

Introduction to Workplace Safety Initiative (WSI)

On any given day, eight to ten of our colleagues do not come to work because they have been injured on the job. Many of these injuries could have been prevented had those individuals and their supervisors been more involved in their efforts to work safely.

These workplace injuries hurt us in many ways. Those injured suffer, their families suffer, their coworkers must pitch in to cover for them, we lose a highly trained professional and we suffer financially. Workers Compensation claims, medical expenses, lost time, and many hidden costs are all absorbed by the University.

Over the past three years we will have paid out over **5 million dollars** for these injuries. These are real dollars, money we could otherwise spend on new programs, new equipment, or employee compensation.

We must do a better job of integrating safety into our workplace. With over 4,000 employees every day engaged in a wide variety of tasks, we must ensure that safety is an integral part of those daily activities. Safety must become a way of life. We should start every meeting involving our employees with a safety note. We should know all the safety concerns before we start every job and we must protect ourselves from them. As supervisors it is your responsibility to ensure your employees go home safe every day.

To help achieve this goal a new Workplace Safety Initiative (WSI) will be implemented over the next year. This initiative will include eleven key steps:

- Top management support
- An employee incentive program
- A new incident reporting system
- Quarterly employee updates on safety issues
- A new University Safety Committee
- A shop/work rules program
- Supervisor safety training
- A return-to-work program
- Safety performance reviews
- Safety as part of New Employee Orientation
- A system to allocate costs for losses

Every employee and supervisor must completely support this effort. My staff at the Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) Department is ready to help you make OHIO a safer place to work, learn, educate, and live. Please contact them through our web page at <http://www.ohiou/ehs> to utilize their expertise.

You as faculty, staff, supervisors, and individuals must make safety your personal priority. We can no longer afford to lose valuable employees and expend our resources in this manner.

Joe Adams, Director EHS