Office Safety Meeting Kit



Many workers think that the office environment is the safest workplace. But, a safe office workplace requires hazard control, good housekeeping, and safe work practices.

OFFICE HAZARD IDENTIFICATION

Office risk assessments are an effective way to manage safety and health risks within an office environment. This process begins with hazard identification?identifying objects, situations, or activities that can potentially cause harm to employees.

FOUR PHYSICAL OFFICE HAZARDS

Physical hazards that threaten the safety and health of an office worker.

1. **Temperature.** Management of Temperature Hazards in the Office:

- Consult employees on what they feel is the right temperature for their working areas
- Remind employees to wear appropriate clothing to the office, especially during summer and winter season.
- Always check whether the air-conditioning system is working properly and regulate accordingly.
- Control direct sunlight with blinds and louvers.
- Refer to guidelines on workplace temperature control in your country.
- Optimize thermal gradient according to the office layout.

1. **Indoor Air Quality and Ventilation.** Management of Air Quality Hazards in the Office:

- Indoor air quality audits to evaluate adherence to accepted air pollution thresholds.
- Ensure proper maintenance, cleaning, and filtration of the ventilation, heating, and air-conditioning system.
- Schedule office housekeeping regularly.
- Comply with office and building smoking policies.
- If there is an office kitchen, remind employees to store food properly and throw out food before they spoil.

1. **Noise.** Management of Noise Hazards in the Office:

- If possible, apply engineering controls while at the design stage and try to choose features that will reduce noise to the minimum acceptable level.
- Adhere to the acceptable sound level limits stated in your country?s respective occupational health and safety laws.
- Identify the sources, paths, and levels of sound. Once identified, prioritize the control of sound levels that are most excessive.
- Place a barrier between the noise source and employee (e.g., sound walls or curtains).
- Perform regular maintenance on machines and equipment. Consider adding noise mufflers, vibration isolators, or duct silencers.

1. **Slip, trips, and falls.** Management of Slip-Trip-Fall Hazards in the Office:

- Remove hazards at the design stage, such as eliminating uneven flooring and installing additional power outlets to avoid cord trails.
- Keep walkways and hallways free of debris, clutter, and obstacles.
- Consider installing slip-resistant mats or replacing worn flooring panels.
- Implement good housekeeping practices, such as cleaning up spills immediately.
- Provide warning signages in case of spills to avoid any incident.
- Immediately fix leaks from equipment or pipes.

ENSURE OFFICE SAFETY FOR EMPLOYEES WITH AN OFFICE SAFETY CULTURE

Develop A Strategy That Is Culture-Driven Rather Than Policy-Driven. Office workplaces that truly want to solve the root cause of unsafe conditions should realize that, more than the ?do?s and don?ts? and safety signages, it is the culture they build that will help improve office safety in general. Leaders must develop a strategy that helps employees understand the true value of office safety and health in their lives and motivate them to go beyond compliance.

Identify (Or Create) Office Safety Champions. Safety champions in the workplace are the heart and soul of a strong office safety culture. They are passionate employees who are willing to take initiatives and lead their teammates by example.

Utilize All Media to Communicate Goals Clearly. Use every medium possible, including email blasts, meetings, and bulletin boards, to constantly communicate office safety and health goals.

Provide Training to Employees. Trainings are effective avenues to educate employees on basic safety skills, such as proper hazard identification, risk assessment, and incident reporting.

Use Positive Reinforcement to Reward Employees. Celebrate wins, small or big, based on data improvement and office safety audits; communicate results and recognize those responsible. This strategy ensures office incidents are reduced for the right reasons and further encourages employees to go beyond simply complying with office safety rules.

Encourage Employees to Always Speak Up. Encourage employees to offer ideas, whether novel or traditional, for the improvement of office safety and health.

Companies should not be complacent with decades-old policies that may not be as relevant today as they were before. If safety policies are ineffective, employees will simply work around them and inadvertently increase risk in the process.

Ensure Timely Succession of Safety Champions. Workers play a critical role in building the foundation for a sustainable office safety and health culture. Ensure that appropriate discussions about work are conducted regularly so that the culture evolves with useful insights from employees. With effort from the bottom up, offices can develop a health and safety culture that endures.

FINAL WORD

Safety in the traditional white collar working environment and safety in manufacturing, industrial oil and gas and construction conjure up vastly different images. But the effects and results of lack of workplace safety impacts workers in both aforementioned sectors in substantial ways.