

College of Forestry 150: Changing the Culture about Safety

Safety Policy & Procedure Manual

Section 100: Introduction

Effective: 01 January 2007

Revised: August 2014

PURPOSE

The purpose of this section is to introduce the concept of culture change and awareness of safety in the workplace.

Background Information

There is a wealth of information available on safety in the workplace and safety programs within the workplace but there are several common themes. First and foremost is that *the strength of any company or organization is its people*. The second is that *the key to success depends on a visible management commitment to safety*. The third is *communication and reporting*. Fourth is the belief that *all injuries and fatalities are preventable and that "unsafe is unacceptable."* Finally, it is important that everyone understand that *safety begins at home and in our daily lives. The idea is that safety in the workplace is a continuation of safety in our daily practices.*

Creating a Culture of Safety

The key according to industry and agency experts is to *maintain effective standards to protect worker health and safety*. Standards are voluntary practice guidelines to help workplaces meet regulatory requirements. It has been proposed that workplaces may elect to follow either prescriptive, process-driven standards or performance-based standards. Prescriptive, process-driven standards provide rules defining specific actions that must be taken in various situations. Performance-based standards are designed to meet performance goals without specifying how they are to be achieved. A small number of companies favor performance-based standards, while the majority prefer prescriptive standards. Scare programs, reminders, incentives and other magic bullets don't work. They might change reporting but they don't change behavior. The most effective motivations for safety are peer safety culture, management credibility, and an organizational safety system.

Employer and Supervisor Actions for Healthier and Safer Workplaces

- 1. Taking responsibility** - Ensure that you have an effective worker/employer occupational safety committee to help identify and reduce workplace hazards (for higher risk workplaces).
- 2. Meeting standards** – Develop and constantly review the health and safety standards that apply to your work and ensure that these standards are fully met.
- 3. Getting help** – Have contact with a safety association, private consultant or the Occupational Safety & Health Administration ([OSHA](#)) for more information on ensuring your working conditions are as good as they can be.
- 4. Training workers** - ensure that all workers are properly trained and supervised by competent personnel to work safely. Young and/or new workers tend to have more workplace injuries, largely due to inadequate training and supervision.
- 5. Changing workplace culture** - demonstrate a genuine commitment to workplace health and safety at all levels of the organization, starting at the top. Make health and safety an integral part of organizational meetings, hiring, promoting, objectives, publications and reviews.

Employee Actions for Healthier and Safer Workplaces

Everyone has responsibility for workplace health and safety. When it comes to workplace health and safety, workers have the most to gain ... or lose. The action steps below help workers exercise their fundamental rights and responsibilities ...to know, to participate, and to refuse unusually dangerous work.

- 1. Getting involved** – Employees should be encouraged to assist the College Safety Committee identify and reduce workplace hazards.
- 2. Meeting standards** - know the health and safety legislated standards that apply to your work and your workplace. Cooperate with your employer and fellow workers in meeting health and safety standards. Support initiatives to exceed these standards where possible.
- 3. Getting help** - contact the College Safety committee, health and safety web sites, [OSHA](#), or other reliable sources for more information on working conditions. Be mindful of not only shorter-term safety issues, but also longer-term health issues related to the work you do.
- 4. Being trained** - get the proper training for any job you do so that you can do the tasks without endangering your safety or health - or the health and safety of your fellow workers.

5. Walking the talk - demonstrate a genuine commitment to health and safety - on and off the job. Make health and safety an integral part of your way of life ... and support others in protecting their health and safety.