# Safety Zone

## Whys, Whats and Hows of a Safety and Health Program

Like productivity and quality in your business, safety needs to be managed and not left to chance through the unguided judgement and actions of employees who may be well-meaning, but uninformed. Most businesses have standards for productivity, quality, and expectations of who in your business does what, and when.

A safety program is a system of standards that comprise your organization's expectations of safe work. A simple example of a standard would be: "All metal shop employees (who) must wear impact resistant safety glasses (what) whenever operating grinders" (when).

### Setting Expectations of Safety

This gives you a framework to provide everyone in your organization the knowledge of what your organization expects them to do (or not do!) when it comes to safety. It also gives business management the ability to measure compliance with the standards it set and to look into why a standard is not being complied with. For instance, a standard may need to be changed, or more training is needed, etc.

Safety programs provide structure and consistency important for any organization, but are critical for multi-location organizations.

Although some very small organizations may need only a list of rules and standard operating procedures, even those should be in written form to ensure that within an "informal" structure, no important standard is overlooked.

Also important is regulatory compliance. A documented, written safety program that is being followed consistently makes any employer look better to an OSHA compliance officer. Additionally, in some cases, state or federal law may require certain safety program elements for specific hazards, such as for Mechanical Presses, Bloodborne Pathogens, Hazard Communication (of hazardous chemicals) and others.

In some locales, safety programs are also known as IIPP's—Illness and Injury Prevention Programs—but the goal is the same: to ensure a common set of standards and expectations regarding an organization's handling of their responsibility to maintain a safe and healthful workplace.

### WHAT

A safety program/IIPP should be designed around an organization's size, operations and the hazards its employees face. For example, a small outside sales firm's primary exposure might be road and traffic hazards for its sales personnel who drive to customer appointments, so its program would be smaller, have fewer standards and would be focused on the automobile hazard. A large company engaged in erecting steel framework for tall buildings would necessarily need a larger, more elaborate safety program.

Even so, in many cases, safety programs can be distilled down to some fundamentals:

- Company Policy Statement
- Assigned Responsibilities
- Employee Training
- New Employee Orientation
- Employee Safety Meetings
- Accident Reporting And Investigation
- Employee Safety Rules And Procedures
- Facility Inspection Procedures
- Fire Safety Procedures
- Emergency Preparedness

Depending on the specifics of what and how the organization conducts its operations, there may be other factors, but the above list is at least a good starting point.

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**HOW**

There are many guides online to forming and operating a safety program, however, a short booklet put out by OSHA is an excellent, step-by-step guide on safety programs, and can be found here: https://www.osha.gov/shpguidelines/. From this link, scroll down and in the right-hand column are further links for construction and general industry versions.

In the guides, OSHA lists Seven Core Recommended Practices:

1. Management Leadership

2. Worker Participation

3. Hazard Identification and Assessment

4. Hazard Prevention and Control

5. Education and Training

6. Program Evaluation and Improvement

7. Communication and Coordination For Host Employers, Contractors, and Staffing Agencies (Multiemployer worksites.)

These recommendations track well with the fundamentals listed above, and with step-by step action items for each of these elements in the booklet, a safety program can be put together that is an exact fit for your organization.

The AmTrust Loss Control website also provides valuable resources pertaining to safety program development, implementation and operations under the Safety Programs section on the right-hand side of the page. Also, AmTrust policyholders can access the training and informational videos free of charge. Simply click on the "Get Access" button and complete the form.

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