

NINE KEY SAFETY PROGRAM PARAMETERS FOR OHIO WORKERS' COMPENSATION GROUP RATING PARTICIPANTS

Continued success in the group rating program depends on your ability to avoid costly claims through ongoing safety efforts. The Nine Key Safety Program Parameters reflect a sound approach to workplace safety. The BWC recommends these steps to all employers in all rating plans. We urge you to consider how you can best integrate them into your work environment.

1. WRITTEN SAFETY AND HEALTH POLICY

The employer's top executive shall sign a safety and health policy document to be given to all new hires. The policy shall be communicated to all employees, then reviewed with them on an annual basis. It shall include:

- the management, supervisors' and employees' responsibilities with regard to the organization's commitment to workplace safety and health; and
- commitment to returning the injured or ill employee to work at the earliest opportunity.

2. VISIBLE ACTIVE SENIOR MANAGEMENT LEADERSHIP

Contemporary businesses establish safety and health as a core value of their organizations. Senior management, including the top executive on site, must be the role models for how they want all other employees to act in creating a safe work environment. Active leadership shall include, at a minimum, the following:

- authorizing the necessary resources for accident prevention;
- discussing safety processes and improvements regularly during staff or employee meetings;
- ensuring that all members of management are held accountable for accident prevention activities, and for managing accident prevention processes;
- annually assessing the success of the safety process by utilizing perception surveys, personal interviews and behavior sampling strategies; and
- encouraging employees to take an active part in maintaining a safe workplace.

3. EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT AND RECOGNITION

Both management and employees shall actively participate in the safety and health management process for it to be effective. Employee participation opportunities could include:

- safety and health involvement teams, focus groups, and safety and health committees;
- accident investigations;
- safety and health audits; and
- instructing safety and health training programs.

A program shall be established to identify and formally recognize employees for excellence in accident prevention. Recognition opportunities could include:

- consistently high contribution to safety and health;
- contribution to continuous improvement through participation in problem-solving, decision-making or perception surveys; and
- suggestions for safety and health improvements, or employees who could complete special safety and health projects.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

Regular verbal and written communications on matters affecting employee safety and health shall be included in each organization's approach to managing safety and health. Communications shall include:

- quarterly written and/or verbal feedback to all employees on their accident prevention performance;
- a process for upward communication as well as downward and throughout the organization;
- tools for communication could include memos, bulletin boards, staff and general meetings; and
- feedback should include the organization's overall safety and health performance.

5. ORIENTATION AND TRAINING FOR ALL EMPLOYEES

Each organization shall identify and respond to the specific training needs of its employees including supervisors, managers, and team leaders. Employers shall develop a written safety and health training program that documents specific training objectives and instruction processes. Orientation shall include:

- company safety and health policy;
- employee responsibilities;
- medical procedures such as how and when to report injuries or illnesses;
- actions to take in case of emergencies;
- how to report unsafe practices or conditions; and
- return-to-work procedures.

Safety and health training shall include:

- hazard communication;
- bloodborne pathogens, if applicable;
- specific job/task safe work practices and hazard recognition.

At a minimum, training shall cover:

- procedures for the safe and efficient use of machinery and tools;
- ergonomic risk factors, including the prevention of cumulative trauma disorders;
- training should also focus on chemical hazards and how to prevent contact or exposure; and
- if appropriate, procedures for lockout/tagout, hot work permits, and confined space entry.

All training shall be documented to include the date, topics covered, instructor's name, and the names of employees attending the training session. Each employee in attendance should sign the documentation form on the day of completion.

6. PUBLISHED SAFE WORK PRACTICES

Guidance for employees in the form of written safe work practices is important for a clear understanding of job requirements and responsibilities. Both general and job-specific safe work practices shall be identified, documented, and made available. Employees shall be provided a copy of the general safe work practices; and all shall sign a statement to indicate they have read, understood and will follow the safe work practices. Examples of general safe work practice knowledge expected of most employees include:

- good housekeeping;
- personal protective equipment;
- first aid procedures;
- ergonomic principles;
- respiratory protection;
- lockout/tagout procedures;
- confined space entry;
- hazard communication; and
- bloodborne pathogens, if applicable.

Job-specific safe work practices apply to operations and tasks that involve recognized hazards and risks associated with those specific tasks. Job-specific safe work practices shall be posted or made readily available in the work area.

7. ASSIGNING AN INDIVIDUAL THE ROLE OF COORDINATING SAFETY EFFORTS

An individual shall be designated as the Accident Prevention Coordinator, and given responsibility and authority over the organization's safety and health efforts.

A person acting in this capacity does not assume operational responsibility for safety and health, but supports line management supervision and employees to prevent accidents. Duties shall include:

- helping management and employees identify accident prevention and safety and health training needs (possibly through perception surveys, interviews, behavior sampling or other methods);
- help supervisors make changes or develop strategies that improve safety and health;
- identifying and communicating new safety and health requirements;
- compiling accident or illness-related records;
- tracing progress on safety and health-related projects; and
- working with employees to optimize safe work practices.

An employer may choose to delegate these functions to more than one person. A small company owner may assume these duties or delegate them to a manager. In either case, the Accident Prevention Coordinator(s) shall attend at least one safety and health management seminar each year. Seminar requirements include the following:

- a minimum of six hours of instruction;
- taught by quality instructors; and
- directed at enhancing knowledge and skills in managing organizational safety systems and processes.

8. EARLY RETURN-TO-WORK STRATEGIES

Employers shall establish a post-injury or disability management policy and procedure consistent with the Health Partnership Program (HPP) to help injured or ill employees obtain quality medical care and return to work.

Components of the disability management procedure shall include, at a minimum:

- employer informing the employees of the selected Managed Care Organization (MCO);
- informing employees of procedures identifying where medical treatment can be obtained;
- providing employees with any other available supporting information or materials;
- immediate reporting of accidents and illnesses to a supervisor;
- regular supervisory communications with off-work employees while they are convalescing;
- investigation of all accidents within 24 hours to identify system or process improvements so corrective measures can be taken; and
- when not prohibited by a labor agreement, a modified or transitional work program that allows employees to return to work in a productive capacity during the recuperative period.

9. INTERNAL PROGRAM VERIFICATION

To assess the success of company safety efforts, to include audits, surveys, and record analysis. Organizations shall compile occupational accident and illness-related data in order to:

- identify safety and health process problems;
- help manage the compensation process; and
- provide information necessary for developing solutions to problems.

SAFETY RESOURCE

The BWC Division of Safety & Hygiene offers educational and safety consulting services at no additional cost. Safety & Hygiene consultants assist employers by identifying safety and health hazards and assessing safety programs and making recommendations for improvements. For more information, call their toll free number at 1-800-OHIOBWC or 1-800-644-6292, ext. 22. The Division of Safety & Hygiene provides the following services:

- Safety Audits
- Ergonomic Studies
- Industrial Hygiene Consulting
- Reference Materials, Videos, etc.
- Safety Publications
- Employee Safety Training
- Safety Councils
- All - Ohio Safety and Health Congress

ALTERNATIVE RATING PROGRAMS

The BWC allows for particular discounts / rebates to be added on top of the group rating discount, up to the maximum allowable discount. Additional discounts are available through:

- Drug Free Workplace Program
- Safety Council Discount

To learn more about these programs, contact our Risk Management Services Department at 1-800-777-4283.