

Employee engagement in safety

Employee engagement in workplace safety is critical for maintaining a safe and productive environment. When employees actively engage in safety efforts, they're more likely to follow protocols, identify hazards and contribute to a culture prioritizing well-being. Employee engagement will differ from company to company depending upon factors such as culture, leadership, employees and the current safety program. Regardless of the type of safety program you have, involving employees in it will show the compa

Create a culture where employees remind each other about safety practices and help correct unsafe behaviors. Focus on the point that safety is everyone's responsibility and not one department or person. No single employee should be policing safe work practice, but it should be a responsibility of everyone. Reinforce to staff that reporting unsafe conditions and behaviors is key to prevention and keeping an overall safe workplace. When safety is part of the team's shared responsibility, compliance improves naturally.

Probably one of the most important parts to a safe workplace is leading by example. When leaders consistently demonstrate commitment to safety, it sends a strong message. Regardless of who enters the work area, ensure employees wear required PPE and follow safety guidelines such as staying within marked walking areas. Engaged leadership shows that safety is a priority and not just an obligation. Employees who regularly do not enter the work area and are seen not following safety rules shows to employees that safety is not a priority.

Keep safety visible with bulletin boards, digital displays, posters or company newsletters. Regular reminders reinforce the importance of safety in the workplace. The safety message should be changed periodically (weekly or monthly). Use these communication channels to reinforce safety guidelines, such as PPE usage, Safety Data Sheet information or review of safe work practices.

Regularly request feedback on safety processes and be proactive in implementing suggested changes. When employees see their feedback leads to improvements, they're more likely to stay engaged. Regardless of how small a safety suggestion may seem, always get back to the employee with a response. Ignoring requests can demonstrate a non-caring attitude toward safety.

Encouraging employee engagement into your company's safety program is a great way to demonstrate how important safety is in the workplace. When developing a strategy that is specific to your culture, be creative, think outside the box and include employee suggestions. Once you've come up with a strategy that fits your organization, communicate it with employees. Share the philosophy that safety is the number one priority. Remember, in a workplace where employees feel valued, supported and empowered to contribute to safety, they'll be more likely to stay actively engaged in creating a safe environment.

If you need help identifying potential hazards in your workplace, please contact Andy Sawan, risk services specialist at Sedgwick at andrew.sawan@sedgwick.com or 330.819.4728.