Unsafe Acts Meeting Kit



REASONS FOR UNSAFE ACTS

Unsafe acts are performed any time an employee fails to abide by safety rules and protocols. These actions include fighting, horseplay, or performing a job without the necessary safety equipment. Unsafe acts are extremely dangerous, especially in industries that require workers to handle heavy equipment or hazardous materials on a regular basis. In certain cases, these acts can even result in permanent injury or death. Employees who engage in unsafe acts may be subject to formal disciplinary action or termination, due to the risk involved. Prior to employment, companies usually brief new employees about company policies and procedures involving safety. If a company does not inform employees about safety rules, it could be found guilty of making employees work in unsafe conditions.

PREVENTION OF WORKPLACE ACCIDENTS

Accidents are usually the result of unsafe acts or conditions, or both. What specifically constitutes an unsafe act?

In the workplace, unsafe acts can include:

- Horseplay
- Not using personal protective equipment
- Running
- Using damaged tools
- Not lifting properly
- Violating safety rules

Unsafe conditions are physical hazards and can include:

- Missing machine guards
- Exposed electrical circuits
- Damaged equipment
- Slippery floors
- Improper storage of materials
- Lack of proper supervision
- Inadequate training

Best Practices For Employees Safety

- Follow all specific safety rules
- Report all unsafe acts or unsafe conditions to your supervisor
- Encourage fellow employees to work safely
- Check the condition of personal protective equipment and use the correct PPE for the specific hazard you are dealing with
- Ask for help if you need it
- Ask questions if you are not sure of the proper way to do something
- Lock out and tag all equipment before adjusting it or performing maintenance on it
- Inspect the condition of ladders before using them
- Don’t use chemicals unless you have been specifically trained on the hazards and protective steps you need to follow to use them safely
- Keep your work area neat and clean to avoid trip hazards
- Use three-point contact when entering and exiting the cab of a truck
- Push, don’t pull whenever possible

UNSAFE ACTS IN A WORKPLACE CAN BE PSYCHOLOGICAL ACTS

The important elements of an effective psychological safety program (A.K.A. an organization’s Respectful Workplace Program) can also be referred to in the same way as the original 3 E’s:

- Education
- Engineering
- Enforcement

Education means training employees in relation to:

- The Respectful Workplace Policy
- Job responsibilities
- Safety rules and safety awareness (the expectation that they treat each other with respect and dignity)
- Explaining your expectations that they will work safely (treating each other with respect)
- Defining unsafe acts (such as bullying and harassment)

Engineering means finding safety hazards:

- Identifying and correcting the hazards (disrespectful behavior)
- Daily safety checks of equipment (regular demonstrations of civil/safe behavior towards coworkers and others)
- Implementing corrective action to reduce accidents. (Apologizing to someone when we have done something that offended them)

Enforcement of safety rules still remains as:

- Rules are not effective unless they are enforced
- Progressive discipline for repeaters
- Re-educating employees when needed

Reinforce Positive Safe Behavior

Other points to remember when you are dealing with unsafe acts.

- Be consistent. If you address unsafe behaviors only some of the time, you will be sending mixed messages.
- Always positively reinforce safe behavior or it may disappear.
- Don’t jump to conclusions. Unsafe behavior is not always deliberate.
- If you continue to see unsafe behavior, talk about the potential consequences of such continued behavior.
- Be sure to always document the discussions and any related actions.

FINAL WORD

There is a magnitude of reasons behind why unsafe acts occur. Despite what the reason may be for the unsafe act, one thing is for sure- injuries will occur overtime if they continue to take place. Unsafe acts are the root of the majority of injuries on the job and when paired with unsafe conditions it is likely someone will be injured.