Loss Control Information Bulletin

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Recognizing and Correcting Workplace Hazards

According to data from the national Safety Council, on the job injuries cost employers over $125 billion annually.

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA's) general duty clause of the Federal Regulations states that "Each employer shall furnish to each of his employees employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious physical harm to his employees ..."

Each employer is responsible for providing a safe place to work for their employees. Identifying workplace hazards is a key recognizing and correcting workplace hazards.

Keys to Hazard Identification

The best hazard identification programs:

■ *Cover every part of the workplace with a comprehensive hazard review process,*

■ *Encourage open communication between the employer and employees, and*

■ *Track identified hazards until they are corrected.*

There are four hazard areas that need to be evaluated … Materials, Equipment, Environment, and People. Using the following questions will assist with your hazard identification process.

■ *What hazards are associated with the materials used in my operations? Make a list of all materials used and identify the hazards associated with the materials.*

■ *What hazards are created by the equipment used in your business? Make a list of all equipment used and identify the hazards associated with the equipment.*

■ *What types of hazards are created as a result of the environment in my business? Make a list of the prevalent environmental conditions and identify the hazards associated with these environmental conditions.*

■ *What kind of things do my employees do that could be hazardous? List all of your employees and their jobs and then identify the hazards associated with each job.*

Once you have identified the possible hazards within your business operations, you need to locate where these hazards are presenting unsafe conditions or environments.

Using an inspection checklist is one way to systematically inspect your business or operational facilities for these hazards and to see if there are any hazards in need of controls.

Your inspection program should be assigned to management or supervisor employees with authority for correcting problems noted. Hazard identification training should be provided to these employees to increase their effectiveness.

The inspections should be scheduled on a regular basis (weekly, monthly, or quarterly) depending on the nature and complexity of your work environment. Quarterly should be the minimum inspection frequency.

Involve your employees in the process to encourage them to report uncontrolled hazards between inspections.

Farmers has a variety of industry specific self-inspection checklists to assist you with this process.

Other aspects to include in your hazard identification control efforts within your operations include:

- *Review of your accident and incident records for worker injuries,*

- *Review of accident investigation reports for on the job injuries for your business,*

- *Review of industry incident rates such as Bureau of Labor Statistics to compare your control efforts to those of business in your industry, and*

- *Employee observations.*

Once your program is up and running it is important that the information collected is shared throughout your operations. This would include your management team, safety committee members and employees.

Use safety bulletins to communicate hazards in the workplace and the controls and precautions required when employees are working with, near, or around these hazards.

Safety incentive programs and employee safety suggestion boxes are additional ways to get more employee participation in the hazard identification and control process.

Any identified hazards in need of control need to be monitored to insure that the appropriate corrective action is taken in a timely manner. Managers and supervisors must be charged with this responsibility and held accountable for following up to conclusion the correction of any identified hazard that is uncontrolled.

Hazard identification and control is an essential part of an employer's responsibility. These guidelines will assist you in getting your program started on the right track.