Safety Management Solutions

IHS Whitepaper

©IHS Inc. www.ihs.com 800-716-3447 or 303-397-2896

Many companies fail to take the necessary proactive measures to ensure a safe and healthy workplace. A common obstacle preventing the implementation of a jobsite safety and health (S&H) solution is a lack of understanding of where to begin.

Although there is much to learn and do when starting down the path of workplace safety and health, the general process can be broken down into three stages:

1)   Familiarization with Known S&H Requirements and Standards
2)   Identification of S&H Requirements and Hazards Specific to a Workplace
3)   Development, Implementation and Maintenance of an S&H Program

By systematically moving through these three stages, any company can create an effective S&H Program that produces a safe and healthy workplace.

The Business Motivation for an S&H Program
Implementing new business practices requires time and money, both precious commodities in the business world. Before time or money is invested in the three stages of an S&H Program, there needs to be a sound and clear business motivation for such a decision. Fortunately, there is more than one:

1)   Investment in the well being of employees is sure to increase the level of goodwill toward the company while boosting workplace morale.

2)   Effective Safety and Health Programs are proven to reduce occupationally related illnesses, injuries and deaths.

3)   A workforce with less illnesses and injuries means subsequent benefits to any business, from achieving maximum productivity to reducing costs through:
   • less sick days and absences,
   • less replacement training, and
   • lower insurance premiums.

4)   A comprehensive and effective S&H Program will reduce a company's likelihood of being fined for workplace safety and health violations.

These business benefits can provide the necessary motivation for a company to move through the three stages of becoming compliant with safety and health rules and standards.

The Cost of Occupational Injuries and Illnesses	
$170 billion	Amount spent by businesses each year on occupational injuries and illnesses
$60 billion	Cost to companies each year in lost productivity from injuries and illnesses
40 percent	Amount of income a worker can lose over five years due to suffering a disabling injury

Source: Safety and Health Add Value. OSHA Publication 3180

The Benefits of Occupational Safety and Health Management Programs	
20 to 40 percent	Amount that injury and illness costs can be reduced by when companies establish S&H Programs
40 percent	Amount that occupational injuries and illnesses have been reduced by since 1970
50 percent	Amount that occupational fatalities have been reduced by since 1970
75,000+	Number of lives saved since 1970

Source: Safety and Health Add Value . OSHA Publication 3180

Stage 1 of 3: Familiarization with Known S&H Requirements and Standards

The first stage in a company creating a safe and healthy work environment involves becoming aware of the hazards that have already been identified across general business workplaces as well as those of the particular industry in question.

Such already identified hazards have been systematically documented since 1970 when workplace safety and health requirements and standards truly came of age with the establishment of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) at the federal level of the US government.

OSHA's mandate is to "assure safe and healthful working conditions for working men and women" (Occupational Safety and Health Act). At the same time, provisions allow for individual states to operate their own safety and health programs so long as they prove to be equally effective to OHSA's programs.

As a result, a company may be required to comply with safety and health regulations and standards at federal and/or state levels. Regardless of the level of government that is regulating the S&H issues of a business, corresponding requirements and standards will have been created for reference and enforcement purposes. (How to access these reference documents will be covered at the conclusion of this white paper.)

Familiarization with these reference documents first involves learning about general workplace requirements and standards, such as:

• ensuring knowledge of, and protection from, hazardous chemicals in the workplace
• an emergency action plan describing steps to take during a fire or other emergency
• walking/working surfaces requirements
• provision of medical and first aid personnel and supplies appropriate to the workplace hazards

As well, each company needs to learn the S&H requirements and standards particular to their industry, such as:

• machine guarding requirements where employees operate machinery
• provision of appropriate respirators where airborne hazardous substances occur
• hearing conservation programs where exposure

to excessive noise occurs

Once familiar with both general workplace and industry specific S&H requirements and standards, a company will have an extensive collection of information to implement. Still, there is an even more specific level of familiarization required, as outlined in the second stage of three.

Stage 2 of 3: Identification of S&H Requirements and Hazards Specific to a Workplace

The second stage in creating a safe and healthy work environment involves identifying additional hazards particular to the workplace as well as the rules and standards that correspond to those hazards.

One of the best approaches to identifying additional workplace hazards is to solicit the expert, inside knowledge of employees. Workers are more familiar with the work environment than any regulating body or even their employers in most cases.

Furthermore, asking for the help and input from workers on safety matters goes toward increasing their investment in the S&H program that will be the end result. Finally, mining information from employees is one of the less expensive approaches to developing a comprehensive safety strategy.

