

Safety & Health Training: Voluntary Protection Programs Requirements for Employees

Education and training provides your employees with a greater understanding of your safety management system (SMS) and how they can contribute to SMS implementation and sustainment. Employees are important to a successful SMS because they are the most impacted by workplace culture and organizational policy and procedures. You must ensure they have adequate knowledge and expertise to commit to and support your SMS and drive improvements for a safe and healthful workplace. This one pager discusses the safety and health (S&H) training requirements for employees in an SMS, specifically the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA's) Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP).



Image retrieved from Bing Images (Creative Commons)

NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION

New employee orientation gives your organization an opportunity to educate all employees BEFORE they begin work. Don't cut new employee orientation short! New employee orientation informs your employees about hazards, how to recognize and report hazardous conditions, and safe work procedures.

Consider developing an onboarding checklist identifying the information to cover, including required OSHA topics. New employee orientation is also the time to educate new employees on your SMS and expectations for their involvement, an especially important factor if the employee never worked at an organization with an SMS.

Supplement new employee orientation with an on-the-job orientation provided by managers or supervisors. This orientation gives employees information regarding specific risks, hazards, and safety rules associated with their assigned work areas.

Required Topics

- Hazards at the worksite
- Emergency evacuation
- Protective measures
- Employee rights under the OSH Act

OSH = Occupational Safety and Health

EDUCATION AND TRAINING TOPICS

Your organization must tailor training to meet the requirements of your workplace and employees. Conduct a training needs assessment and evaluate current experience and education against assigned SMS roles and responsibilities. Determine if additional training is needed to help employees effectively contribute to your SMS. Training should focus on the following categories and topics, considering assigned duties:

Rights & Responsibilities	Hazard Awareness	Emergency Preparedness
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights and responsibilities under the OSH Act (general industry employees) • Rights and responsibilities under 29 CFR 1960 (federal employees) • OSHA literature on whistleblower rights and the OSH Act • Anti-retaliation protections 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worksite safety hazards • Worksite health hazards • How to recognize and report hazardous conditions • Signs and symptoms of workplace-related illnesses and injury • Implemented hazard controls • Safe work procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responsibilities for each type of emergency • Emergency procedures • Critical operations
SMS Programs and Results	Personal Protective Equipment	OSHA Required Training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazard control programs applicable to assigned work • Hazard analysis results • Trend analysis results • Employee participation in the SMS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where PPE is required • Why PPE is required • Limitations of PPE • How to use PPE (e.g., don/doff, proper care, disposal, maintenance) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Varies based on assigned job duties and training requirements specific to the worksite • Training Requirements in OSHA Standards

CFR = Code of Federal Regulations PPE = personal protective equipment

EFFECTIVENESS OF PROVIDED TRAINING

Make sure any training you provide is effective. Periodically review training content to ensure the information supports current regulatory information and reflects current organizational policy and expectations. It is good practice to formally document this review.

Evaluate the effectiveness of provided training through pre- and post-tests, course surveys, instructor surveys, on-the-job observations, demonstrations, and more. Continuously look for ways to improve employee-provided training to make it more effective.



Image retrieved from Bing Images (Creative Commons)

Consider providing ongoing and refresher training too, even when not required. Refresher training helps employees remember and retain the provided information. Try to mix up the training so it is not the same year after year.

For additional information on the SMCX's services, please visit the SMCX-hosted website at: <https://www.smcx.org/>.