



# Supervisors' Safety Update

## Ideas and Strategies for Leaders



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### WORKING SAFELY NEAR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

*By SeaBright Insurance Loss Control*

**A** person walking by your job site is distracted by their ringing cell phone. This person collides with your worker and the tools he's carrying, becoming injured and causing your employee to fall and twist an ankle besides. The incident can impact your productivity and workers' compensation insurance rates; additionally the injured party may make a claim against your general liability policy.

Now let's look at a more complicated situation. Your employee is working at a place of business that has not (for whatever reasons) closed its doors during your agreed work shift. A customer with a legitimate reason to be inside the business has a similar incident to the above, with your worker. Now, you, your worker, the business owner, the customer, maybe even a property manager and a general contractor are suddenly involved. This could take a while!

Good idea to really play it safe - but HOW? Try to implement safety programs that protect as many parties as possible, for the real life scenarios that can happen on any given day.

The worker must stay safe when performing the job tasks. Also, customers, the general public and/or bystanders must be protected from any possible hazard exposures from the work area. With those key concepts in mind, the safety program answers in detail these questions:

- How should the worker stay safe?
- Will this also serve to keep the general public safe?
- How should the worker respond to situations in the immediate vicinity?

First and foremost, a safe worksite (from the worker safety perspective) is likely also to be safe for others nearby. Use appropriate equipment and safe practices to protect your employees and comply with regulations: remember that OSHA [or State] codes are the minimum that is required. Do a job site analysis of the hazards present and what can be done to eliminate or control them.

On top of that realize working in or around the general public can create a list of hazards that are normally controlled by securing a worksite and limiting access to qualified personal only. Unfortunately, some service and construction work must take place in areas where the public cannot be excluded. These could include retail stores, gas stations, restaurants, etc. Using portable barriers like those found at airport security lines is an effective way to direct people away from any hazard areas. Keep in mind that people need to be able to reach restrooms, cashiers etc. Good traffic control will direct them away from your immediate work area and towards their destination instead of just blocking off a selected area. It is important to be aware of and eliminate tripping and falling hazards as people will often be focused on everything but where they are walking. Your workers may even be the focus of attention causing people to walk into or through otherwise obvious hazards like electrical cords, ladders, holes, etc.

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Additional measures may need to be taken to guard hazardous equipment and for energy isolation. Most employers train their employees to follow strict procedures when tagging out equipment or electrical circuits, but do the client's employees understand that they cannot remove a tag or turn on a breaker? What would normally be acceptable to tag out may now require locking out. Can power equipment be reached by inquisitive children? It is fairly common to see a small work station set up outside of new home or behind a store undergoing renovations. Can these stations be accessed by inquisitive children? Is it possible for someone to access your air compressor or generator? Taking a few minutes to place barriers, signs, and securing power sources can help control most of these scenarios.

When working close by others not employed in your company, you should develop and use a site-specific worksite analysis checklist to help with these areas just mentioned. If you cannot complete your work while the business is closed, work during the very slowest times of your client's work cycles.

Employees who do not receive safety training are more prone to panicking should an unplanned event occur. Members of the general public who are involved with or witness an incident are also prone to panic. First response to any unplanned event is essential to controlling further damage or injury especially when working in proximity to the general public. When you plan the work for your job site, consider the following factors:

#### Neighborhood factors

- Near to courthouses or other "protest" sites? (Animal testing lab, abortion clinic, etc.)
- Near to stadiums, concert halls or other assembly venues?
- Work at hours when other activity nearby is virtually non-existent, but your area is open?
- Near to prison or other risk-factor facilities?

#### General safety factors

- Other construction sites or dangers nearby? (Chemical plant, power generation, etc.)
- Major body of water nearby?

#### Open-for-business factors (general public exposure)

- Barriers to protect your working area
- Queue-line stanchions & tapes to guide customers
- Signage
- Business manager and client's personnel attentive to help their customers stay clear
- Foreman/superintendent pre-plans with business owner/manager

Here are some checklist items to use for worksite safety, for both worker and non-employee safety. This will reduce the probability of incidents involving individuals who are not your workers.

#### **Pre-Planning (Be aware of Non-employees around your work zone)**

- What are the occupational safety and health hazards that are part of the job today?
- What are the hazards that must be avoided by anyone else nearby?
- What rules and regulations are applicable at today's job site?
- What are the procedures for any reporting of health & safety concerns, medical emergency, injuries & accidents, or legal issues (sexual harassment, discrimination, etc?)
- What is the phone number of the person responsible for safety & health for this site?
- What are the emergency evacuation procedures at this site?
- What are the emergency phone numbers and where are they posted at this site?
- Display warning/caution signs identifying potential hazards and construction zone.

#### **General Public**

- Is public isolated from your worksite and hazards?
- Do your barriers correctly guide public away from site?
- Will your work create hazards outside of immediate work area (noise, dust, fumes, etc) and do you need to protect others outside work area?
- Are energy isolation (LOTO) tags protected from being defeated by members of the general public?

#### **General (inventory of hazards to be controlled)**

- Are work areas free of hazardous chemicals?
- Are containers of chemicals properly labeled? MSDS's for all products used should be readily available. IIPP must be on site.
- Is public safe from airborne hazardous gases, vapors, dusts, mists or fumes? Public sensitive to odors, even if non-toxic
- Equipment such as computers, food, eating surfaces and food preparation assets must be covered to reduce exposure to damage and dust created by the operation.

