



Supervisors' Safety Update

Ideas and Strategies for Leaders



SSU 2006 – 01

NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION A GUIDE FOR SUPERVISORS

By SeaBright Insurance Loss Control

What does the nation's largest theme park, a construction company and a quick service restaurant have in common? They all have a risk management department that has identified employee training as the key to controlling losses, including workers injuries. In a time when insurance costs, including workers compensation are second only to salary as an operating cost for businesses, controlling employee injuries is vital to the success of every business. Training is a key element in controlling these costs. The first step in this training is an effective new employee orientation. Statistics indicate that up to 62% of all job injuries occur to new employees with less than six months experience on the job.

WHY IS NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION SO IMPORTANT?

1. It introduces a new employee to your company's safety culture. It establishes the value you place on the employee and the importance the company assigns to safe work practices.
2. It demonstrates to new hires the equipment, safe work practices and processes that are associated with their job tasks. Although some new employees are "experienced," it does not mean they are trained on how to safety perform a task within your operation. The goal of new employee orientation is to assure that all workers follow the same operational and safety practices, which helps to safeguard the entire workforce.

In 2005, the top ten OSHA violations involved training in construction. Due to the constantly changing work environment, this is no surprise. In the event of repeated violations, employers may face fines for serious/willful misconduct. This could include lack of appropriate and documented employee training. In the event of a serious injury, litigation and criminal prosecution may result.

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GETTING STARTED

Good trainers can make a poorly developed program work well and a well developed program work great...bad trainers can make neither work. The days of long lectures are over. For an employee orientation to be effective, care must be taken to prepare the materials and a proper setting for the training. You can't just show a video, or hand the new employee a safety pamphlet and tell him/her to read it--and then sign a form saying it was understood. Employee orientation materials must be clearly communicated, both verbally and in writing.

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Company rules or equipment procedures must be thoughtfully written at a level that the employee will understand. Materials may also need to be available in Spanish, Chinese, Korean or other languages.

Prepare for orientation and training by practicing your talk. The number one anxiety producing work situation is public speaking. If you are unsure about your speaking ability- practice... practice... practice. For improvement in your presentation, present it to your spouse or friends and ask for constructive criticism. Supervisors must practice communication skills to ensure that new hires will clearly understand the information. Never assume that safe work practices are just “common sense.”

EXPLAIN AND DEMONSTRATE

Good trainers are not born, they learn by experience. Remember the basic rules of any training session:

- **Tell the employee what they are going to learn.**
- **Teach them verbally and with handouts.**
- **Show them by example.**
- **Have the employee demonstrate their knowledge.**
- **Correct and follow-up until the performance is acceptable.**

Be sure to conduct orientation before the employee actually starts work. Failure to do so could result in an avoidable injury and/or facility damage. Employee orientations are often done jointly by the human resources department, safety director and the immediate supervisor. If a language barrier exists, try to use bi-lingual personnel to assist in the orientation.

WHAT TRAINING IS NECESSARY

The new employee must be familiarized with general rules of conduct, code of safe practices specific to their job, general safety rules and other administrative issues. These can be delivered in a one-on-one setting or in a classroom environment. However, training for equipment and vehicle operations is best accomplished on the worksite where employees can learn hands-on. Equipment operator certification will be necessary for forklifts, scaffolds, or power tools.

Orientation topics may include:

- General employee safety rules
- Code of safe practices specific to job operations (e.g.: construction)
- Company rules of conduct and disciplinary procedures
- Prompt reporting of all work related accidents to supervisors
- Safe lifting and material handling techniques, including demonstration (Lifting remains the number one cause of injury incidents.)
- Equipment training and certification (shoring, cranes, forklift, vehicles, equipment, etc.)
- Special hazard training for chemical safety
- Selection, use and care of required personal protective equipment. Such as: gloves, respirators, or eye/face protection
- Location of fire alarm and fire extinguishers
- Location of first aid kits
- Emergency evacuation procedures

**Also, remember
that everybody
learns at a
different rate.**

SETTING FOR THE ORIENTATION

Better retention of new information will be accomplished if the orientation is done in a quiet office or small meeting room. Avoid distractions, loud work environments or noisy equipment if possible, to assure that full attention can be given to the matters discussed.

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DOCUMENTATION

All employee orientations must be documented for legal reasons. A good way to do this is to use a checklist. Items covered during the orientation are checked off and the bottom of the form is signed and dated by the trainer and the employee. (See attached example). Orientation and other training records should be kept in the employee's personnel file for at least five years.

JOB TRANSFERS AND RE-HIRES

If an employee is transferred to a new department, a new orientation must be done regarding the duties of the new job. This could include the code of safe practices for construction operations, for example, or training and certification for specific process and/or equipment use. If an employee leaves the company and returns six months or more later, you should do a complete new employee orientation again, including all documentation.

FOLLOW-UP

Never assume that new hires retain all the training information provided. Also, remember that everybody learns at a different rate.

Use the Ask, Pause, Call (APC) method.

- **A**sk the question.
- **P**ause to allow employee to think. The questions should be used to gauge the effectiveness of the instruction. Do the attendees look perplexed or confused?
- **C**all on someone to answer the question. Calling on someone allows others to think about the answer.

After the initial orientation, it is good practice for the immediate supervisor to stay in close contact with the new employee for at least a week, and up to one month. Assigning a trusted, experienced co-worker to act as mentor is also a good idea. The more hazardous the work, the more important is this follow-up step. Any unsafe actions or behaviors observed should be corrected in a constructive way.

CONCLUSION

Employee orientation is a vital part of assuring a workforce of quality employees, and must not be overlooked. Never assume that an experienced employee does not need orientation. They may be experienced at another facility, but must be trained by your company to be qualified for work. Orientation must be completed before the employee actually begins work, and it must be documented.

Supervisors must practice communication skills to ensure that new hires will clearly understand the information. Never assume that safe work practices are just "common sense."

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF HAVING RECEIVED SAFETY ORIENTATION
AND TRAINING IN
COMPANY SAFE WORK PRACTICES**

I acknowledge having received the company's safety orientation and code of safe practices. I have read the safety rules and I have been given an opportunity to ask questions about them. I agree to abide by these safety rules, and I understand that my failure to follow these safety rules will result in discipline up to and including termination. I further understand that it is my responsibility to report all unsafe conditions or violations of the Company Safe Work Practices to my supervisor or other management personnel.

I have received safety training in my particular job assignment and have read the following:

- SAFETY POLICY STATEMENT
- CODE OF SAFE PRACTICES
- SAFETY POLICY ENFORCEMENT PROCEDURES
- ACCIDENT REPORTING PROCEDURES
- REPORTING OF UNSAFE CONDITIONS
- PROPER MATERIAL HANDLING TECHNIQUES
- PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT USE
- CHEMICAL SAFETY AND MSDS TRAINING
- LOCATION OF FIRE EXTINGUISHERS & FIRST AID KITS
- EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURES
- JOB SPECIFIC SAFETY RULES (specify) _____
- SPECIFIC EQUIPMENT OPERATION/CERTIFICATION (specify) _____

Employee Signature: _____ Print Name: _____

Supervisor Signature: _____ Orientation Date: _____

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