

Employee safety orientations by Dan Stockwell

Before you begin

Share a safety-orientation check list and a handout with your meeting participants.



Introduction

No business organization can expect good safety performance unless its top management demonstrates that safety is a key organizational value. A leader must communicate the need for safety to all employees. Accountability is one of the key factors to commitment. Every level of your organization needs to be accountable for its safety responsibilities. Make safety orientations for new and transferred employees a part of your organization's basic safety processes.

Discussion

According to the National Safety Council, statistical data differs. However, experts generally agree new employees are significantly more prone to work-related accidents. Along with production and quality, safety must be a top priority. This applies to an employee who is new to the organization, transfers to a new job or returns from an extended work absence. A safety orientation provides specific safety information. It can also promote the importance and value of safety within an organization.

The orientation leader uses a check list to provide direction and consistency when presenting information. Because orientation attendees absorb only so much in one sitting, give them a written outline to improve their comprehension and retention.

Topics

These topics are usually part of a basic safety orientation.

- Review of the safety policy and safety rules
- Review of specific safe work practices and procedures
- Dress requirements
- How to report injuries
- How to seek first aid
- How to report unsafe conditions, unsafe practices and near misses
- How to respond during fire and emergency situations
- Housekeeping standards
- Discussion of specific work hazards
- Use and care of personal protective equipment
- Hazardous material identification and safe use (material safety data sheet)

This is by no means a complete list. Each organization may develop a more comprehensive orientation. To record employees participating in the orientation, use a sign-in sheet.

A successful safety orientation includes follow-up and additional education. Supervisors need to ensure employees understand specific work practices and procedures. Encourage employees to ask questions.

Soon after the orientation and on a continual basis, evaluate employees' knowledge and understanding. To ensure that new or transferred employees comprehend your company's standard operating procedures, supervisors need to closely supervise and educate them.

Summary

A well-planned and implemented safety orientation lays the foundation for an employee's future safety performance. To continue the safety process, conduct training on a regular basis. This training may include:

- Safety meetings;
- Safety contacts;
- Specific safety issues and/or safety training on changes in work practices.

References

Web site

- Employee Orientation Checklist (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety): <http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/orientation.html>

Publication

- National Safety Council: *Accident Prevention Manual for Business & Industry, Administration & Programs*, 13th Edition, 2009.

BWC resources

- *Safety Leader's Discussion Guide 2005*, "Training Techniques, A Guide for Safety Leaders" by Amy Stewart
- *Safety Leader's Discussion Guide 2009*, "Using the Internet to find safety information" by Karen Jensen

BWC videotapes and DVDs

Division of Safety & Hygiene's video library

- *Orientation to Workplace Safety*
- *Health & Safety Orientation: The Competitive edge*
- *Introduction to Workplace Safety*
- *Safety in the Workplace: Volume III – Safety Orientation for New Employees*
- *Retail Safety Orientation*
- *Safety Orientation for Custodial & Maintenance*
- *Safety Orientation for Schools*
- *Teacher Safety Orientation*
- *Safety Bob's Construction Safety Orientation*
- *Construction Safety Orientation*
- *Construction Safety Orientation for Employees*

All videos and DVDs are available for loan to Ohio employers. Visit the BWC Web site at ohiobwc.com.

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BWC strives to improve the *Safety Leader's Discussion Guide*. Your feedback can help. Please send your information via e-mail to discussionguide@bwc.state.oh.us.