

Safety and Health Responsibilities

We are all familiar with the phrase safety is everyone's responsibility. However, many organizations do not clarify and communicate exactly what it expects each person to do in support of the safety and health process. As a result, safety often becomes someone else's responsibility. Much time is wasted trying to find someone to blame for an accident, rather than developing corrective measures. Lack of clearly defined responsibilities also leaves the employer with no means of measuring the safety performance of his or her managers or supervisors. Hence, the safety program flounders.

Read the suggested roles and responsibilities for people at various levels in an organization below. Although the job titles and responsibilities are geared to larger industrial operations, they are certainly applicable to other types of businesses and smaller operations. In any case, we suggest you review these criteria with each person who has managerial responsibilities to determine the most appropriate to their specific job function and span of control.

Plant manager

1. Establish and communicate the goals for the safety and health process.
2. Sign a written safety policy statement that outlines the safety-management process and the responsibilities of each individual in the organization.
3. Discuss safety performance, progress and goals during all meetings with department heads and supervisors.
4. Review and respond to trends in the frequency and severity of injuries/illnesses/near misses/property damage.
5. Review and respond to summaries of safety audits, accident investigations, safety committee meetings, employee suggestions and disciplinary actions.
6. Provide the necessary resources for safety and health improvements.
7. Ensure you monitor measure and recognize the safety performance of every individual.

Production manger

1. Demonstrate support for all safety-related activities, policies and procedures.
2. Review and sign off on all safety committee meeting minutes, departmental safety audits/follow-up actions and accident investigations/follow-up actions.
3. Assist safety director in monitoring and evaluating supervisory safety performance.
4. Assist safety director in conducting periodic meetings with supervisors to inform them of new policies and procedures related to safety.
5. Consult with the safety director to ensure the installation and use of all new equipment, tools and materials complies with safety and health requirements.
6. Assist the safety director in determining what types of specific safety training employees might need when introducing new equipment, tools, materials or processes.

Engineering manager

1. Review safety committee minutes and provide monthly updates of planned improvements and status of issues in progress.
2. Ensure the safety director reviews and approves all new machinery, tools and processes.
3. Ensure engineering staff comply with all safety policies and procedures.
4. Assist production, safety and maintenance manager in ensuring proper safeguarding of new and existing machinery.
5. Supply managers and supervisors with needed reference material and cost data for justification of safety improvements and training.
6. Consult with managers and supervisors on safety and health requirements, and training needs for new equipment, tools, materials and processes.

Maintenance manager

1. Provide monthly updates to safety committee, and provide frequent updates of issues resolved and in progress.
2. Assist safety committee members in conducting safety and health audits.
3. Assist in developing, updating and ensuring plant-wide safety compliance with the lock-out/ tag-out and hazard communication program.
4. Ensure compliance with all safety policies and procedures in the tool room and maintenance shop.
5. Assist production, safety and engineering manager in ensuring proper safeguarding of new and existing machinery.
6. Supply managers and supervisors with needed reference material and cost data for justification of safety improvements and training.
7. Consult with managers and supervisors on safety and health requirements and training needs for new equipment, tools, materials and processes.
8. Ensure all contractors are aware of safety requirements and follow proper procedures.

Safety director

1. Develop facility-wide safety policies and procedures.
2. Ensure the proper equipment and systems for compliance with safety and health standard are in place, and maintained them properly.
3. Conduct general safety and health training/reporting systems for all new employees.
4. Assist safety committee/team members in conducting safety and health audits.
5. Assist supervisors with job-safety analyses, accident investigation and safety training.
6. Keep abreast of new requirements and innovations related to safety and health. Supply managers and supervisors with needed reference material and cost data for justification of safety improvements and training.
7. Consult with managers and supervisors on safety and health requirements and training needs for new equipment, tools, materials and processes.

Human resources manger

1. Maintain and summarize injury logs, accident investigation reports and safety audits.
2. Prepare reports to top management to summarize facility and departmental safety performance, progress and recommendations for improvements.
3. Coordinate safety committee activities and maintain documentation.
4. Assist top management in setting goals and developing performance measures.

5. Assist the operations manager in evaluating supervisor safety performance.

Supervisors/ foremen/ lead people

1. Conduct job-specific safety and training for new employees. Ensure the employees clearly understand and follow the procedures.
2. Communicate and consistently enforce the disciplinary process.
3. Observe employees on a regular basis to ensure they follow safe work practices. Document your findings.
4. Give employees positive reinforcement for following safe work practices and provide coaching for needed improvements.
5. Conduct periodic departmental safety training.
6. Investigate and correct reports of unsafe conditions and behaviors.
7. Investigate and develop corrective action for all accidents and incidents.
8. Ensure the organization provides workers with and properly use protective equipment.
9. Ensure employees properly maintain all tools and equipment, and keep them in safe working order.
10. Ensure all people entering the work area comply with facility and departmental safety rules.
11. Develop departmental safety goals.
12. Conduct job safety analysis, and ensure employees follow established procedures.
13. Encourage employees to submit suggestions for safety improvements.
14. Participate in safety committees and safety involvement teams.

Employees

1. Comply with plant safety rules, policies and procedures.
2. Comply with safe operating procedures for tools, equipment.
3. Comply with safe handling instructions for chemicals and materials.
4. Provide suggestions to enhance safe operating and handling procedures.
5. Keep work areas clean and orderly.
6. Use and take care of personal protective equipment.
7. Participate in safety training for new or transferred employees.
8. Participate in safety involvement teams.
9. Communicate hazards and issues needing attention to supervisor.
10. Promptly report all accidents, near misses and property damage.
11. Promptly report equipment and tools needing repair or replacement.
12. Ask for and provide assistance when needed.

Suggested initial steps in the development of a process to measure safety and health-management performance are below ,

1. Meet with the individual or group to which these criteria apply to explain the importance of each element in the safety management process.
2. Review/revise policies, procedures and systems to ensure the appropriate tools, resources and authority are available for implementation of these elements.
3. Determine how you can implement and measure each element in an accurate and meaningful manner.

4. Explain how you will evaluate and use these elements in the performance review system for all managers, supervisors and employees.