

SAFETY NEWSLETTER

April 2022

Safety Coaching

Implementing these strategies and tips will help you to coach employees resulting in safer performance and higher levels of productivity.

Frequency of Coaching

- Do not wait for a formal, annual performance review to talk to employees about safety performance or their productivity.
- Schedule a regular time to meet with each employee, following your organization's guidelines. (In most organizations, this is once a month.)
- However, address poor work performance or unsafe behaviors **as soon as you see them** and also provide positive feedback for safe behaviors as you see them.

The Importance of Addressing Both Positives and Negatives

Unsafe behaviors

Failure to address unsafe or unproductive behaviors perpetuates performance problems and forces other employees to accept or compensate for poor-performing team members. This can drain your team and increase potential problems.

Recognizing safety performers

Recognizing talented and safe employees by giving them positive feedback has many benefits, including:

- Making employees who are working safely feel appreciated for their efforts.
- Increased retention of your best employees.
- Encouraging other employees to improve their performance.
- A greater level of safety performance, productivity, and general improvement than can be accomplished by discipline.

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Strategies for Effective Coaching

- Complete all training. You need to know the safety practices and the work tasks of the employees you are coaching as well as how to use observation forms.
- Not all employees have the same knowledge, skill, or performance level; so provide specific guidance and coaching based on each individual's performance.
- Recognize that anyone who is not working safely in a work group can create risk for others, and remind employees that it is important for everyone to look out for the safety of others.
- Be as objective as possible. Observations are useful tools for staying objective.

Effectively confronting employees

- It is your responsibility to tell employees who are working in an unsafe manner or who are not meeting expectations that they are falling short of the requirements of the job.
- However, the manner of communicating this information is important. You must be:
 - Objective.
 - Clear and direct.
 - Calm (even if the employee is not).
 - Tactful and not belittling or threatening.
 - Personable and respectful.
 - Willing to listen to the employee.
- If an employee reacts defensively or angrily, you must stay consistent but also listen to the employee, stay calm, and try to de-escalate the situation.
- In addition to pointing out the problem, you must coach employees working unsafely on how to improve their safety behaviors so that they fully understand what is expected of them.
- If the employee is working unsafely because the rules are difficult to follow for some reason, this is an opportunity for problem-solving to improve the process itself.
- If coaching is not successful, remind the employee of the specific consequences that will arise if there is not improvement in their performance and give them a further chance before corrective actions have to be taken.
- If coaching is successful, give the employee positive feedback and confirm that they have improved.

Information provided by Succeed Management Solutions

