

RESTARTING YOUR SAFETY PROGRAM

There will come a time when a company needs to stop, step back and examine their safety program and the efforts they are or aren't putting forth for their employees. Where to start is always a daunting question. This is, however a question that has to be answered to ever begin correcting problems that affect the effectiveness of a safety program.

1. THE STATE OF YOUR SAFETY PROGRAM:

Assessment and Management Support.

A bold and honest assessment of the safety program must be done to find what is working and what is not working. Chances are if the safety results merits an assessment, than more isn't working than is working. Assistance on the assessment can be obtained from your insurance company, professional associations such as the CAGC, the consultative services of OSHA or from safety professionals with a clear understanding of the type of construction your company performs.

Questions to ask and things to look at during your assessment:

- Look at your recent losses.
- What safety rules not being enforced?
- Ask your managers, foremen and employees what they think is wrong with the safety program.
- Ask your managers, foremen and employees what they think can be done to improve your program.
- Do your employees feel management supports the safety program?
- Ask your managers, foremen and employees what training they need?

- Ask your subcontractors what they think about your safety program on your job sites.
- Look at what your competition is doing right or wrong with their safety programs.

How do you get your management involved in the safety program? Take the information gathered from your assessment and present it to your management. Ask what they are willing to do to improve the problems. Get upper management involved in committees assigned to tackling safety concerns or problems. Ask upper management to bring the assessment findings to the planning committees that are targeting problem issues. **Remember management needs to be "PRO" active, not "RE" active with their safety support!**

2. SAFETY TEAMS or COMMITTEES: Involving Employees.

How do you involve your employees?

- Ask employees what they think.
- Ask employees what they want.
- Ask employees what they will do to improve the safety program.
- Give your employees a voice and responsibility for what they want to see done by involving them in planning.
- Assign task to groups of employees or teams with them reporting back to upper management.
- Gather small groups of employees together to form committees or teams. Give them a mission. Give them a direct line to the top of management. Empower them to act on their convictions. Give them recognition when they try. Give them reward when they succeed.
- Say THANK YOU - Give them thanks for being involved.

3. SAFETY INCENTIVES:

Employee Recognition.

Look at the types of incentives you have used in the past to recognize your employees safety efforts. Ask your employees how effective they were. Use incentives that will encourage long-term modifications. Look at rewarding efforts not just results. Look at what other companies do with their incentives or recognition programs. Ask your employees and use their input when setting up a reward system. Use a team of peers to review results that are to be recognized. Work with management on establishing an incentive budget that will be committed to rewarding and recognizing employees' efforts over a long term period targeting more than one year. Be creative and don't be afraid of being different. Tie the safety incentive or recognition into the job and get employees to evaluate its effectiveness.

4. DEFINE THE SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIELD MANAGEMENT:

Site Implementation of the Safety Program.

Define the safety responsibilities of your field management. Identify who will carry out the following safety responsibilities:

- Site-specific workplace hazards identified and abatements (daily safety inspections).
- Site-safety training and re-training.
- Site communication of workplace hazards or concerns on upcoming events.
- Communicate with other contractor's safety compliance methods to be implemented.
- Conduct and attend safety pre-task meetings.
- Communicate your company safety program and site safety requirements.
- Represent your company on OSHA inspections or investigations.

5. SAFETY COMMUNICATION:

How to get the word out, there's change in safety.

How does your company communicate safety concerns?

- How does your employees hear about safety accidents or injuries?
- Do your employees know their safety rules?
- How often do you review your safety rules?
- How do you communicate safety changes in your industry?

In your assessment you have identified the problems. Look to your employees to help you find the solutions to these problems. **Establish clear lines of communication and responsibility.** ASK!

6. TRAINING:

Re-training and new training on changes.

How do you train your people on the basic safety dos and don'ts they need to work safely?

- Ask your employees how they think the training can be made more effective.
- Look for ways to keep the training interesting and interactive.
- Have a clear method of how to determine when re-training is needed and how it will be conducted.
- Establish when re-training will be conducted on the normal components of your safety program.
- Get the employees involved in helping with the training.
- Establish how you will train new employees on your safety program.
- Ask your employees what training they would other training they would like.

7. SUBCONTRACTOR SAFETY:

Communicating Safety Responsibilities.

Recognize that your biggest safety liability is your contract workers.

- How do you monitor your subcontractors' safety efforts?
- Establish clear communication methods to assure the subcontractors know the site safety rules and their contract requirements on your safety program.
- Consider reviewing your subcontractors' safety records.
- Require subcontractors to participate with on site safety inspections. Require them to abate all issues involving their work or employees immediately.
- Establish a regular meeting time on the site with all contractors and your management to discuss safety concerns and upcoming safety hazards that require pre-planning.

8. SAFETY OWNERSHIP:

Upper management, field management, subcontractors, employees.

- Keep employees informed.
- Give employees a voice to upper management with safety concerns.
- Encourage employees to participate with the implementation of your safety program by assisting with site safety inspections, safety training, new employee mentoring, conducting tool box meetings, selecting models or types of personal protective equipment and implementing incentive or recognition programs.

KEYS TO RE-STARTING YOUR SAFETY PROGRAM

1. THE STATE OF YOUR SAFETY PROGRAM:
Assessment and Management Support.

2. SAFETY TEAMS or COMMITTEES:
Involving Employees.

3. SAFETY INCENTIVES:
Employee Recognition.

4. DEFINE THE SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES OF FIELD MANAGEMENT:
Site Implementation of the Safety Program.

5. SAFETY COMMUNICATION:
How to get the word out, there's change in safety.

6. TRAINING:
Re-training and new training on changes.

7. SUBCONTRACTOR SAFETY:
Communicating Safety Responsibilities.

8. SAFETY OWNERSHIP:
Upper management, field management, subcontractors, employees.