

## New Employee Safety Orientation

New employee safety orientation is the process of introducing new, inexperienced, and/or transferred workers to your organization, their supervisors, co-workers, work areas, jobs, and especially the health and safety requirements of their work environment. All new employees working for your company should be required to attend new employee safety orientation. This includes all management, staff (full time, part time, returning, temporary, and interns), and volunteers. It is also important to consider and develop a method to communicate safety and health hazards and their controls to contractors and other visitors.

A well-planned orientation will provide your new employee with a positive first impression of the company as well as show them that they are a valued member of your organization. While there are many aspects to consider when orienting a new employee to your company, this bulletin will focus primarily on the safety and health discussions that should be considered and communicated.

### **The following are some important steps to consider prior to a new employee's first day on the job.**

- Develop a safety orientation checklist specific to your organization.
- Designate an experienced employee to lead the orientation.
- Make sure that there is a clean and functional work area ready for the employee.
- Ensure the employee has the proper equipment and supplies.
- Ensure the employee has the necessary information technology resources, including access to programs necessary for performing their job duties.
- Make sure the employee's supervisor is not scheduled to be off when the new employee arrives, and he or she has plenty of time to meet with the employee.
- Ensure all required documents and forms are prepared.
- Ensure meaningful work is prepared for the first day.
- Designate and prepare an appropriate mentor for the new employee to continue the orientation.

## When Should Safety Orientation Be Provided?

Safety orientation should be provided after the hiring offer is made and before the employee begins work. The length of time required for safety orientation will depend on each individual workplace and the specific job, tasks, and hazards involved. Not all training can or should be completed on the first day, and it should not consist of a whirlwind of checklists and safety manuals handed to the new employee. Time the safety orientation sessions to best match the needs of the workplace and the work done, but be sure all areas are covered prior to the employee being exposed to a given hazard.

## What Topics Should Be Covered?

The safety orientation should provide guidance, direction, and essential health and safety information to new employees to promote the importance of maintaining a safe environment. It should be practical and hands-on, and it should focus on the skills the employee must develop to be successful and safe at their job. The following are some common topics to discuss during safety orientation:



- **Rights and Responsibilities:** Explain both the employee and employer responsibilities as outlined in your operations general safety rules and requirements. Specific information may include:
  - Reporting accidents
  - Reporting unsafe working conditions
  - Process for exercising their right to refuse unsafe work
- **Safety Programs and Procedures:** Explain the company's safety procedures as they pertain to the employee's job and department. Outline the expectations for the employee and the employee's supervisor to adhere to all standards.
- **First Aid:** Introduce first aid providers, indicate areas for first aid kits or room, and explain to employees how to call for first aid for themselves or for a co-worker.
- **Accident/Injury Reporting Procedures:** Explain the established company procedure and contact people for reporting any injuries sustained by the employee.
- **Emergency Procedures and Preparedness:** Review the company's emergency personnel contact info; evacuation plan, including exit routes; evacuation signals and sirens; location of eyewash stations and showers, fire extinguishers, and alarm pull boxes; identify fire marshal(s); and identify exposures. Other procedures may also include: bomb threats/suspicious packages; threatening, violent, or disruptive behaviors; chemical spills, gas leaks; etc. A walkthrough of the facility highlighting these aspects is also beneficial.
- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):** Review the required PPE for specific jobs or job tasks, including the appropriate use, how to obtain, proper fit, storage, and maintenance.
- **Workplace Hazardous Communication:** Explain where hazardous materials and substances are located, and review the labeling system, hazardous symbols, and location and contents of the Safety Data Sheets (SDSs). Train employees on site-specific products and accompanying SDS material.

## Why Should Safety Orientation Be Provided?

Providing a safety orientation and extra assistance and monitoring during the initial period of employment is critical, regardless of the age of the employee, as they are not familiar with the hazards of the job or the workplace. During this phase, each worker develops the knowledge, skills, and abilities that are necessary to work in a safe and healthy manner.

## Conclusion

The benefits of providing new employees with a comprehensive orientation are numerous:

- Employees become aware of the health and safety hazards on the job, controls for these hazards and how they can affect their safety and the safety of others.
- The training can assist in the reduction of the risk of potential injuries and accidents.
- Meets regulatory requirements and demonstrates due diligence
- Helps balance the company's need for productivity with the employee's need for safety and security
- Increases efficiency of the new employee
- Demonstrates the company's moral obligation to protect the employee from harm which can contribute to retaining employees and reducing turnover

A thorough, documented, and well-planned safety orientation will be a positive addition to your company's overall safety and health program. It will also assist in the further development of a positive safety culture throughout your organization.

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