Nevertheless, a company may still require help from a third party to fully identify the additional S&H requirements and hazards specific to its given workplace. In such cases, an effective third party resource involves using self-inspection checklists that ask specific questions in order to prompt businesses

> **One of the best approaches to identifying additional workplace hazards is to solicit the expert, inside knowledge of employees. Workers are more familiar with the work environment than any regulating body or even their employers in most cases.**

on safety and health rules yet to be considered. A collection of such checklists can be found in OSHA's Small Business Handbook at http://www.osha.gov/Publications/smallbusiness/small-business.pdf.

By the end of stage two, a business is familiar with the safety and health rules, requirements, and standards for:

- the general workplace
- the industry specific workplace
- the specific workplace in question

With this comprehensive range of information in place, the business is now ready to apply what it has learned in stage three of three.

Stage 3 of 3: Development, Implementation and Maintenance of an S&H Program

The third and final stage of a company creating a workplace that complies with safety and health rules and regulations begins as a stage, and then evolves into an ongoing process.

Similar to the stages before, stage three begins with one-time activities that are new to the business – in this case the development and implementation of a Safety and Health Program. From there, however, maintenance of the S&H Program becomes a perpetual component of the life of the business, ever changing in response to the evolving nature of the business in question and the evolving S&H rules and regulations that apply to it.

As with stage two, a company may require help from a third party when facing the activities of developing and implementing an effective S&H Program. OSHA provides a helpful resource for this purpose at http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/safetyhealth/index.html in the form of a general guideline for businesses to follow.

Since each business and workplace is unique, so too, each S&H Program is unique, demanding attention to detail and customization. Likewise, the implementation process of each S&H Program will be different, requiring sensitivity to corporate culture, worker attitudes, and other business agendas.

The final component of stage three is the maintenance of the newly developed and implemented S&H Program. The ongoing process of running and modifying the safety and health management solution produces the business benefits mentioned earlier, making the investment of time and money to this point worthwhile.

For example, the following table highlights typical reductions in lost workdays due to the implementation of a particular voluntary OSHA S&H Program:

	A Laundry service	A Rehab center
1991	468	491
1992	368	472
1993 (1st year of program)	108	482
1994	51	88

Source: "Maine Top 200" – OSHA Shifts its Focus From Regulations To Outcomes, http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/leveraging/03c.html

Additional benefits from the same S&H Program included 65% of the participating employers realizing overall reductions in injury and illness rates with a 47.3% decrease in compensable claims for worker's compensation.

Such safety, health, and bottom line benefits are directly related to the development and implementation of an effective S&H Program. At the same time, the ongoing process of maintaining an effective S&H Program can prove difficult in light of constantly changing safety and health regulations and standards. Once again, a company may require help from a third party to ensure they remain compliant with these new rules.

The IHS Environmental, Safety and Health (ESH) Management Solution

For over 45 years, IHS has provided businesses with critical information delivery and management solutions. Today, their Environmental, Safety & Health (ESH) Management Solution provides comprehensive, centralized access to current and historical codes, laws, regulations and standards from OSHA, as well as international, federal, and state sources.

The ESH solution also combines the online regulatory compliance library (CyberRegs™) with the IHS Specs & Standards service for immediate access to collections of industry specifications and standards directly from the corresponding regulations.

By ensuring a company's S&H Program has access to the latest rules and regulations, the ESH Management Solution from IHS is a cost effective approach to maintaining vital workplace safety and health compliance.

Sources

All About OSHA LLC. 24 Jul. 2006 <http://www.allaboutosha.com/>.

Occupational Safety and Health Administration. 24 Jul. 2006 <http://www.osha.gov/>.

"OSHA's Small Business Handbook." Occupational Safety and Health Administration. 2005. 24 Jul. 2006. <http://www.osha.gov/Publications/smallbusiness/small-business.pdf>.

"Outside Leveraging: Creating Relationships Through Partnerships with Stakeholders." Mini Case Study "Maine Top 200" – OSHA Shifts its Focus From Regulations To Outcomes. U.S. Food and Drug Administration. Last updated May 2, 2000. 24 Jul. 2006. <http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/leveraging/03c.html>.

"Safety & Health Management Systems eTool." Occupational Safety and Health Administration. 24 Jul. 2006. <http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/safetyhealth/index.html>.

"The Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act." U.S. Department of Labor. 24 Jul. 2006. <http://www.dol.gov/compliance/laws/comp-osha.htm>.

About IHS Inc.

IHS (NYSE: IHS) is one of the leading global providers of critical technical information, decision-support tools and related services to customers in a number of industries including energy, defense, aerospace, construction, electronics, and automotive through two operating segments, Engineering and Energy. We serve customers ranging from governments and large multinational corporations to smaller companies and technical professionals in more than 100 countries. Our customers rely on our offerings to facilitate decision making, support key processes and improve productivity. We have been in business for more than 45 years and employ more than 2,300 people around the world.