

10 Steps to Creating an Effective Safety Program for General Industry Employers

This summary guide may be used as a reference for establishing a working safety program for general industry employers. It provides an outline that can be incorporated into a business' everyday activities. Chesapeake Employers' safety specialists can help policyholders develop an effective safety program for their business or organization.



1. Ensure management commitment to safety.

A commitment to safety is the most important step management can take to protect employees from accidents and injuries. Chesapeake Employers' experience shows that the business owner's and senior management's safety commitment and involvement are key to building and maintaining an effective workplace safety culture. Their example will foster a positive safety culture throughout the organization.

2. Designate responsibility for your safety program.

While safety is everyone's responsibility, it is best to designate a specific person to be responsible for creating, implementing, and managing an effective safety program. The responsible individual must have the experience, qualifications, and knowledge to do the job. This individual must be knowledgeable about the organization's business operations and must be given the time, resources, and authority to manage and enforce the safety program.



Depending on the company size, a safety committee should also be added to assist in identifying and remediating hazards and risks. Chesapeake Employers offers a safety tip sheet on *The Importance of Safety Committees*.

3. Determine the safety- and health-related regulatory requirements for the industry.

Each workplace safety program must be specific to the site and its operations. The considerations necessary to tailor a program for a company are:

- The size of the company or organization;
- Individual workplace operations and exposures;
- Incident trend reviews;
- Personnel capabilities;
- Available resources; and
- Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Maryland Occupational Safety and Health (MOSH) regulations and standards that govern the industry or the activities performed by an organization.



OSHA has comprehensive information on the federal laws and regulations governing industries on its [website](#). Note that there are separate standards governing the construction, certain fleet/transportation operations, maritime, and agriculture industries.

4. Conduct a hazard assessment of your workplace.


Conduct an analysis of hazards, exposures, and losses to develop a comprehensive baseline that will be used to identify and prioritize safety needs. Identify any situations that present hazards or are in violation of any law(s), regulation(s), or standard(s). Pay particular attention to those areas identified as having significant incident occurrences in the past.

Effective strategies for a hazard assessment of a general industry workplace include:

Process Flow

Look at each process, start to finish, to see what hazards exist. This will aid in refining the processes to eliminate or reduce risks and hazards.


Checklists

Inspection checklists are a helpful tool for identifying hazards in your facility. An example of a Self-Inspection Checklist begins on page 5 of [OSHA's Small Business Safety and Health Handbook](#). 

Floor Plans

Prepare a floor plan of each department or work area. Be sure to note any fire exits and location of health and safety equipment, such as First Aid kits, Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) and eye wash stations. Mark on the floor plan all pertinent machinery, processes, and facilities.

Job Safety Analysis/Job Hazard Analysis

Conduct a Job Safety Analysis (JSA), also known as a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA). A JSA/JHA is a systematic examination and documentation of every task within each job to identify health and safety hazards, and steps to control each task.  Chesapeake Employers provides a sample JSA on its website.

Equipment Manuals

Make a list of all the equipment used in your workplace and obtain the manufacturer's operating instructions for each piece of equipment.



5. Develop a written safety policy.

Develop a safety policy statement stressing the company's commitment to promoting safety at all levels of the operation. Once a policy statement is developed, management should communicate to employees the intent of the policy, their responsibilities for complying with the policy, and its enforcement procedures. The elements of an effective safety policy include:

- Compliance measures to ensure that all federal OSHA and MOSH regulations and recordkeeping requirements are met;
- Documented education and safety training focused on managing the relevant hazards/risks and each employee's associated responsibilities;
- Processes to remedy or reduce hazards or risks in an effective and efficient manner.

OSHA has certain injury and illness reporting and recordkeeping requirements as contained in 29 CFR Part 1904. While employers are required to complete both OSHA Form 300, *Log of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses*, and OSHA Form 300-A, *Summary of Work-Related Injuries and Illnesses*, only the latter, Form 300-A, is required to be posted in the workplace. [Downloadable OSHA record-keeping forms are available.](#)

[Consult OSHA for sample safety programs.](#) Additionally, Chesapeake Employers' Safety Management Consultant can provide sample safety programs. Employers can use these resources as guides when developing their own customized programs tailored to their specific workplaces.

6. Ensure two-way communication about safety.

Communication is key to building and maintaining an effective safety program. Communication should travel in both directions: Management to employees and employees to management.

7. Correct identified hazards.

Recognized hazards might constitute violations of laws, regulations, and standards. They could also result in property or production loss. Most important, these conditions present hazards to employees that could result in injury, illness, or even loss of life.

