

DEVELOPING A LOSS CONTROL PROGRAM

Establishing a loss control program must be done in a logical, step-by-step procedure. It can be compared to constructing a house. The foundation must be laid before the walls and roof can be erected. The foundation of a program must be sound and support the elements that make up the program. If not, the program will eventually weaken and collapse.

The planning for construction of the program must be done by top management. Their planning will determine the program's success or failure. The need to eliminate, or at least control, human suffering and the direct and indirect costs of accidents should be the incentive to establish an effective loss control program.

Once the decision has been made to develop a program, management has to initiate action in the following four areas:

1. **The reasons why the program is needed and what is to be accomplished must be developed.** These objectives will determine the depth and scope of the program's development.
2. **A policy statement should be written and communicated to all employees.** It should clearly outline the objectives and indicate top management's intentions and determination in achieving an effective program designed to provide a safe working environment.

3. **Responsibilities have to be assigned.** An effective loss control program involves all staff functions, all levels of management and the labor force. Therefore, all employees will have some responsibilities and involvement in the program.
4. **Provisions have to be made for communications to the top management on the effectiveness of the program.** Their review of the results will enable them to give additional direction and emphasis as needed.

Completing these four items will establish a firm foundation which will support other essential elements of a total loss control program. The sequence of implementation of the elements will depend on the priority of the objectives established by top management. Each element will require the assignment of responsibilities for each phase of implementation.

It should also be remembered that all elements cannot be implemented at once. Building a successful program takes planning, and time must be given to allow the element initiated a chance to become effective. Also, the success of one phase will often lead to the initiation of the next logical phase. Successful implementation will allow one element to interface and complement all others.

The following are recommended elements of a loss control program. Your safety program should include, but not be limited to, the following:

1. Issue a loss control policy statement appointing a safety director.
2. Develop systems that will hold each department (supervisor) accountable for the injury and accident costs that occur within each department.
3. As part of the annual performance review of each supervisor, include a review of how well he or she controlled injuries and accidents in the employee group for which they are responsible.
4. Make sure all supervisors get some kind of safety training each year.
5. Work with all department managers (supervisors) to form accurate job descriptions for all jobs within your company. Use these job descriptions while interviewing and training employees.
6. Establish formal safety rules and procedures. These should include both general plant and individual department rules.
7. Develop formal reporting, investigating, and analysis procedures. Provisions should be made to make sure that all accidents and injuries are reported immediately. Prompt investigation to uncover the real causes will allow for analysis and corrective action.
8. Make the review of injuries and safety concerns a standing part of each morning plant meeting.
9. Review the OSHA log and first report of injury forms on an ongoing basis to make sure appropriate accident investigations are performed on all occurrences.
10. Develop a self-inspection program. Procedures should be established to perform regular safety audits for unsafe conditions and unsafe acts within the facility. The self-inspection program should include development of a formal inspection checklist.
11. Develop a safety incentive program. These programs can be set up in many different ways. Determine the best method for your company and develop a written program. Safety incentive programs place accountability on each employee within the company to work in a safe manner. These programs also help reduce questionable claims.
12. Maintain records and attendance sheets from safety meetings as evidence of training documentation for OSHA and other outside agencies.
13. Put up a lost-workday injury board.
14. Start a safety suggestion box and acknowledge employee contributions in the daily newsletter or bulletin board.
15. Keep employees informed on the company's progress in reducing Workers' Compensation claims. This is typically accomplished by posting man hours worked since the last Workers' Compensation injury. Explain to existing employees and new employees the effects of Workers' Compensation claims on premiums for the following three years and the effects on their individual job security due to not being able to compete with competitors.
16. Have at least one safety meeting with each individual employee each year. This would be a good time to counsel employees who have an injury frequency problem and to thank employees who have worked a period of time without injuries.
17. Make sure the line supervisor is the person who is filling out the accident report and that he or she is spending sufficient time analyzing contributing factors and actions to prevent a recurrence. These items should be reviewed by a member of top management to make sure the supervisor is being held accountable. This accountability will help avoid future accidents and injuries.
18. Develop a return-to-work program. This formal written program should include developing a list of light-duty jobs for each department.
19. Review first-aid facilities within the plant to make sure all necessary items are included in the kit. Formal first-aid procedures should be developed. Employees performing first-aid procedures in the plant should receive formal first-aid training. Training can be provided by the Red Cross, local technical colleges, local hospitals, etc.
20. Provide CPR training for at least two employees on each shift. Identify the CPR-trained employees to all members of management and to all employees.

These are general elements of loss control programs. They do not include specific programs, such as hazard communication, lockout/tagout, bloodborne pathogens, etc. These programs should be developed if or when the hazards exist. Safety programs should not be limited to the above elements. Good loss control programs address all employees' needs and working exposures. Loss control programs should be periodically evaluated to ensure their effectiveness. New aspects, techniques, and variations must be adopted when necessary to keep the program alive, growing, and effective.

The information and recommendations contained in this material have been obtained from sources believed to be reliable. However, SECURA accepts no legal responsibility for the accuracy, sufficiency, or completeness of such information. Additional safety and health procedures may be required under particular circumstances.