

Safety Leadership Starts With You

Time and time again, the topics of safety leadership and risk management culture are brought up at businesses around the country. As leaders, you have a responsibility to help keep your operations running smoothly and ensuring your employees are working to the best of their abilities. But from an overarching perspective, safety leadership must start at the top — with you.

Risk Identification – When it comes to risk management, identifying the root causes of accidents and injuries and remedying them immediately using a risk management plan can help create a healthier, more stable business. Take the time to periodically conduct a workplace analysis that includes the inside and outside of the building. Focus on:

- General operations
- Machines and equipment
- Employee processes and work practices
- Housekeeping safety
- Clean walking surfaces
- Well lit and organized storage and loading zones
- Any other areas and activities necessary to perform safely well at your workplace

Take notes when potential hazards are found, gather the information, and develop plans for what is needed to control situations that may lead to unacceptable consequences. As necessary, endeavor to promptly correct workplace hazards. Safety guidelines are more effective if they are presented in a written format — create a formal safety manual and present it to employees. In this, include the means for holding employees accountable for any unsafe work habits or conditions.

Lead by Example - Your actions as a leader hold a great deal of value. As you interact with others, you should demonstrate a high level of understanding for the safety of your business, and your actions should reflect the culture of a workplace that encourages others to follow your lead.

If you see areas that need work, note them and address them. Any employee infractions should be documented and followed up on, and training should be assigned promptly. By continuously following your risk management plan and showing interest in a safe workplace, you demonstrate to your employees the level of dedication and respect that you have for them, and for your business model.

Listen to Employees – Your employees are on the front lines, and often interact with job-specific risks that you may not be entirely familiar with. If they raise safety concerns or offer suggestions about areas of their jobs, take the time to listen to them, and work to remedy the situation. Job hazard analyses are also more accurate when employees are involved.

In turn, work with them on areas that they may need further training in, along with regular refresher courses for specific tasks. By working alongside your employees to come up with relevant topics, you can keep them involved in regular training.

A risk manager is an important part of any business. Your role requires care, organization, and planning, as well as confidence and the energy to take control of a business's risk management culture. You will recognize the importance of designing and following through on a comprehensive risk management plan in order to best help protect your business's people and bottom line.

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