STEP 4

Communication

Ongoing and active communication is a key element in an effective safety program. All too often this is an area that is not utilized to its full potential. Employees are interested in how the company is doing from a safety standpoint.

They, also, have many good ideas that can help improve the overall company safety program. Many employees do not offer good ideas because they either do not believe they will be implemented or they are not comfortable in communicating these to their supervisors.

In order for communication to be successful, employees need to be made active participants. Communication needs to be encouraged and fostered. Employees need to be encouraged to inform you of safety related problems without fear of reprisal. These items should be addressed as soon as possible and the employee advised of the action taken. It is, also, extremely important that employees feel that they are being listened to and that their opinions matter.

Ongoing communication methods should include the following:

Informal Personal Contact

This includes talking to employees on the floor at work on a regular basis about safety concerns. This should be done as managers or supervisors tour the work areas. Good ideas should be recognized and rewarded.

Open Door Policy

Inform employees that supervisors or the safety coordinator are available to confidentially discuss safety related items or concerns.

Monthly Safety Meetings

Safety meetings should be held on a regular basis. The meeting, number of employees in attendance, and subject discussed should be turned in to the safety coordinator.

The following tips are provided to assist in making the meetings successful:

1. Prepare for the meeting by reviewing the subject matter that is to be discussed in advance.

2. Gather your employees into a group so that you may be easily heard.

3. Start on time.

4. Give employees an opportunity to report safety concerns and give suggestions.

5. Report progress on correcting unsafe conditions previously reported.

6. Discuss all accidents and close calls experienced by the group. Determine how to prevent a recurrence.

7. Discuss the company's safety record - Good or Bad.

8. Plan the meeting to cover one pertinent topic.

9. Get the employees involved by asking questions. Use examples from your own experiences that relate to the subject matter.

10. The meeting should run about 10 minutes - more time if the subject warrants it.

Written Communication

This is an excellent method to keep employees advised of changes in the safety program, the company accident record, new programs or employee safety suggestions.

Written communications can include the following:

* Company Newsletter
* Safety Handbook
* Notices
* Letters to employees

Postings

This can be in the form of Safety Bulletin Boards which can be used to inform employees of safety notices, meetings, etc.

Safety Posters are another form of communication used to remind employees of the dangers and safe work practices.