



Self-Inspection Program

A self-inspection program can be beneficial to any organization. It should involve everyone from top management to the front-line worker. The main benefit, however, is that it allows for the detection of unsafe conditions in time to provide countermeasures before someone is injured.

Self-inspections occur at various times and are conducted by various people depending on the scope and purpose of the inspection.

Daily The employee should inspect their work area, tools and equipment at the beginning of each workday. Maintenance personnel, supervisors and others whose duties take them into the production area should be constantly checking for unsafe actions and conditions. Always where remedial action is needed, it should be reported and corrected as soon as possible

Weekly Department heads, plant managers and others who may not normally get into the production area should tour their area for the purposes of inspection and safety contacts with the employees.

Monthly This frequency allows for a planned and scheduled inspection. It can involve the safety person, safety committee and others. The participation of top management in such inspections shows that they are not only interested in safety but also that they are involved.

Establishing the Program

A planned monthly inspection usually involves the safety department and the safety committee. This type of inspection should cover all areas, including those areas where "no one ever goes." Scheduling the inspections when maximum observations can be made with the least amount of work interruption is advisable.

The inspection team should be limited in size to approximately 2 to 4 members. They should represent operations, supervision and safety. The team should be under the direction of a responsible member of management who will provide the authority necessary to assure its effectiveness. Specific

responsibilities should be assigned (i.e., who will take notes, be the spokesperson, follow up on recommendations, etc.).

Prior to conducting an inspection, consider the following:

1. Training of inexperienced team members must be considered. Areas should be covered such as facility layout and operations flow; standards, regulations and costs; hazard recognition of unsafe acts and conditions; and purpose of the inspection.
2. Previous inspections should be reviewed. This is to insure that previous recommendations have been completed.
3. Accident records for various areas or departments should be reviewed. Information concerning how a particular accident occurred will often reveal hazards which need to be corrected.
4. All necessary personal protective equipment should be provided and worn in areas where it is required.
5. A preplanned route should be developed. This will insure that all areas will be inspected completely and thoroughly. It also will eliminate backtracking, unnecessary interruptions of production processes, and distractions.

Program Records

Accurate inspection records are important. They serve as evidence of the program, provide documentation of necessary corrective actions, and provide a method of follow up to assure completion. One of the easiest methods to record an inspection is to use a checklist. These can be secured from a variety of sources or one can be tailored to suit your individual requirements. Checklists have several advantages, but should be used only as an aid to the inspection process.

The use of checklists is especially helpful when periodic inspections are required for particular equipment. Such items as conveyors, hoists, cranes, fire extinguishers, sprinkler systems, scaffolding, ladders, etc., should be inspected by qualified persons on schedule designed to insure compliance.

Records of inspections and corrective actions should be maintained for review as appropriate for authorities having jurisdiction.

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Instituting Corrective Actions

The results of an inspection should prompt actions to correct the problems. The following guidelines should be used:

1. Correct the cause of the problem whenever possible. If the authority needed is above the inspector's, make certain that this is brought to the attention of someone who has the proper authority.
2. When an individual has the authority to correct or minimize a problem or hazard, do it immediately.
3. Conditions that cannot be corrected immediately should be conveyed to management in a written report. The conditions should be listed in the order of priority, including suggested solutions and compliance dates, if possible.
4. Management should advise the inspectors as to what actions are being planned from the suggestions, or the reasons why actions will not be taken.

Employees should be made aware of unsafe acts and conditions observed during inspections. The items can be discussed with the employees and their suggestions solicited to prevent recurrence.

Self-inspections are a necessary part of any safety program. They get employees involved in the loss control efforts, uncover unsafe conditions and practices, and increase morale when items are corrected.