

Goal

This program provides the elements to develop a good training program.

Objectives

The program developer will become familiar with the seven steps for program development and will be able to use them to plan site-specific training.

Program Development

Safety training should be a part of every employee's basic job training. This reinforces the belief that safety is an essential part of the job. By focusing on job training needs, you will identify safety training needs. You want your employees to learn what they need to know to perform their jobs.

Follow these steps for an effective training program:

Step #1 - Determine Training Needs

Training does not solve all problems. Sometimes the problem may be work procedures, equipment, or lack of employee motivation. Ask yourself, "Could the employee do the job if he wanted to?" If the answer is "yes" then training may be less effective (but can still be used). "Does the employee have the skills or knowledge to perform the job?" If the answer is "no" then training will probably benefit the employee. Training may need to be done due to:

- Employee's lack of knowledge;
- Employee's lack of skills;
- New machinery or equipment;
- New procedures or job change; and
- Any aspects of behavior needing to be changed.

Some training may be required by federal, state, or local laws, such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), local fire departments, or other local regulatory agencies. All new employees need to participate in an overall safety training orientation class. Every employee must be trained to be aware of and understand the hazards in the workplace. Finally, dangerous work practices may exist on the job.

After you have determined that training will correct the problems and/or meet the legally mandated training, the next step is to identify the training needs.

Step #2 - Identify Training Needs

The purpose of training is to ensure that the employee will be able to perform the job correctly and safely. Some questions to help identify training needs are:

- Does the employee have previous experience?
- Does the employee know how to perform the tasks?
- Does the employee possess the skills to perform the tasks?

Once these questions have been answered, you can look at additional information to help identify specific training that needs to be done. Information to look at includes:

- Accident and injury records;
- Incident and near miss reports;
- Audits and inspections;
- Observing employees while working;
- Safety meetings;
- Suggestions from employees; and
- Job hazard analysis and developed solutions for the hazards (this is a very valuable tool to identify training needs).

As you are identifying the overall company training needs, you also need to determine which employees need training in what area. All employees do not have to be trained on all jobs. Train each employee on their job procedures and the overall safe way to perform that job. Each time an employee is assigned a new job procedure, train on the new procedure. Some variables to consider are:

- Employee age (younger employees have higher injury incident rates, especially in the first year);
- Length of time on the job (new employees have higher incident rates, especially in the first year);
- Is employee physically able to perform the task? (tall enough, short enough, strong enough, fit in the work space, etc.);
- Company size;
- Type of work to be performed;
- Specialized equipment;
- Personal protective equipment; and
- Any use of hazardous materials/substances?

After gathering and studying all of this material and information, you will have identified:

- Problem areas in the workplace;
- Tasks and skills needed to perform the job; and
- Employees needing training.

Step #3 - Identify Goals and Objectives

After determining training needs, it is time to identify your goals and objectives. When developing your goals, you should know exactly what you expect your employees:

- To do to perform their tasks;
- To do to improve their performance, and
- To do to improve their behavior.

Your objectives are the steps you will outline for employees to reach the company's goals. Objectives need to be well thought out and planned for the training to be successful. Therefore, objectives should be clear, concise, measurable, and shared with the employees. The four elements to consider when developing your objectives are:

- Audience - identify who is going to receive the training.
- Behavior - what observable action will the employee exhibit during evaluation?
- Condition - under what circumstances will the desired action be performed? What materials and equipment will be used?
- Degree/Standard - how well must a task be accomplished? What score must be achieved?

As you develop your objectives, remember the four elements, and also ask yourself, "Will this help the employee reach the goal? Is it designed for the employee to be successful?"

Step #4 - Develop Learning Activities

You must decide what types of activities you're going to use to train your employees. How are you going to get across to them the skills and knowledge they need? Different people require different types of training; some visual, some hands-on, etc. However, you must remember to use activities that will allow your employees to reach the goals and objectives. Prepare your training materials and aids after deciding on the learning activities. Arrange objectives and activities in the sequence that corresponds to the tasks actually performed on the job, and if possible, use hands-on demonstrations. Employees will retain training information if it is related to their job tasks.

Also consider the following:

- Determine your training method, (i.e., lecture, role-play, simulation, case-study, self-instructional, on-the-job, discussion, hands-on, homework, games, or a combination of several);

- Select media, (i.e., references, flip charts, diagrams, overheads, slides, films, videotapes, audiotapes, or computer based training); and
- Plan guides and tests, (i.e., instructor's guide, student's manual, pre-test, and post-test).

Select the training methods that will best suit your audience and their training needs for optimum learning and retention. With proper planning and preparation, the goals and objectives will be met.

Step #5 - Conduct the Training

The actual training is crucial for the overall safety training process to be successful. Begin your training with a short review of the key training subjects and activities. After each objective is taught, draw a relationship between the employee's goals, interests, and experiences to the objective. Reinforce what the employee has learned by summarizing objectives and key points. An effective training program allows employees to participate in the training process and to practice their new skills and knowledge in a safe environment. Allow employees time to:

- Participate in discussions;
- Ask questions;
- Share their knowledge and expertise;
- Learn through hands-on experience; and
- Participate in role-playing exercises.

Step #6 - Evaluate the Program

When you develop the objectives and contents of your training program, you will also develop a policy on how the training activities will be evaluated and the requirements for success. A training program is successful only if workers learn from it, accomplish the established objectives and reach the goals. Without evaluation, you will never know.

Your evaluation can include:

- Student opinion;
- Supervisors' observations (both before and after training); and
- Workplace improvements.

From the evaluation, learning and performance improvement can be determined. If employees achieve the desired results, then the training should be offered in the future. If there is no change in behavior on the job, then the training needs to be improved.

The evaluation tool can identify strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement in both the training and the trainer.

Frequent program evaluation ensures that the training program information remains current and relevant to the employees.

You can use several methods of training evaluation:

- Tests (written or performance-based) can be taken at the end of the training or several weeks later;
- Supervisors may observe or interview the employee to determine job or performance improvements following the training;
- Reduced injury or accident rates indicate improved workplace performance; and
- Informal discussions may occur prior to the close of the training session.

Step #7 - Program Improvement

You can use the information from Step #6 to improve your training program. Training program revisions and improvements can be made based on the evaluation results. For example, revisions may be made in the program if the evaluation indicates that training materials were confusing, procedural steps were

missed, or the employee failed to retain the information. The following changes should also prompt revisions in the training program:

- Job responsibilities;
- New equipment;
- New procedure; and/or
- New hazards.

You (employers) have a general responsibility to train your employees to work safely so they can go home to their families after work. Remember, OSHA mandates training in a number of the federal standards. By following these outlined steps, being prepared, presenting your program with enthusiasm, sincerity, and careful evaluation, you will promote safe work habits in your workplace.

Review Questions

1. Why is Step 1, Determine Training Needs, important?
2. Training can be developed from several sources. List two.
3. What is the purpose of identifying goals and objectives?
4. How important is Step #6, Evaluate the Program?

Review Answers

Resources

The Texas Department of Insurance, Division of Workers' Compensation (TDI, DWC) Resource Center offers a workers' health and safety video tape library. Call (512) 804-4620 for more information or visit our web site at www.tdi.state.tx.us. Disclaimer: Information contained in this training program is considered accurate at time of publication.