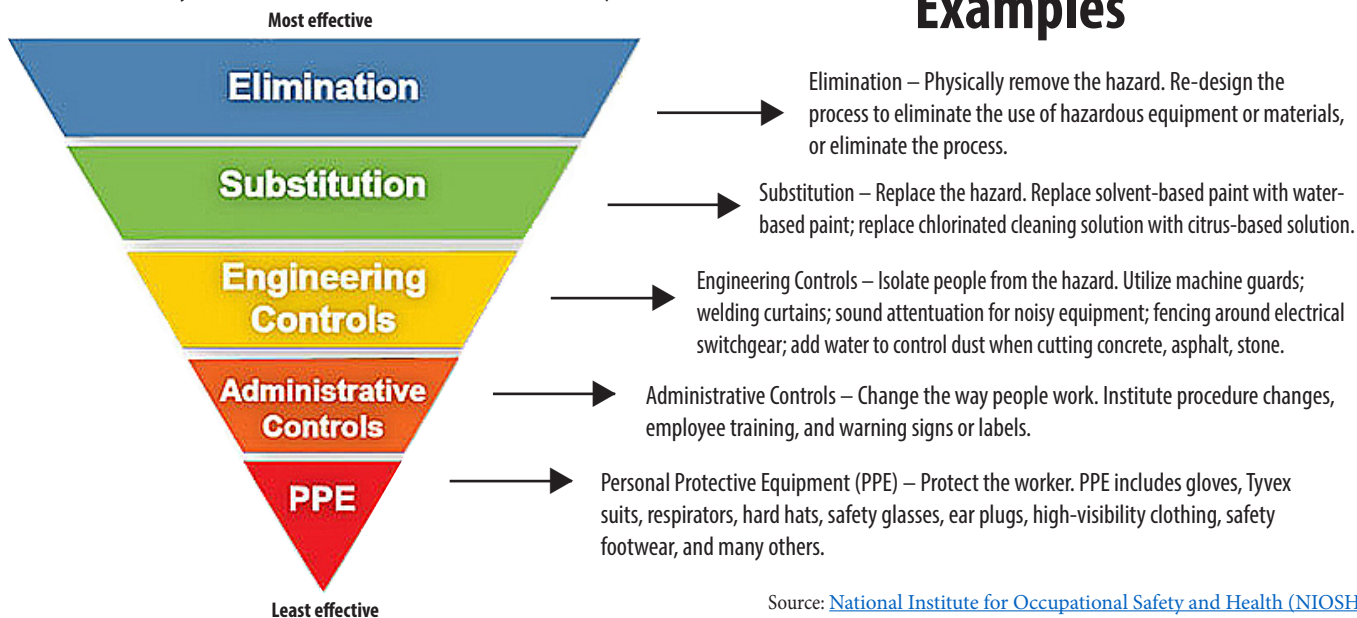
Hazards, once recognized, should be promptly abated or controlled. In the event there are multiple hazards, it is best to categorize the hazards by severity and put together an action plan showing the timeframe for abatement. It may be necessary to put in place appropriate countermeasures to maintain worker safety until the final resolution. It is important to ensure the intermediate actions remain in force and are documented until the final solution is put in place.

(10 Steps continued on pg. 4)

Below: The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health's (NIOSH's) Hierarchy of Hazard Controls is a widely accepted system promoted by numerous safety organizations. This concept is taught to managers in industry, to be promoted as a standard practice in the workplace.

NIOSH's Hierarchy of Hazard Controls

Follow NIOSH's Hierarchy of Hazard Controls to minimize or eliminate exposure to risk.



Source: [National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health \(NIOSH\)](#)

8. Regularly train employees on safety.

Chesapeake Employers recommends employers provide and document job safety training for employees. Documentation should include the date of the training, the training topic(s), a list of employees required to attend, and their signatures confirming attendance.

Documentation should also contain the material used for the training (video, PowerPoint, etc.). An employer should ensure that all current and new employees understand the hazards to which they may be exposed and how to prevent harm to themselves and others from that exposure. OSHA standards require that most employers provide training on:

- Emergency plans and fire protection plans;
- Personal protective equipment (PPE); and
- "Right to Know law" (which regulates how information about workplace chemical hazards is communicated to employees). It states that private-sector employers must provide chemical information to their workers under the OSHA standard. More information on the federal law that provides these rights is available at [OSHA Hazard Communication Standard \(29 CFR 1910.1200\)](#).

Chesapeake Employers provides a host of safety resources on its Safety Center, many of which are available in both English and Spanish, including:

- Policy templates, safety posters, safety tip sheets, and training materials;
- An OSHA 300 Log tool;
- Toolbox Talks training materials; and
- A Learning Management System.

More information about [OSHA-required training](#) can be found online. Additionally, some occupations require a certification with a predetermined training process to obtain and maintain the certification (i.e., forklift training, flagger training, etc.).

9. Keep the workplace hazard-free.

Once hazards are corrected, take steps to ensure that the workplace remains hazard-free. Develop work practices, administrative controls, work rules, and emergency procedures that will prevent new hazard creation. Use incident trend reviews to take quick action when problems arise.

10. Regularly review the safety program and keep it up-to-date.

Developing and implementing an effective safety program is only the first step to fostering a successful safety culture. Employers must attend to program maintenance: Coordination of the program, documentation of the program details, addition of new work practices and hazard controls, and continuation of enforcement through a variety of safety audits. Safety programs should be reviewed at least annually or in the event of a change of conditions or an incident or accident that exposes another hazard. The review should be performed by a safety representative or his or her designee.

This is a summary of generally accepted best practices for creating an effective workplace safety program for general industry employers.

For more information on Chesapeake Employers' safety and loss prevention services, call the Customer Service Contact Center at (410) 494-2000 or 1-800-264-4943 outside Baltimore.