

## Recommended Practices for Safety and Health Programs: Education and Training

OSHA has recently updated the Guidelines for Safety and Health Programs it first released 30 years ago, to reflect changes in the economy, workplaces, and evolving safety and health issues. The new Recommended Practices have been well received by a wide variety of stakeholders and are designed to be used in a wide variety of small and medium-sized business settings. The Recommended Practices present a step-by-step approach to implementing a safety and health program, built around seven core elements that make up a successful program. In this issue of the Remediation News we have reprinted the recommended practices for education and training. As we all near the end of the year it is important for the environmental remediation industry to remain diligent in our commitment to the safety of our employees. The following is a reprint of the United States Department of Labor publication available at: <https://www.osha.gov/shguidelines/>

Education and training are important tools for informing workers and managers about workplace hazards and controls so they can work more safely and be more productive. Another role of education and training, however, is to provide workers and managers with a greater understanding of the safety and health program itself, so that they can contribute to its development and implementation.

Education and training provides employers, managers, supervisors, and workers with:

- Knowledge and skills needed to do their work safely and avoid creating hazards that could place themselves or others at risk.
- Awareness and understanding of workplace hazards and how to identify, report, and control them.
- Specialized training, when their work involves unique hazards.

Additional training may be needed depending on the roles assigned to employers or individual managers, supervisors, and workers. For example, employers, managers, and supervisors may need specific training to ensure that they can fulfill their roles in providing leadership, direction, and resources for the safety and health program. Workers assigned specific roles in the program (e.g., incident investigation team members) may need training to ensure their full participation in those functions.

Effective training and education can be provided outside a formal classroom setting. Peer-to-peer training, on-the-job training, and worksite demonstrations can be effective in conveying safety concepts, ensuring understanding of hazards and their controls, and promoting good work practices.

### Action item 1: Provide program awareness training

Managers, supervisors, and workers all need to understand the program's structure, plans, and procedures. Having this knowledge ensures that everyone can fully participate in developing, implementing, and improving the program.

### How to accomplish it

- Provide training to all managers, supervisors, workers, and contractor, subcontractor, and temporary agency workers on:
  - Safety and health policies, goals, and procedures
  - Functions of the safety and health program
  - Whom to contact with questions or concerns about the program (including contact information)
  - How to report hazards, injuries, illnesses, and close calls/near misses
  - What to do in an emergency
  - The employer's responsibilities under the program
  - Workers' rights under the Occupational Safety and Health Act
- Provide information on the safety and health hazards of the workplace and the controls for those hazards.
- Ensure that training is provided in the language(s) and at a literacy level that all workers can understand.
- Emphasize that the program can only work when everyone is involved and feels comfortable discussing concerns; making suggestions; and reporting injuries, incidents, and hazards.
- Confirm, as part of the training, that all workers have the right to report injuries, incidents, hazards, and concerns and to fully participate in the program without fear of retaliation.

### Action item 2: Train employers, managers, and supervisors on their roles in the program

Employers, managers, and supervisors are responsible for workers' safety, yet sometimes have little training on safety-related concepts and techniques. They may benefit from specific training that allows them to fulfill their leadership roles in the program.

### How to accomplish it

- Reinforce employers, managers, and supervisors' knowledge of their responsibilities under the Occupational Safety and Health Act and the workers' rights guaranteed by the Act.
- Train employers, managers, and supervisors on procedures for responding to workers' reports of injuries, illnesses, and incidents, including ways to avoid discouraging reporting.
- Instruct employers, managers, and supervisors on fundamental concepts and techniques for recognizing hazards and methods of controlling them, including the hierarchy of controls.
- Instruct employers, managers, and supervisors on incident investigation techniques, including root cause analysis.

### Action item 3: Train workers on their specific roles in the safety and health program

Additional training may be needed to ensure that workers can incorporate any assigned safety and health responsibilities into their daily routines and activities.

### How to accomplish it

- Instruct workers on how to report injuries, illnesses, incidents, and concerns. If a computerized reporting system is used, ensure that all employees have the basic computer skills and computer access sufficient to submit an effective report.
- Instruct workers assigned specific roles within the safety and health program on how they should carry out those responsibilities, including:
  - Hazard recognition and controls ([see action item 4](#))
  - Participation in incident investigations
  - Program evaluation and improvement
- Provide opportunities for workers to ask questions and provide feedback during and after the training.
- As the program evolves, institute a more formal process for determining the training needs of workers responsible for developing, implementing, and maintaining the program.

### Action item 4: Train workers on hazard identification and controls

Providing workers with an understanding of hazard recognition and control and actively involving them in the process can help to eliminate hazards before an incident occurs.

### How to accomplish it

- Train workers on techniques for identifying hazards, such as job hazard analysis (see [OSHA Publication 3071 \(PDF\)](#)).
- Train workers so they understand and can recognize the hazards they may encounter in their own jobs, as well as more general work-related hazards.
- Instruct workers on concepts and techniques for controlling hazards, including the hierarchy of controls and its importance.
- Train workers on the proper use of work practice and administrative controls.
- Train workers on when and how to wear required personal protective equipment.
- Provide additional training, as necessary, when a change in facilities, equipment, processes, materials, or work organization could increase hazards, and whenever a worker is assigned a new task.

We at Innovative Environmental Technologies wish all our clients, employees and competitors a safe and prosperous New Year.