

Keys to An Effective Environmental, Safety and Health Program

Reference: None

1. Communication

How do you communicate safety information? If it does not come from the top and reach the front-line employees, you have a communication problem. Management needs to constantly evaluate their communication styles and make sure the overall message is being displayed and heard to all employees. There needs to be a communication pathway that goes down as well as up through the chain.

All employees need to be empowered to speak up on EHS issues. No matter how serious or not, the employee needs to be heard. Employees understand what an unsafe condition is but too often do not bring the subject up to others. Why? I have heard countless excuses over the years. The main one is "this is not my job." If employees and management do not promote an open environment when communicating EHS issue, there will continue to be unsafe conditions that do not get addressed.

2. Safety Needs to be Everyone's Job

How many times have you heard this from employees? "It is the EHS manager's job to take care of unsafe conditions." I have always stated that it is the EHS Manager's role to coordinate all employees to take care of unsafe acts and conditions. Training must reinforce that following good EHS principles saves lives and reduces the potential for tragic accident and incidents.

3. Innovation

Every failure is an opportunity to find flaws in your program and fix them to prevent future incidents. This does not mean we should wait until an accident/incident has occurred before we address them. Engaged employees can be very innovative when it comes to EHS solutions to problems. Just give them a chance to be heard. Make sure they know you value their opinion.

4. Transparency

EHS communications must be transparent at all levels of the organization. All employees need to understand the importance of EHS issues and the importance of preventing accidents/incidents from occurring. When employees see transparency and honesty throughout the organization, dialogues will open up. It has been my experience that the employees can provide valuable information when it comes to resolving known EHS issues and issue resulting from accident/incident investigation.

5. Tools

Collecting EHS data can be a daunting task at times. Learning from failures can be streamlined if a process is in place to help you follow the right path to good conclusions. This can be the right EHS software, written programs and excellent employee participation in the process.

Keeping EHS information in front of your employees should be a daily event. This can be accomplished through postings, TV monitors, announcements and job briefings. Employee must see that Management is 100% committed to excellence in the EHS process. Once that happens you will be surprised at the result.

Questions? Contact The Redstone Group at 617-763-5034 x7007 or jwilliams@redstonegrp.com