

Management Commitment And Employee Involvement

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Providing a maintenance professional with a safe work environment can be an extremely challenging task. The nature of the job requires the technician to put him or herself in different situations every day. This adds additional risk that might not be present in other professions. So how do we keep these employees safe?

There are four main elements to a successful safety process:

- Management commitment and employee involvement.
- Worksite analysis.
- Hazard prevention and control.
- Training.

We are going to focus on the first element, "Management Commitment and Employee Involvement."

Management Commitment

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Safety needs to be encoded into a company's DNA; it's a culture which needs to be present throughout the entire organization. First and foremost, this commitment needs to be visible by the leadership in the organization. If it's not present at the top, the process is unlikely to make it to the bottom. This commitment consists of five elements:

- Formalizing a safety and health policy.
- Setting clear goals and objectives.
- Being a very visible "safety cheerleader."
- Holding the company and individuals accountable for safety performance.
- Providing recognition.

Employee Involvement

Employees need to believe in safety themselves, in order for this culture to spread. Involvement means that the employees are actively engaged with safety and always thinking safety. Awareness is critical in keeping employees safe. Incidents happen when an employee's mind is wandering, or he/she rushes into a job.

No job is more important than someone's safety. The challenge is getting the workforce to slow down and think about potential hazards before jumping into a job. An awareness process forces employees to think before they act. This is a cultural change and doesn't happen over night. Here are some ideas that have worked for Advanced Technology Services in getting the workforce more engaged.

Talk About Safety Every meeting should begin with a discussion on safety. Some discussion examples include:

- A review of recent incidents that have occurred, with a discussion on how to prevent them from happening again: Information needs to be openly communicated throughout an organization to prevent similar incidents from happening repeatedly.
- A tool box talk discussion on a specific safety topic: Get the employees involved in the discussion by having them present the information. Make sure to include talking points.
- Safety concerns or issues: Give them an opportunity to talk about any issues or concerns they have.
- General discussions: What will everyone do to promote safety today?
- Near hit reporting: A well established near hit reporting process can ultimately lead to a reduction in workplace injuries. Near hits can be predictors of more serious injuries to come. In theory, if you can eliminate the near hits, you can eliminate the injuries.

Pyramid Approach

Once you get your near hit process off the ground, you can start focusing on the bottom of the pyramid: at-risk behaviors. Many companies spend the majority of their time and efforts at the recordable injury level. This is a reactive approach to safety, as the injury already happened. To be more proactive, focus on the behaviors that lead to the near hits and recordable injuries.

Pre-Job Review

Another method to get employees thinking safety is to mandate a pre-job review that requires the employee to examine the job for safety concerns. At first this will require a physical document to be filled out, but as time goes by, it will become second nature.

You can have all of the fancy programs you want, but until you get the commitment from management and get the employees fully engaged, you likely will not achieve the results desired. Keeping maintenance professionals safe is a very challenging task. This requires involvement from everyone to achieve success. The key is awareness- always think safety.

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