

Supervisor Training

For a Safety and Health Program to be effective, Owners/Managers must take an active role in the development of the program. They need to convince the front-line Supervisors of the importance of controlling hazards associated with Materials Handling, and Storage, and hold them accountable for employee training.

Observing proper job procedures is of paramount importance.

Because of the high incidence of back injuries, both Supervisors and employees should demonstrate and practice safe Manual Lifting Techniques.

There should be a formal training program to teach workers how to recognize and avoid Materials Handling hazards.

The Training Program on Proper Lifting Techniques should cover the following topics:

- Body Anatomy: Spine Muscles, Joints of trunk and legs
- Body Strength: determining one's lifting capacity
- Physical factors: Those that may contribute to an accident; how to avoid the unexpected
- Safe postures for lifting, and timing for a smooth lift
- Coordinating the lift, who is the lead person, who will direct the lift
- Aids such as handles, wheels, carts and platforms
- Body responses: warning signals to be aware of when lifting

The Company's training program should reduce workplace hazards by emphasizing the following:

- Dangers of lifting without proper training
- Avoiding unnecessary physical stress and strain
- Awareness of what a worker can comfortably handle without undo strain
- Proper use of equipment and procedures for use
- Recognizing potential hazards and how to prevent or correct them

The best Supervisors take the time to:

- Explain the job workers need to do
- Detail all the hazards that could be present
- Spell out the safety steps needed to complete the job

Supervisors need to be on the lookout for their people. It is okay to over-communicate with your employees- even if the job is a simple one.

- Do not let employees take shortcuts!
- Plan- give employees a daily safety talk and the right tools to do the job
- Allow enough time to do the job safely
- Remind employees that safety comes first

Safety shortcuts should not be tolerated; disciplining employees who try to circumvent safety guidelines is an effective way to get the safety message across. They will thank you for caring about them and sending them home at night the same way they arrived in the morning. All businesses rely on effective supervisors. Good supervisors often make the difference between meeting your target and missing them. A good supervisor is a role model to the employees. Do you wear your PPE when needed; do you follow all the Company and OSHA safety guidelines? Employees are watching you to see what you do.

As a supervisor- you are like the meat in the sandwich between your Management and the people who report to you. If you understand your role and how to approach the job right, you will do fine.

It is important to clarify your role and objectives to your people. Your relationship will be on different footing- especially if you came up through the ranks. You will not be part of the "gang" anymore, as your status has changed. Take the time to find out what motivates your people, even if you have known them for a long time. Ask what their aspirations are both personally and professionally. Are there any gaps in skills that they may need help with?

In order to be a good supervisor you need to have a combination of skills, technical, interpersonal and HR. You also will need some managerial skills, such as being able to effectively communicate with others. You will have to know how to delegate to others, and how to make decisions.

You will need to establish guidelines, so you will be able to measure performance. Everyone should have a clear picture of what is expected of them.

You will need to be assertive in conversations and be able to handle potentially difficult situations effectively. Build your credibility by handling difficult situations up front. Be prepared to defend your team by backing up what you say with facts.

Increased responsibility will bring increased pressure. You will need to walk a fine line some of the time. Be prepared to know what effects this may have on you. There is a reason why you were chosen to be a supervisor by your management team.