Employee Safety Responsibilities Meeting Kit

What’s At Stake

SAFETY RESPONSIBILITIES OF EVERY EMPLOYEE

A safe work environment is a reasonable expectation that employees have of their employers. Employees want their employers to protect them from job hazards, but it’s important that employees realize they have a role in maintaining a safe workplace as well.

Both employers and employees share the accountability for encouraging a safety culture to improve behavior and performance in the workplace. They also share accountability to encourage peers to value safe work practices and safety programs in a positive, proactive way. Employers and employees can work together to achieve an effective safety culture.

What’s the Danger

Safety is the business and responsibility of every employee and can be achieved through proper education, training, use of protective equipment and by following safety rules, regulations, standards, and laws.

HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Each employee is responsible for understanding and practicing appropriate safety procedures.

1. **Act as safely at work as you would elsewhere**

You should take reasonable care of your health and safety no matter where you are or what you’re doing. This is especially true in the workplace, where your actions can affect both your own safety and that of others. It’s important to cooperate with your

employer, make sure you receive the proper training for your job, and understand and follow your company's health and safety policies. In addition to your company's policies, there are generally accepted safe work practices and laws by which you should also abide.

1. **Use the tools available to you to maintain a safe environment.**

Your company will provide you with tools to ensure your health and safety at work. It's your responsibility as an employee to use them. Observe health and safety signs, posters, warning signals, and written directions. Follow safe practices and specific guidance from Safety Data Sheets (SDS) or chemical label instructions, if your work involves hazardous materials. Use engineering controls and personal protective equipment (PPE) appropriate to your work.

1. **Educate yourself on hazards, safety practices, and rules.**

When you're first hired, your company will provide you with adequate training for the work you are expected to perform, including the tools you will need to get the job done. They'll train you on company safety policies and potential hazards. However, this is not where your on-the-job education should end. It is up to you, the employee, to continue to educate yourself. Learn about potential hazards associated with your work and work area, know where information on these hazards is kept for review, and use this information when needed.

1. **Communicate about unsafe practices and conditions.**

When you are aware of hazardous conditions or behavior, defective equipment, or other hazards, it is your responsibility to warn your co-workers to keep them out of harm's way. You should report all unsafe acts, unsafe conditions, illnesses and injuries to the appropriate person at your company. No one knows your job or tools better than you do – if you think a job or task is unsafe, stop the work and communicate your concerns with your supervisor.

1. **Identify and lower your Level of Acceptable Risk (LOAR).**

The Level of Acceptable Risk is the “warning light” threshold that each employee has that establishes the level of risk an employee is willing to take or accept to perform a task or operation before he or she feels the risk is too great. You must learn to lower your LOAR and integrate safety procedures as you plan your work to remove the risk.

1. **Remember that following safety rules and regulations isn’t optional – it’s the law.**

People go to work every day expecting not to be injured. As an employee, you have a right to a safe and healthful work environment, but employers are not the only ones responsible for your safety – you are, too. By accepting these six employee safety responsibilities, you are making your workplace a safer place for both you and your co-workers.

BEST HEALTH AND SAFETY STEPS FOR WORKERS

All workers are responsible for protecting their own health and safety at work.

To minimize the risks to your health and safety:

- keep your work area free of hazards
- Make sure your employer has provided you with training and instructions.
- follow all reasonable (safe) directions by your supervisor
- do not undertake work if you are not confident that you can do the task safely – ask your supervisor for training
- stop work if you become aware of an unsafe situation and immediately report it to your supervisor
- read all policies and procedures carefully, particularly where they may impact on your health and safety
- comply with all policies, procedures and instructions in relation to work, health and safety (WHS)
- wear all required PPE
- operate plant and machinery in line with correct policies, procedures and training
- do not take drugs or consume alcohol before or at work

- actively support WHS consultation processes
- assist incident investigators or workplace inspectors.

DO NOT PLACE OTHERS AT RISK

It is your responsibility to not place others at risk:

- take reasonable care that your actions or lack of action does not adversely affect others
- do not interfere with, change or remove any safeguard, safety device or personal protection equipment (PPE) – except when part of an approved maintenance, repair or emergency procedure
- report all hazards or incidents to your supervisor as soon as possible.

FINAL WORD

Employers and employees have a shared accountability for setting a safety culture that improves behavior and performance. But employees must realize that they are the first line of defense against unsafe practices and conditions, and therefore must react in a positive and productive manner.