New year audit

Start the year off with a commitment to continually improve safety.

The new year is here, and it's important you start it off right. So why not implement an audit of your company's safety program?

The basic reason for engaging in a safety-program audit is to ensure that your program is functioning properly and helping you achieve your goal of zero accidents. A proper safety-program audit should be designed to confirm that effective program elements are in place for recognizing, removing, or controlling hazards that could unfavorably impact your company's physical and human assets. When audits are done right, they help reduce injury and illness rates, lower worker's compensation costs, empower employees by involving them in activities affecting their own safety and health, increase job satisfaction, and make the company more competitive in the marketplace.

What should go into your safety-program audit?

According to online safety training company Vivid, formal safety audits should:

- Be conducted on a regularly scheduled basis,
- Demonstrate the company has made a commitment to safety and is monitoring and enforcing its established safety policy and procedures,
- Be an official part of the company's health and safety program,
- Involve employees, supervisors, middle and upper-level operating management, and health and safety professionals, and
- Establish a schedule of safety audits for each workplace and work process.

> " Any type of self-audit to be conducted by (or supervised by) a competent person. "

Safety audits should be regularly scheduled yearly.

Also note that OSHA requires any type of self-audit to be conducted by (or supervised by) a competent person who is capable of identifying the relevant workplace hazards. According to OSHA, competent persons are employees or management officials who have the training or experience necessary to identify workplace safety or health hazards, given the scope and complexity of the processes under review.

Commit to safety

Here are five ways, courtesy of OSHA, management team members can show their commitment to your safety program.

1. Management implements and communicates a written, signed policy supporting the safety and health program.
2. Management routinely demonstrates visible commitment to the program.
3. Management defines specific goals and expectations for the program, along with plans for achieving the goals.
4. Management allocates appropriate resources (funds and time) to accomplish goals and manage the program.
5. Management assigns responsibility and accountability for implementing and maintaining the program.

While OSHA does not explicitly require them, a voluntary safety audit programs are a sound business practice that demonstrate a company's commitment to continuous improvement of its health and safety effort.

For a useful safety audit guide, please visit: https://www.osha.gov/shpguidelines/docs/SHP_Audit_Tool.pdf

THE AUTHOR

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