OSHA® FactSheet

Injury and Illness Prevention Programs

Injury and Illness Prevention Programs are proactive processes that can substantially reduce the number and severity of workplace injuries and illnesses and can alleviate the associated financial burdens on U.S. workplaces. These systematic programs allow employers and workers to collaborate on an ongoing basis to find and fix workplace hazards before workers are hurt or become ill. This Fact Sheet describes some common program elements and how to implement them.

Injury and Illness Prevention Programs are an effective tool for reducing occupational injuries, illnesses and fatalities. Many workplaces have already adopted such approaches, for example, as part of OSHA's Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) and Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP) for small employers. Not only do these workplaces experience significant decreases in workplace injuries, but they often report a transformed workplace culture that can lead to higher productivity and quality, reduced turnover, reduced costs and greater worker satisfaction.

Thirty-four states and many nations around the world already require or encourage employers to implement similar programs. Based on the positive experience of these employers, OSHA believes that Injury and Illness Prevention Programs can provide the foundation for breakthrough changes in the way employers and their workers identify and control hazards, leading to a significantly improved workplace health and safety environment. Adoption of an Injury and Illness Prevention Program will result in workers suffering fewer injuries, illnesses and fatalities. In addition, employers will improve their compliance with existing standards and experience the financial benefits of a safer and healthier workplace.

Injury and Illness Prevention Programs should include the systematic identification, evaluation and prevention or control of general workplace hazards and the hazards of specific jobs and tasks.

The major elements of an effective program include:

Management Leadership
- Establish clear safety and health goals for the program and define the actions needed to achieve those goals.
- Designate one or more individuals with overall responsibility for implementing and maintaining the program.
- Provide sufficient resources to ensure effective program implementation.

Worker Participation
- Consult with workers in developing and implementing the program and involve them in updating and evaluating the program.
- Include workers in workplace inspections and incident investigations.
- Encourage workers to report concerns, such as hazards, injuries, illnesses and near misses.
- Protect the rights of workers who participate in the program.

Hazard Identification and Assessment
- Identify, assess and document workplace hazards by soliciting input from workers, inspecting the workplace and reviewing available information on hazards.
- Investigate injuries and illnesses to identify hazards that may have caused them.
- Inform workers of the hazards in the workplace.

Hazard Prevention and Control

- Establish and implement a plan to prioritize and control hazards identified in the workplace.
- Provide interim controls to protect workers from any hazards that cannot be controlled immediately.
- Verify that all control measures are implemented and are effective.
- Discuss the hazard control plan with affected workers.

Education and Training

- Provide education and training to workers in a language and vocabulary they can understand to ensure that they know:
    - Procedures for reporting injuries, illnesses and safety and health concerns.
    - How to recognize hazards.
    - Ways to eliminate, control or reduce hazards.
    - Elements of the program.
    - How to participate in the program.
- Conduct refresher education and training programs periodically.

Program Evaluation and Improvement

- Conduct a periodic review of the program to determine if it has been implemented as designed and is making progress towards achieving its goals.
- Modify the program, as necessary, to correct deficiencies.
- Continuously look for ways to improve the program.

For more information, visit the Injury and Illness Prevention Program page on OSHA's website at: www.osha.gov/dsg/topics/safetyhealth.

Twenty-seven states operate their own occupational safety and health programs approved by OSHA. States enforce similar standards that may have different or additional requirements. A list of state plans is available at www.osha.gov/dcsp/osp.

For assistance, contact us. We can help. It's confidential.

OSHA® **Occupational Safety and Health Administration**

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