

Sustaining VPP Star Status

CONGRATULATIONS! You did it! The Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) recognized your worksite as a Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) Star.

Now, the next question is: *“How do I maintain it?”*

Remember, your objective as a VPP Star site is to continuously improve your safety management system (SMS) and mature your safety culture.

Don't lose focus of this objective! Some sites think they achieved the end-goal and all is well. However, OSHA expects you to find ways to improve; after all, they will see you again in three years! Think about the items below to help you successfully sustain your OSHA VPP Star recognition.

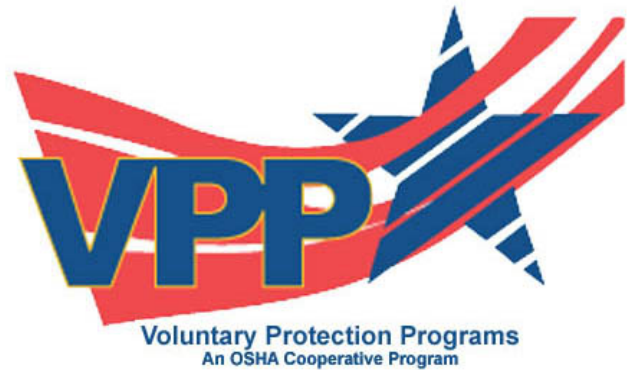


Image retrieved from OSHA at:

https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/vpp/images/new_vpplogo_large.jpg

EVALUATE YOUR SMS

Complete the mandatory annual self-evaluation to measure successes, identify areas of improvement, and determine the changes necessary for continuous SMS improvement. You must submit the annual self-evaluation to OSHA by February 15 each year.

This review critically assesses the effectiveness of your SMS elements and sub-elements. In your evaluation, describe SMS improvements, identify deficiencies or further improvement opportunities, set goals and objectives with target dates, and assign responsible persons to open action items.

INCREASE EMPLOYEE INVOLVEMENT

Continue to increase employee involvement in your organization. Some worksites achieve VPP Star recognition and then lose emphasis on employee involvement over time. Not only does employee involvement expand knowledge on workplace hazards, safety and health policies, and safe work procedures, but it also allows your workforce to speak up about any program deficiencies or potential improvements.

As your SMS continues to mature, look for ways to increase employee involvement opportunities or incorporate new ideas for involvement. New involvement activities help to keep employees engaged and interested in SMS and safety and health improvement.

MANAGE CHANGE

Confirm the systems you have in place to manage changes continue to be effective. VPP requires you to analyze changes in chemicals, equipment, processes, and facilities, but consider expanding these to look at other changes too, such as new leadership or other key personnel, employee turnover, increases or reductions to resources, or new business priorities or missions. All of these changes can affect employee safety and health and SMS performance. Educate all personnel on your processes to report workplace changes so you can assess potential impacts before they create safety and health concerns.

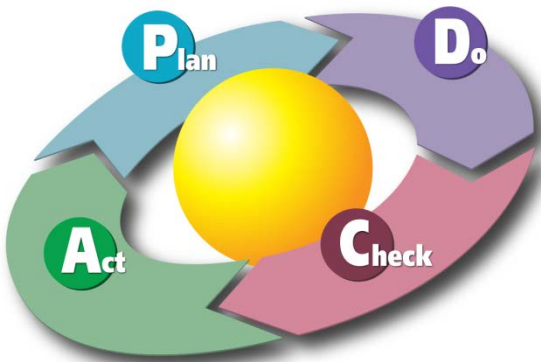


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USE THE PLAN-DO-CHECK-ACT MODEL

Use the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) model for continuous improvement to help mature and sustain your SMS. Consider using this model to set SMART¹ safety and health goals and objectives. First, develop goals and set specific objectives to improve a sub-element of your SMS (PLAN).

Next, implement the actions you plan to take to meet your goals and objectives—aim at meeting a certain level of SMS performance (DO).

Then, monitor progress periodically to determine if you are meeting your set goals and objectives (CHECK).

Finally, if successful, create new goals and objectives for further SMS improvement. If unsuccessful, revise or modify goals and objectives to take better action in hopes of achieving them (ACT).

ANALYZE SAFETY AND HEALTH PERFORMANCE

Expand your trend analysis program by including indicators measuring the performance of safety and health programs, policies, and procedures. Develop these performance indicators for your SMS sub-elements to help measure their effectiveness.

Analyze your performance to identify factors and issues that may be contributing to SMS deficiencies. Use these performance measures to direct resources, develop new strategies, and help set goals and objectives for continuous improvement.

If you expect all new equipment to receive a safety and health evaluation, measure this when you inspect or evaluate work areas. Is there any new equipment that has not received an evaluation? If so, what percentage of new equipment are you capturing overall? What can you do to improve and ensure the evaluation of all equipment?

If you require all new hazard controls to receive follow-up after 30 days, measure how often you meet this requirement. Have any controls missed their 30-day follow-up requirement? How many follow-up evaluations have occurred before or after the 30 days? What percentages of follow-up evaluation occur on time?

BE A VPP MENTOR

As a Star site experienced in achieving success with VPP, provide guidance to other organizations seeking help in implementing their SMS. Work closely with the organization you mentor – give them tips and recommendations to overcome obstacles so they can successfully implement OSHA VPP criteria. Consider developing Special Government Employees (SGEs) too! Not only do SGEs get to sit through an informative training session, but also they visit other sites shooting for Star recognition and can bring home ideas and best practices you can use at your organization.

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

¹ SMART – Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-Bound.