

Establishing Effective Job Training for Company Profitability

Most successful and profitable companies have a plan. And, that plan includes employee training-management training and worker training. However, to really profit and stay in safety compliance with state and federal agencies, a company must have a defined training plan and understand each component. There are three vital components of effective health & safety training for the employee consisting of initial, job specific, and refresher training.

Initially all employees, supervisors and hourly workers alike, must be provided a general orientation of their job responsibilities, company facilities and an overview vital operations. All full-time, part-time and temporary workers should be included. This is not “common sense” stuff since every business is different and has their own unique risks. Everyone needs to know the chain-of-command, the job expectations, and where to turn for help. Then there are the state and federal HR and safety codes that generally apply and specifically apply that all employees should understand. Simply pointing an employee to a bulletin-board with over a dozen different regulations to read isn’t enough. To be a productive functioning employees, all need understanding in their interaction with co-workers, equipment, machines and chemicals in the workplace. Best business practices call for a thorough new-employee orientation program, and it should be taught in the first day or two on the job.

Next, there should be job specific training. A Hazards Survey should have been conducted and a training plan developed to educate employees in each job area, thereby reducing the risk of injury and loss incidents. If the employee will be managing and/or conducting manual lifting, specific ergonomic training should be provided. Additionally, various types of mechanical equipment such as forklifts, cranes, and industrial trucks may be used in the production process. All employees must be given specific instruction on the safe use, limitations and possibility of incidents in using such mechanical devices. And if there are workers under the age of 18, they must be given documented instruction on the DOL compliance regulations forbidding underage operation. The untrained employee and the underage employee see mechanical devices as big toys and do not comprehend the seriousness of operation.

To improve production and keep safety in the forefront, annual refresher training should be provided in each department. Employees should actively participate in a review and training process for critical areas to improve daily operations. Hazardous operations such as forklift/ industrial truck use, the storing and handling of hazardous chemicals, the responding to emergency situations and use of firefighting equipment/ fire extinguishers, and the entering of confined spaces usually require annual re-training for job specific exposures per compliance regulations.

Also, anytime there is a major change in operations, there is an addition or deletion of equipment use, there is the addition or removal of hazardous chemical substances, there must be training. Break out the operator’s manuals and the MSDS and utilize them for effective training. Providing continual training opens the lines of communications and makes employees feel comfortable in conducting their job. It also shows that management cares about the health, safety & well-being of the employees- which improves overall employee morale.