe. This includes stopping any machinery and removing yourself from dangerous elements (such as live power wires).
E	Ensure others are safe. Make sure that they stop what they are doing and remove themselves from a dangerous environment.
C	Call your emergency help number (e.g. 911) and summon help from within the organization.
H	Help the victim if you are trained and if it is safe to do so. Move the victim as little as possible as it could aggravate their injuries.
A	Activate emergency response plans if appropriate.
R	Reassess the scene for new safety hazards, including bystanders.
G	Get control of the scene. Make sure evidence is not disturbed.
E	Extract yourself. Turn things over to the proper authorities (such as emergency response personnel or management).

Documenting Incidents

Incident-Related Documentation

The documents that you will be legally required to have in the event of an accident will differ depending on where your business is. However, the following information should be gathered immediately after an accident.

- Type of incident
- Date, time, and location of incident
- Employee's personal information (name, address, telephone number)
- Employee's work-related information (employee number, position, status)
- People on duty at time of incident and where they were
- Emergency response personnel
- Name of hospital that employee was taken to
- Witnesses' personal information (name, address, telephone number) and testimony

- Description of incident, including timeline of events, damage, type of accident, hazardous materials or energies involved

Other Documents

In addition to keeping a log of safety incidents, you should document all activities in your safety culture. This includes:

- Training
- Safety manuals
- Policies
- Safety materials distributed to employees
- Minutes of safety committee meetings

Make sure that you are familiar with the reporting and recordkeeping regulations in your area and that you abide by them.

Investigating Incidents

About Safety Investigations

The purpose of a safety investigation is to determine why the accident occurred and how it can be prevented. There are many types of accident investigation techniques, and most require a specialist. This session is designed to give you a brief overview of a simple investigation technique. We encourage you to get certification from a specialized organization if you are going to be performing accident investigations.

Accident Investigation Kit

Your organization should have the following materials gathered together in an accident investigation kit:

- Company's safety policy and investigation procedure
- Insurance information (contact information and policy numbers)
- Graph paper and blank paper
- Notebook
- Appropriate forms
- Pens and pencils
- Calculator
- Handheld GPS
- Cameras (film and digital, both with date and time stamp)
- Extra batteries and film
- Measuring tape
- Tape recorder
- Flashlight
- Safety tape

The Safety Investigation Process

Once you are prepared, here are the steps to take.

Step One: Gather Data

Make sure you identify the basic facts of the incident: who, what, when, where, and how. (The “why” will come later.) You will want to include a description of the accident, a timeline, witness reports, photos and sketches, and physical evidence.

Step Two: Determine Probable Cause

In determining the cause, we must aim for prevention, not for blame. For example, “Employee error” is often listed as the cause for an accident. “Lack of proper training in forklift use” would be a better probable cause because it’s something we can try to resolve. There are many tools out on the market that can help you determine the root cause, including checklists and simulations.

Step Three: Identify Effective Solutions

Effective solutions have three characteristics:

- They must help prevent a recurrence of the incident
- It must be something that you can control
- It must be in line with your organization’s values

In the example above, “Lack of proper training in forklift use” was identified as the probable cause. Retraining the affected employee is not an effective solution because it will likely not prevent a recurrence of the incident. Re-designing forklift training and re-certifying employees is a better solution; if all employees have better knowledge of how to operate the machine, this will resolve the hazard.

Step Four: Assign Responsible Parties and Reasonable Target Dates

Once you have identified the solutions, put them in action. Determine who will implement the solution, what will be done, when it needs to be completed by, how it will be evaluated, and who will monitor progress.

Step Five: Write Final Report

Your report should include all the data gathered, the probable cause, the solutions identified, and the action plan for the solutions.

Step Six: Communicate Results

The highlights of the report (what happened and what the organization plans to do about it) should be communicated to all employees. More detailed information may be appropriate for those affected by the incident.

Step Seven: Track Solutions

The accident investigator is typically responsible for tracking solutions as they are implemented to ensure that they are implemented correctly and on time.

Step Eight: Evaluate Solutions

Monitor the workplace for recurrences of the incident. Did the solution work at preventing occurrences of this incident? If not, you will need to re-evaluate the probable cause and effective solutions.

(This process was developed by Ronald Meyers and R. Alan Thomas as part of the Transform 180 safety program.)

Near Misses

A near miss is just that: an accident that almost occurred. There is nothing more frustrating than to be discussing an accident in the lunchroom and to hear someone say, “Well, I knew someone would fall through that step sooner or later; I almost put my foot through it last week!”

It is important that near misses be treated with the same seriousness as actual incidents. You must have a method for dealing with near misses in your safety plan. We recommend that:

- Employees are required to report near misses as soon as they occur.
- Managers are required to complete a form detailing the near miss and to take action to minimize the hazard as much as possible.
- The near miss is reported to the safety committee ASAP.
- The safety committee determines what action to take (full investigation, hazard review, etc.).
- Action is monitored by the safety committee using steps seven and eight in the accident investigation process.

Reviewing the Program

The final essential component of your safety plan is to include a review process. This process will depend on the size of your company and the size of your plan. We recommend that the plan be reviewed annually. Hazard identification will also need to be reviewed annually, or when there is:

- Addition of new equipment
- Office re-location
- Change in job responsibilities
- New pattern of incidents
- Issue raised by staff member

Your options for reviewing the safety plan include:

- Use of checklists
- Visual inspections

- Employee interviews
- Rating procedures
- Outside consultants
- Review of statistics, such as incidence rate and lost days
- Review of reports and incidents
- Review of training programs and other safety materials
- Review of safety regulations in your area to ensure that you are up-to-date

Further Reading: