

Recommendations

1. University Management from the top down, needs to set a daily goal of ZERO workplace injuries, ZERO repeat injuries, and persistently encourage all of their employees to meet those goals.

Unless all managers, at all levels of management or supervision, consistently emphasize the goal of working safely and consistently emphasize the goal of working each day without an injury, ZERO injuries will never happen.

After every incident, the entire staff must be informed about the factors that contributed to the incident, and the steps that will be taken to prevent it from happening in the future.

At the beginning of every work shift, the supervisor should recognize the potential hazards that might be encountered, reinforce that workers avoid those hazards, and make sure that all procedures and equipment are in place. At every staff meeting, the supervisor must include working safely as a topic and discuss recent incidents.

2. We recommend that the President of Ohio University include “Working Safely” among his university goals and priorities. In order to emphasize the importance of health and safety, we believe he should publicly state that all university departments establish this daily goal of zero workplace injuries, and zero repeat injuries. The President should emphasize that employees are our most valuable asset, that too many of us are getting injured on the job, that these injuries carry an unacceptable monetary cost as well as an unacceptable cost in terms of human suffering, and that the time has come to develop a culture of “Safety” on this university campus. Finally, the President needs to publicly endorse these recommendations.

The Vice President for Finance and Administration is the individual with ready access to the President. If top-down priority is going to be placed on working safely, it needs to start at the top. William Decatur carries a lot of weight with the department directors that are most -impacted by our findings, but we feel that President McDavis must be made personally aware of the findings and recommendations of this report. Only then can he choose to publicly endorse them. Think of the impact it could have if Dr. McDavis and/ or William Decatur took just 30 minutes to walk through some shops and kitchens, urging folks to work safely, and emphasizing that we need them! Think also about the impact that a simple e-mail to all employees might have if it reminded all of us that working safely is our duty, every day, with every task!

3. All department managers and supervisors must practice and demonstrate safe work practices during their daily activities. They must lead by example.

We’ll never solve the problem of steam burns in our kitchens, as an example, if dining hall managers don’t demonstrate the use of long oven mitts and provide them in convenient locations and in sufficient numbers and insist that they be worn whenever handling products going into or out of an oven or steamer. Saying one thing, and doing another, is a recipe for failure. Supervisors and department managers must wear safety glasses and gloves when called for by the job. They must wear seatbelts and use handrails. They must demonstrate safe lifting. They must insist on placement of warning signs on wet floors and provide sufficient numbers of warning signs to do so.

4. All supervisors who conduct employee performance evaluations/reviews must make safe work performance, and prompt, thorough incident reporting an integral part of those evaluations/reviews.

Employee and Supervisor evaluation forms should include a rating section that includes Safety on the Job. Employees have both the right to and responsibility for a safe work place. Safe work practices reduce injuries and their effects on employees, increase productivity, and help to reduce workers compensation claims costs. O.U. employees work under occupational safety and health requirements established by the institution and by federal and state laws. Some people will actively comply with all safety requirements, report incidents promptly, attend training and take other steps to insure a safe environment for themselves and their co-workers. Others do not take safety seriously, do not apply safe work practices, and do not attempt to insure a safe work environment. Supervisors have additional responsibilities of seeing that safety rules are followed, that employees are properly trained, and that incidents are reported and corrections are made to minimize hazards. These evaluations must pertain to all employees at all levels. Evaluating personnel for safety performance could be as simple as:

Failure to meet performance standards:

Employee – Does not follow established safety rules. Does not always promptly report incidents. Work practices endanger self and co-workers.

Supervisor – Does not effectively communicate safety information to employees. Cannot be relied upon to investigate accidents.

Meets some performance standards:

Employee – May or may not promptly report hazards found in the workplace. Follows safety rules when reminded.

Supervisor – Informs employees of safety rules, but no enforcement. Investigates incidents, but fails to follow through with corrective actions.

Meets most performance standards:

Employee – Follows safety rules and reports hazards. Participates in most training programs when requested.

Supervisor – Takes corrective measures when incident occurs. Periodically trains employees on department safety requirements and enforces them.

Fully meets performance standards:

Employee – Follows all departmental rules of safe work practices. Participates in incident investigations and safety committees if requested.

Supervisor – Sees that employees follow established work practices and holds routine meetings to insure that rules are understood.

Exceeds performance standards:

Employee – Follows established work practices and actively participates in safety committee work. Volunteers for incident investigations.

Supervisor – Arranges on-going training in occupational safety and health issues. Sees that employees have equipment and knowledge to work safely. Involves employees in establishing and revising work safety rules and enforces them.

Greatly exceeds performance standards:

Employee – Follows established work practices and actively participates in safety committee work. Volunteers for safety audits and training in job safety and health.

Supervisor – Arranges on-going training in job safety and health. Sees that employees have equipment and knowledge to work safely. Involves employees in establishing and revising work rules and enforces them. Recognizes and rewards safety accomplishments.

5. All department managers need to develop and document safe work practices (work rules) that must be followed by their employees. These work rules should be constantly evolving to address the identified causes of work-related incidents and injuries. Those employees must be properly trained regarding those work rules. Then, any observed violation of those safe work rules should become a trigger in the employee discipline process. (see appendix #2 for current O.U. Policy and Procedure # 44.109).

All department managers/shop supervisors must develop and engage their employees in developing written shop rules. Those shop rules should anticipate previous incidents which may or may not have resulted in injury, and must be adjusted as necessary to address incident experience. New employees must receive training regarding these shop rules upon hire, and all employees must receive training as the rules are updated. Until an employee has received documented training in compliance with the written work rules pertaining to a particular job, that employee must not be permitted to actually do the job. Supervisors must actively manage safety programs, training, record keeping, and incorporate “safety first” concepts into all shop work projects.

6. Criteria for supervisor performance reviews must include the supervisor’s ability to conduct thorough incident investigations, and take proper corrective action to prevent similar incidents in the future.

The department of S & RM will review supervisors' written incident investigations. Inadequate investigations, or repeat incidents, may trigger further action by S&RM. Documentation of this further action by S&RM should be a sign for comment on the supervisor's performance review. Directors should actively review and take corrective actions for repeated failure to conduct thorough investigations and implement preventive strategies.

7. All supervisors (anyone who completes the supervisor section of the Employee Injury/Illness/Incident Report Form) should be required to successfully complete an incident investigation course.

We recognize that employees are hired and/or promoted into positions of supervision based on qualities that may or may not place emphasis on his/her ability to conduct incident investigations, develop and enforce work rules, and demonstrate safe work practice. The intent of the S&RM incident investigation course is to instill this knowledge and understanding in the minds of our supervisors. We believe that this training must be mandatory.

8. All departments should contribute from their budget to the lost-time cost ("Temporary Total") of their lost-time injuries.

9. Individual departments should set specific injury/incident reduction goals, and periodically review their progress toward meeting those goals.

S&RM must continue to provide recent incident/injury summaries to individual departments. Those departments must demonstrate that they've learned the lessons from those experiences by making necessary corrections to the workplace or work practices. Each department must be informed of their safety record, set measurable goals for improvement, and honestly measure their progress toward meeting those goals. Directors should take advantage of S&RM staff expertise and help in developing their programs and reducing injuries.

WE MUST PROMOTE A "SAFETY CULTURE" AT OHIO UNIVERSITY, WHERE EVERYDAY IS AN INJURY-FREE DAY!