



Report Shows Necessity of Management Commitment & Employee Engagement to Safety Programs

Concepts Embodied in BWC's 10-Step Business Plan for Safety

Many companies do some level of safety training, ranging from a brief safety orientation for new hires to a more rigorous, structured schedule of safety meetings and training with all employees. While any effort on the part of employers to reduce workplace accidents should be applauded, a recent report shows that safety training alone is not the most effective way to prevent workplace injuries and illness.

A study released in February based on research conducted by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) and the Canadian Institute for Work and Health (IWH) demonstrates that safety training programs must be complemented by management commitment and investment, as well as employee involvement in comprehensive hazard identification and risk management programs.

The NIOSH-IWH study, "A Systematic Review of the Effectiveness of Training & Education for the Protection of Workers", also shows that the degree to which employees engage in training is a key factor in a company's safety program effectiveness. Low engagement - such as training that uses oral, written, or multi-media presentations but require little or no active participation by the employee – have minimal impact on reducing workplace accidents. High engagement training that involves hands-on practice in a realistic setting produces the best loss prevention results.

These "best practices" of management commitment and employee involvement are embodied in the *Ten Step Business Plan for Safety* that is the foundation for many alternative rating programs available through the Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation (BWC). In fact, the first two steps in the Ten Step Business Plan are *Visible, Active Senior Management* and *Employee Involvement and Recognition*.

"The tone is set at the top," said Brad Hunt, Director of Business Development for RiskControl360°. "It should be apparent to everyone in the company that safety is an organizational value and that resources will be committed to help create a safe work environment and prevent injuries."

Senior management should attend training sessions and conduct safety audits in their departments. They could also conduct accident investigations and participate in new hire safety orientation. By taking the lead, management not only "talks the talk" but "walks the walk" to ensure that safety is, in fact, an organizational value and that everyone knows it.

Furthermore, as BWC continues its rate reform efforts, safety will take on even greater importance for employers. "As Ohio's workers' compensation environment continues to change, the justification for premium discounts will increasingly be based on effective safety programs," said Brad Hunt, Director of Business Development of RiskControl360.

To see the NIOSH-IWH report, visit www.cdc.gov/niosh. Click on "NIOSH-Issued Publications" under the Publications & Products section. For information on how to develop a safety plan in your business, call Shawn Combs at RiskControl360. Shawn can be reached at (614) 827-0364.