

SEVEN STEPS TO BETTER SAFETY TRAINING

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Employee safety training is one of the most important elements of an effective safety program. If employees are not provided proper thorough safety training they may never learn the safest way to do their jobs. Employees who are left to determine how to do a job on their own often develop bad safety habits that become extremely difficult to break later. Proper safety training has to be an integral part of each job. Employees should not be left on their own until they understand the safe work practices required for the job.

As important as safety training is, we do not always do as good a job of training as we need to do. Training takes time and follow-up. It takes an individual who is comfortable with the subject matter and competent in training. All too often, this is not the case. Many supervisors who are required to train new employees have not received the necessary training themselves and do not feel comfortable doing the training. Therefore, in many instances, the training that is given, is not effective.

The first thing we must do if we are going to be effective, is to sell the program to our employees. Employees must buy into what we are trying to do. If they do not, training can be very difficult at best. Remember, many employees don't see a real need for it. They believe accidents happen to the other guy and they are somehow exempt from accidents and injury. Therefore, employees must be sold on the need and importance for safety training. This can be done if the instructor has a positive approach, is enthusiastic about it and know the subject matter well.

To have effective safety training, it is important to ensure that the individual doing the training know how to train and is comfortable with it. By knowing the seven key steps of effective training, and practicing these we can go a long way in improving our training program and effectively communicating safe work procedures to our employees.

The following seven steps have proven effective in significantly increasing the amount of knowledge retained after training has been completed. Employees also learn quicker and easier.

Step 1

Make sure all trainers are well prepared and know the job:

- Each trainer needs to go through and read the material in detail.
- A breakdown of each of the key steps needs to be made.
- An outline of the training sessions needs to be done.
- Trainers need to know the subject matter to such an extent that they can lead, in a discussion format and not read the material.

Step 2

Prepare the Learner:

- Put them in a position for job instruction. Set the stage so learning can take place. Identify areas that can interfere with the training or cause distractions and take steps to eliminate these.
- Put the trainees at ease and stress the importance of the training.
- Develop a personal dialog directly with the trainees. Find out what they know about the subject. Build upon this relationship.

Step 3

Describe the subject matter or job in detail. Discuss each step in detail.

Step 4

Demonstrate step by step:

- Do the job at the normal rate, then slowly step by step. Employees learn easier if the job is broken down into steps.
- Explain each step in detail.
- Repeat instructions as you go along.
- Ask the employee to explain the job back to you in detail. If the employee has difficulty, go over the steps again.

Step 5

Have the employee do the job:

- Make sure they do the job in detail. Do not let them leave out any of the steps.
- Have the employee repeat out loud each step as they perform it.
- Correct any areas of confusion immediately.
- Have the employee go over the key safety points.
- Test the employees by asking "why" type questions.
- Have the employee continue to perform the job under close supervision until the employee knows the job or process thoroughly.

Step 6

Evaluate the process:

- If it is felt the employee needs additional training, repeat steps 3 through 5 as necessary.
- The employee is not to be left alone until the trainer is convinced that the employee can work safely.

Step 7

Follow-up:

- Check on the progress of newly trained frequently at first, then periodically thereafter.
- Encourage employees to ask questions about their job if they need to. Continue to stress safe work practices and attitudes on a continuous daily basis.

All employee should be retrained if there is a new procedure or process. Also, any employee observed working unsafely should be retrained as necessary.

Effective training can have a positive impact on an employee's safety attitude. Safety behavior has a direct link to an employee's safety attitude.

Remember: Training is more than just passing on information. If the trainee hasn't learned -- the trainer has not taught.

If you have any safety concerns or need any assistance, please call American Safety and Health Management Consultants, Inc., at 1-800-356-1274.