How Do You Turn a Good Safety Program Into a Great Safety Program? – Ask the Expert



Question

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Answer

I recently read an article where Nancy Mugavero, OSHA Region V Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) manager, shared the 10 elements of a stellar safety program.

1. **Employee Engagement -Participation**
   Work to employee strengths when it comes to building a solid safety program, Mugavero said. You must create a safety culture where workers feel comfortable participating. Build trust by engaging employees in all aspects by asking for concerns, opinions and solutions.
2. **Worksite Hazard Analysis**
   Conduct a wall-to-wall worksite hazard analysis. Make sure industrial hygiene monitoring is included. Review each operation and/or task and create a job safety analysis (JSA).
3. **Employee Involvement – Trust**
   For all identified hazards, create a tracking system that assigns responsibility to a party along with a due date, and ensure the issue has been addressed.
4. **Hazard Prevention and Controls – Hierarchy of Controls**
   When hazards are identified, prevention and control must be implemented. The hierarchy of controls begins with engineering controls in which the hazard is designed out of the equipment, chemical or operation. As a last resort, personal protective equipment should be relied upon to minimize worker exposure.
5. **Employee Involvement – Buy In**
   Workers that buy into a company’s safety program will feel comfortable participating in it and be mindful of the process at all times. They will report hazards, incidents and accidents.
6. **Meaningful Safety and Health Training**

Make training relevant to your employees. Define training requirements for all employees by either job title or task, operation, department or required training.
Also, diversify training through using a variety of methods such as PowerPoint, video, hands-on training, etc.

7. **Employee Involvement – Sustainability**
   The more workers are involved with a safety program, the more sustainable it will be. Create teams or committees to foster a sense of belonging and accountability. Involved workers will spread the word.
8. **Management Commitment – Resources**
   Management must commit resources whether it is time, training, access to safety and health professionals or the capital to correct and improve a process.
9. **Management Commitment – Visibility**
   Management must show visible participation in health and safety efforts. This includes attending safety training and/or presenting, participating on safety and health teams and complying with all health and safety rules.
10. **Employee Involvement**
    To drive the point home, the number one key to a stellar program is worker involvement. To make a successful safety and health management program, employees must participate, trust in management, have buy in and have ownership/champion to sustain the program.