

Six Safety Elements Supervisors Must Know



In order for accidents to be reduced to the absolute minimum in all shops, it is imperative that each supervisor be aware of their responsibility for ensuring that each job is completed without accident.

Supervisors are looked upon as leaders. Real leadership requires a feeling of responsibility for the welfare of each of the working groups, as well as for the quality and quantity of work produced. No job can be considered as having been efficiently accomplished if an accident has interfered with the planned procedures.

Some of the most important elements that supervisors are required to consider in completing work satisfactorily are:

1.) Planning: Plan each job properly, making sure that the proper tools, materials and equipment are available when needed and that each worker on the job is specifically instructed in the safe use of tools and equipment.

As a supervisor you know from past experience what hazards may crop up at certain stages of the work operation and should so advise your employees well in advance, so that action may be taken to circumvent these hazards.

In addition, you should ensure that appropriate safety equipment is worn when necessary. This includes, among other things, goggles, hardhats, foot protection, gloves and respirators.

2.) Training: It is most important that each person in the work group be properly trained. Despite all of the safety devices that are put on machinery and equipment, the best safety device known is a careful worker. An untrained worker not only creates hazards for themselves, but they frequently jeopardize the safety of others due to their ignorance of safety precautions.

It is important, therefore, that you familiarize yourself with reference material in the safety division and elsewhere, which applies specifically to your work. As a supervisor you are free to consult not only your immediate superiors, but also others who are available to assist you in performing your work safely.

Further, every supervisor is expected to immediately report a hazard, unsafe act, or unsafe work procedure reported to them, if the corrective action lies beyond their scope of influence or responsibility. If they can correct it, they should do so. If they can't, they should report it.

3.) Attitude: It is important that every supervisor has the proper attitude and instills in their workers a high spirit of teamwork and cooperation. A good supervisor will set an example for their workers by practicing what they preach.

For example, if you instruct a worker to wear goggles when performing eye-hazardous work and disregards the rule yourself, you do more harm than the supervisor who says nothing. It is most important to say what you mean and mean what you say. Workers very quickly detect whether you are sincere.

It is expected that by your leadership and example, the employees will in turn form the proper attitude regarding all aspects of their work, including safety.

It is important, likewise, that you as a supervisor realize that your efficiency rating and continued employment in a supervisory grade is largely dependent upon your satisfactory performance in all aspects of your work.

4.) Inspections: Giving a worker proper tools and equipment and instructing him or her in their use is not in itself sufficient to prevent accidents. It is important that you visit the work site of each job to see for yourself how well your instructions are being followed and to assist and advise the workers as necessary.

It is equally important that during these inspections you be constantly on the lookout for unsafe acts, unsafe conditions and work procedures which could cause an accident, and that you promptly initiate remedial measures to correct unsafe acts and conditions when noted.

You should not assign a worker to a job that that person has never performed before without assuring yourself that the employee is capable in every respect of performing the job safely.

5.) Discipline: If you do a good job of training your people, a minimum amount of discipline should be necessary to ensure that they perform in a satisfactory manner. Do not tolerate unsafe practices any more than you would tolerate sloppy workmanship.

A job completed at the price of damaged material or an injury is not a bargain! The cost of all property damage accidents and a large percentage of our injuries are reflected in the work that we do. It is most important for you as a supervisor to realize this.

6.) Accident investigation: It is important that you as a supervisor know how to investigate an accident properly. If you don't know the facts, intelligent corrective measures cannot be applied.

The time to investigate an accident is immediately after it occurs. The reason for investigating is not to place blame but rather to determine what happened so that the proper action can be initiated to prevent it from occurring again.

Whenever an accident occurs you will be expected to recommend the proper remedial measures to prevent that same type of accident from being caused again.

In some instances, you may be able to take corrective action yourself, while in other instances assistance from the safety division may be necessary. If it is beyond the scope of the safety division's authority, it will be reported to top management.

These thoughts regarding your duties and responsibilities as a supervisor for preventing accidents are by no means all-inclusive. You as a supervisor are also expected to exercise initiative and ingenuity in taking whatever additional steps you may deem necessary to ensure that each job is completed.