- Is public safe from any machines or equipment that would require a lockout/tagout procedure?
- Are there work areas that could be considered a confined space? Is the public prevented from approaching?
- Does work involve powered industrial trucks, compactors or powered lifts? Any safety controls for workers and the public?
- Is there adequate lighting for the work?
- Are toilet facilities adequate? Also used by customers and/or general public?
- Are materials properly stored so as not to create a falling hazard? Is public safe from hazards of staged materials?
- Are work areas free of high noise levels? Public is sensitive to noise; it disturbs some environments (hospital, eating establishment, library, school, religious institution, etc.)
- Staging area for building equipment and assets and separate work entrance for workers should be maintained.

#### **Emergency Exits (Beware of how your work area affects these paths)**

- Are emergency exit paths out of the work area free of obstructions?
- Develop evacuation procedures specific to activities being performed
- Are emergency exit doors free of locks, chains or fastenings that would prevent free escape from inside the work area?
- Are there at least two emergency exits from the work area or building?
- Are emergency exit pathways equipped with emergency lighting?
- Are emergency exits clearly visible and marked by readily visible signs and arrows?
- Be aware of fire alarm and detection equipment which may be compromised in construction activities.
- If permitted near the work area, will the public have access to the corresponding emergency path?

#### **Personal Protective Equipment**

- Is personal protective equipment such as hard hats, gloves, safety glasses, safety shoes, hearing protection and/or respirators provided and used in areas where there are hazards to head, hands, eyes, face, feet and other parts of the body?
- Will members of the public or other contractors be exposed to hazards by your work?

#### **First Aid**

- Are first aid supplies available including an automated external defibrillator?
- Are medical personnel available or people trained in first aid?
- Are eyewash stations and safety showers available in areas with hazardous chemicals?
- Are universal precaution kits available for those responding to medical emergencies?

#### **Walking and Working Surfaces (be especially aware if also used by non-employees)**

- Any overhead or fall exposures must be controlled and public kept at safe distance away.
- Are aisles, walkways and stairs clear of any tripping, slipping and bumping hazards?
- Are permanent aisles and passageways clearly marked?
- Are guardrails, barriers or other types of fall protection provided where this a potential of falling 4 feet or more to the next level either over the edge, through a wall opening or through a floor opening?
- If guardrails are used, are they sturdy enough to prevent someone from falling?
- Are handrails available on stairways having four or more risers?
- Are ladders and stepladders in good condition?

#### **Electrical (protect from access by non-employees)**

- Are flexible wiring and cords protected from damage?
- Are outlets permanent and free of multiple plug adaptors?
- Are plugs with a grounding prong intact and in good condition?
- Are all portable electrical tools and equipment grounded or of the double insulated type?
- Do extension cords have a grounding conductor?
- Is the insulation on exposed wiring and cords in good condition?
- Are electrical panels and junction boxes free of any openings?
- Are all disconnecting switches and circuit breakers labeled to indicate their use or equipment served?
- Are ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) installed on circuits in areas near sinks or other areas of high water usage?
- Are ground-fault circuit interrupters (GFCI) used at locations where construction, demolition, modifications, alterations or excavations are being performed?

### **Machines, Equipment and Tools (Keep public within a separate clearly defined area)**

- Are machines, equipment and tools guarded to prevent contact with moving parts or points of operation that may be hazardous?
- Be aware of cords, forklifts and scissor lift exposures.
- Are machines, equipment and tools guarded to prevent flying chips and sparks?
- Are machines, equipment and tools in good condition with all safety devices operational?

### **Fire (concerning both your work area and the close vicinity)**

- Is there an automatic fire alarm and fire detection system?
- Is there a manual fire alarm system?
- Are alarm pull-boxes and fire extinguishers clearly visible and easily accessible?
- Is the worksite or building equipped with an automatic sprinkler system?
- Are emergency alarms both audible and visual?
- Are portable fire extinguishers appropriate for the hazard readily available?
- Are portable fire extinguishers fully charged and in their designated places?
- Is the kitchen area equipped with an automatic fire suppression system?
- Are work areas free of accumulations of combustible materials?

### **Flammable and Combustible Materials**

- Are combustible scrap, debris, and waste materials (e.g., oily rags) stored in covered metal receptacles and removed from the worksite promptly?
- Are approved containers and tanks used for the storage and handling of flammable and combustible liquids?
- Are flammable liquids kept in closed containers when not in use?
- Are flammable liquids used or stored away from sources of heat that might cause ignition of liquid or vapors?
- Operations involving hot work (welding, soldering, brazing) must have a fire watch conducted and all protocols followed completely.

### **Violence**

- Does worksite have exterior lighting during evening and nighttime operating hours?
- Does worksite have security surveillance system of public areas?
- Does worksite have security alarm system with panic alarm that automatically notifies police or private security?
- If cash is handled, are measures implemented to limit the amount of money available at any one time?
- If cash is handled, are at least two employees working at the same time?
- If a convenience store, is there a clear and unobstructed view of the service counter and cash register from outside the building?

The next page contains a start-off incident witness form. This would be used by non-employees in regards to any incident needing to be reported. Your employees would use your regular accident/incident reporting process.



# Sample Form: Incident Witness Statement

Date and time of incident \_\_\_\_\_

Date and time report completed \_\_\_\_\_

Witness name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to injured party or parties: \_\_\_\_\_

Department \_\_\_\_\_

Where did the incident occur? \_\_\_\_\_

What were you doing when you witnessed this incident?

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Where were you positioned when the incident occurred?

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What did you see and hear?

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What did you do then?

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Who else was in the area?

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Further describe the incident or give any other comments needed:

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Continue on back of this page if more space is needed.

I have read the above and it is true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_