

SAFETY SHOOTER



by Thomas H. Adams

How to Plan Your Safety Training Program

The subject of safety training necessarily starts with the question, "What do we need?" A training-needs assessment must be developed to answer this question. These answers will begin to define the content, frequency, categories of employees to be trained, and documentation required.

Some training is required by law. Federal, state, and/or local laws detail required training for specific operations. A good first step is to determine what is legally required by various government agencies. On the federal level, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) are good examples



of agencies that may require certain types of training. One area to monitor is the subject of hazardous materials. Do you handle or store hazardous materials? Do you have the appropriate Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for these materials? What training is required for employees coming into contact or proximity? What are OSHA 200 logs? Does my company need to maintain these logs? These are samples of regulatory mandates for safety training and documentation.

What about studying your safety record? What kind of accidents or injuries have occurred in and around your firm in recent history? By studying these records you can get some ideas about what type of training is needed from the accidents that occurred. These could be scaffolding accidents, electrical power accidents, slip-and-fall accidents, overhead hazards, or any number of areas where employees are being injured. Better training can help reduce or eliminate the occurrence of the most frequent injuries.

Have you hired anyone lately? Safety training is a primary part of any new employee orientation program. Even for employees who have worked in the industry for some period of time, a safety orientation program tailored for your company

and its policies is critical. While there are many things common to all operations, no two companies are exactly the same.



New equipment, material, and processes require an analysis of safety requirements. Frequently, safety training for new products or equipment will be best furnished by the vendor. Anything introduced into the work of the company must be incorporated with the full knowledge of using the innovation safely.

How about an outside opinion? Some governmental agencies offer an audit service to assist employers with identifying hazards and the appropriate training to deal with those hazards without the threat of enforcement action. Insurance companies will also provide guidance in an effort to reduce claims. A private consultant hired by your firm may be the best option.

Finally, look around at your competitors and trade associations. What kind of training to they do and at what frequency? Contact those organizations and ask if they would be willing to discuss their company safety training programs. Talk to your fellow American Shotcrete Association members. These members are a great resource. You will probably find they will be most willing to explain their programs, which are successful, and which need improvement. You may be able to adopt the more successful elements of another organization's program, eliminating the time and money required to reinvent your own safety training program.



Whatever action plan you decide is best for your firm, just be sure you have a plan, execute that plan, and document it. Four outcomes are assured: a safer work environment, better employee morale, better employee productivity, and lower worker compensation claims.