



Weekly Safety Briefings

Week 13 – March 20-24, 2023

Safety Action Teams

Introduction

Safety teams or committees can have different names within different organizations but the overall idea is similar. For this week's training, we will refer to them as safety action teams. Having a group of dedicated individuals throughout your company that are focused on injury prevention can have a tremendous positive impact on your efforts to make your workplace safer.

This week we will discuss recommendations for forming an effective safety action team, roles and responsibilities of the safety action teams, best practices, and the benefits to creating safety action teams.

Monday – Form a Safety Action Team

Forming a safety action team is a crucial initial step in the process. Below are some suggestions on how to get started:

- Each team should include diverse group of individuals across multiple departments and management levels, as well as front line colleagues. Having different perspectives greatly increases your chances of finding the hazards and the best solutions to minimize or eliminate them.
- Encourage colleagues to find or form a team that will tackle issues that they have a personal interest in.
- Empower the team to take action and make positive changes.

Tuesday – Roles and Responsibilities

Once your safety action teams are established, the next step is defining the team's roles and responsibilities. Developing a written mission statement that clearly states the team's goals and intentions will give the group a solid foundation to build upon. Also clearly defining the duties and responsibilities of the team members gives each person a clear objective. Although the opportunities are endless, below are some examples of items the safety action teams are responsible for:

- Reviewing safety policies and practices.
- Conducting regular safety inspections and noting any concerns.
- Encouraging other employees to report safety hazards.
- Reviewing past incidents and identifying trends to predict future potential injuries.
- Provide safety training to fellow employees.
- Leading safety improvement projects.

Wednesday – Best Practices

Sustainment is often the most difficult step in any new process and the same is true for safety action teams. Today we will discuss some best practices for maintaining an effective safety action team.

- Identify and prioritize "SMART" goals. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time bound)
- Establish action plans to achieve each goal and see them through until completion.
- Establish a routine around meeting and reviewing action items.
- Adding new members or rotating current members to different teams introduces new perspectives and ideas.

Thursday – Benefits of Forming Safety Action Teams

Now that we've discussed how to form and sustain an effective safety action team, now let's take a look at the why. Some companies are actually required to form safety committees. To find out if your company requires a safety action team, check with your regional OSHA office. Even if it's not required, here are some reasons to consider having a safety team:

- It gives the colleagues an avenue to bring up safety concerns.
- Hazards can be identified and corrected before they cause an injury.
- Both management and front line employees are involved in developing your company's safety culture.
- Employees are educated on risks.
- It can boost moral when concerns are heard and employees can see actions are taken to address their concerns.
- You can also reduce your risk of OSHA or local safety citations or penalties.

Friday – Open Discussion

This week we've discussed how to form a safety action team, establish roles and responsibilities, best practices, and the benefits. Now let's open it up to the group to discuss the questions below and any other ideas around safety action teams.

- Does your company currently have safety action teams?
- If you do have a safety action team, what have they achieved?
- Are you involved? Why or why not?
- What are your thoughts around having a safety action team?