

IWIF Safety TIP Sheet

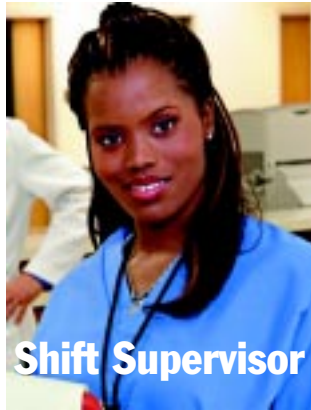
The Importance of Supervisors in Preventing Injuries

Front-line supervisors come with different titles – Shop Manager, Crew Chief, Shift Foreman, and “Boss,” to name a few. Whatever you call them, all frontline supervisors have one thing in common: They’re responsible for the health and safety of the employees who work under them, and as such, supervisors must be competent and committed to safety.

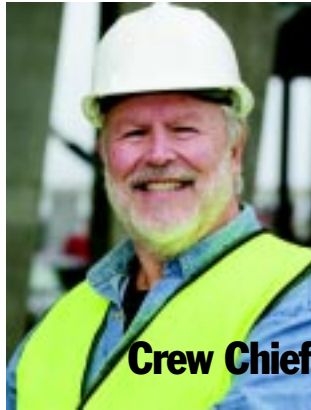
OSHA defines a “competent person” as “one who is capable of identifying existing and predictable hazards in the surroundings or working conditions which are unsanitary, hazardous, or dangerous to employees, and who has the authorization to take prompt corrective measures to eliminate them.”

Responsibilities of the front-line supervisor may include, but not be limited to, the following safety-centric behaviors:

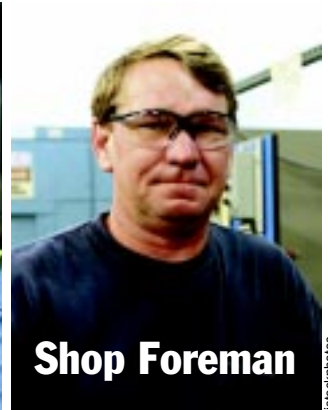
- Supervisors should implement and enforce the organization’s safety policies on all job sites and in the workplace.
- Supervisors should conduct ongoing safety training, such as weekly “Toolbox Talks,” or some other interactive safety discussions with employees, addressing specific hazards before they occur.
- Supervisors should regularly inspect the worksite for health and safety hazards, document serious hazards, bring them to the attention of senior management, and act to correct the hazardous situation(s) as soon as possible.
- Supervisors should investigate and promptly report all accidents, complete all injury and/or property damage investigation and medical forms, and forward them to the appropriate personnel.



Shift Supervisor



Crew Chief



Shop Foreman

- Supervisors should ensure their employees are trained to protect themselves from every potential hazard. They must also verify that employees actually understand how to perform their jobs safely and can demonstrate that understanding.
- Supervisors must ensure that an employee should not undertake a job until properly instructed to perform the task safely.
- Supervisors must pay particular attention to their newest or youngest employees or those moving into a new area of duty. Supervisors must never assume these employees have been trained to perform their new job safely.
- Supervisors must set the standard for safety excellence and model positive workplace safety behaviors at all times.
- Supervisors must respond to workers’ safety and health concerns promptly and support a safety culture where workers are encouraged to bring these safety concerns forward.
- Supervisors must respond to “near misses” promptly with immediate safety corrections and reminders to all employees: “Guys, stop work and listen up! I just saw Joe almost fall off that ladder by overreaching for the gutter!”

All employees have a personal responsibility to perform safely on their jobs, and supervisors are in the best possible position to model, observe, and reinforce proper safety behaviors.

Maryland Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH) offers a 2-day “Introduction to Safety and Health for Supervisors,” designed for supervisors and managers responsible for safety at their facility.

Topics include:

- Creating a safe work environment
- Supervision and accountability
- The costs of safety
- Effective safety training
- Hazard identification and control
- An introduction to industrial hygiene
- Ergonomics and injury prevention
- Hazard communication, and
- Accident investigation

For more information, go to www.dllr.state.md.us/labor/seminars.htm, or contact your IWIF Loss Control or SERMA Risk Management Consultant.

This safety tip sheet is a general advisory only. It may not list all hazards or conditions in need of correction in your workplace. IWIF assumes no liability for identification or correction of conditions or hazards. Safety and health remain your responsibility.