

Make the Road New York ■ Small Business Workplace Safety & Health Training Outline ■ 1

This training outline is designed to follow the information contained in **A Small Business Guide to Workplace Safety & Health**. The series of activities described below will help the trainer give small business owners hands-on practice identifying and remedying health and safety risks at their businesses. The workshop is designed to be completed in about 1 ½ hours, but can be lengthened or shortened according to need.

I. Introductions [10 minutes]

Ask participants to introduce themselves to the group. Each person should say his or her name, the type of business they own (deli, hair salon, etc.), and choose one word to describe a hazard that they have at their business.

II. Overview & Goals [10 minutes]

Explain to the group that the goal of the workshop is to introduce participants to hands-on practices and techniques that can help them (1) identify hazards at the workplace, (2) develop practices to address those hazards, and (3) develop long-term routines to minimize hazards in the future.

FACT: Estimates suggest that employers lose occupational injuries cost businesses across the U.S. close to \$170 billion every year! For small businesses, these costs can be the difference between surviving or going out of business.

Write the Group Ground Rules on butcher paper or a white board. Ask a volunteer to read them aloud. Ask group to add any additional rules.

III. Case Studies & Group Brainstorm [15 minutes]

Distribute Jose's story to the group. Ask participants to read the story aloud, each participant reading a sentence. Have the group brainstorm answers to the questions at the bottom of the story. As facilitator, ask questions that help participants discuss factors including:

- What conditions at the workplace are hazardous.
- How to involve employees in improving workplace health and safety.
- Measures Jose could take to eliminate some hazards.
- What kind of training Jose should give employees.
- What kind of equipment could help minimize risks.

IV. Small Group Activity [15 minutes]

Divide in to small groups of 3-4 participants each. You can group people by business type (all deli owners together), or mix the groups.

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Distribute the story of Marco and copies of the Checklist from the Guide for groups to use. Ask the groups to read the story aloud and then:

- Draw a simple diagram of Marco's restaurant, based on the story.
- Make notes on the diagram, and/or on separate paper, of all the possible hazards they can imagine at that worksite. Ask the groups to use the Checklist to help them identify all possible hazards.
- Ask them to brainstorm as a group measures Marco could take to solve these problems. Suggest they note low-cost versus high-cost options, short-term versus long-term changes, etc.

Note: you can also use Maria's story in this exercise, either instead of or in addition to Marco's story.

V. Report Backs [15 minutes]

Groups will report back what hazards they identified and solutions to those hazards. It works well to do "rounds" – have the first group identify one hazard and the solution they identified, then move to the next group to do the same. This helps ensure all groups will have an equal opportunity to report back.

Add in any additional hazards or solutions that are missing. Highlight that solutions tend to fall in to categories:

- Eliminating hazards when possible;
- Minimizing hazards when they cannot be eliminated (through training, changes to work practices, etc.); and
- Provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect employees against remaining hazards.

VI. Taking the Lessons Home [10 minutes]

Distribute the complete Small Business Guide to each participant. Direct participants to the sample chart for developing a safety & health plan, noting they can use this as a template in their own business.

Close by asking participants to share one idea they got from the training about managing workplace health and safety risks.

Group Ground Rules

- One Voice: Only one person should speak at a time.
- Participants will treat each other with respect. [One form of this is Step Up/Step Back: participants who have spoken already should be encouraged to “step back” to let others “step up” and share their ideas.]
- Information shared in the group will be kept confidential. [Participants should be encouraged to raise real health and safety concerns at their business and should know that others will keep this information confidential.]
- Cell phones should be shut off or put on vibrate.

Exercise One: Jose's Deli

Jose owns a small deli that includes a lunch counter, as well as basic groceries. He has six employees, and always has at least two people on site with him while he's open. The deli is crowded and things get hectic, especially during the rush time. Deliveries show up, and his guys must run around unloading boxes and stocking shelves, while also attending to customers, cooking egg sandwiches to go, and making sure the coffee stand is stocked. Jose's cousin, Pepe, works as a "manager" – helping cover the cash register and keeping things running. Jose counts on Pepe to be the drill sergeant, and Pepe takes this role seriously. When deliveries come, he's constantly pushing the employees to work faster – egging them on to compete to see how fast they can unpack the goods, promising raises to those who finish first.

One morning, things get especially hectic. The two employees are rushing to unpack a new delivery of bottled juice – one tossing the boxes across the aisle to the other to unload. Jose suddenly hears a giant crash, and looks over to see that the bottom has fallen out of one of the boxes, glass is shattered everywhere, one of his employees is on his hands and knees grasping his back, and a small child has slipped and fallen in the mess. Angry, Pepe rushes over demanding to know what happened. Gasping, his employee says, "Like I told you! We have to schedule deliveries at a different time! We can't handle this during the rush hour." Before Jose can intervene, Pepe shouts, "That's enough! You're not the boss! You're fired!" The frightened child starts sobbing, and her mother grabs her and rushes from the store.

Discussion Questions:

- 1) How is this incident likely to impact Jose's business? What are the costs?
- 2) What could Jose do differently in the future?

Exercise Two: Marco's Restaurant

Marco owns a successful Mexican restaurant. To serve his loyal clientele, Marco goes out of his way to run an efficient operation. Marco is able to make it through most of the day with only three employees on duty. He helps out during the lunchtime rush, but for most of the day, he runs errands around town. Marco schedules his deliveries to arrive after the lunch rush, so his busboy is available to unload the truck and stock the supply rooms while his waitress buses her own tables. During the rush, Marco helps out where needed, whether by taking orders or serving in the front of the house, or by helping his short-order cook in the kitchen.

After the lunch rush dies down one day Marco leaves on an errand and the busboy heads to the back of the restaurant to help unload the stock that has arrived. The cook gets to work on his last order, and plans to clean up after. But as he is cooking, an open flame ignites a trail of cooking oil that runs across the counter, and that the cook hasn't had time to clean up. The fire quickly spreads to a roll of paper towels across the counter. Too big to smother, the cook grabs the fire extinguisher – but it just sputters: the pressure gauge indicator is not within the green band. The fire is spreading, igniting oil covered dish towels, a vat of old cooking grease, and items. The flames spread across the area and now block the cook's exit to the dining area. The cook shouts to the waitress and remaining customers through the pick-up window, and they run out the front door. When the cook tries to flee through the backdoor, he hits another roadblock. A mess of boxes and broken jars are blocking the exit, because an inadequately anchored shelf finally collapsed under its load. Because the smoke alarm didn't go off, the busboy hadn't even known of the fire. The two men work hurriedly to move the heavy boxes blocking the doorway and get out just as the fire reaches them.

Exercise 2 (second option) Maria's Salon

Maria owns a popular hair salon with a large regular clientele. She knows that, given the regular use of sharp scissors, high temperatures, and harsh chemicals, the risk for accidents is high. And she understands the importance of taking safety seriously, and communicates this to her employees. About a year ago, Maria met with her employees to create safety and health rules and posted the written policies for all to see. At the meeting, Maria urged employees to report safety and health violations. She even held an emergency preparedness drill to ensure employees knew how to respond in the event of a safety or health emergency. She installed a new ventilation system, and trained employees on how to inspect the system and test air quality in the salon. She also began using only products labeled "formaldehyde-free."

Lately, though, Maria and her employees began experiencing asthma-like symptoms – but couldn't figure out the cause. One evening, Maria saw a story on the news that discount salon products often falsely claimed to be "formaldehyde-free." The next day, Maria tested the air quality in the salon and discovered unsafe levels of formaldehyde in the air. Confused, she inspected her ventilation system and found that the filter was in desperate need of changing.

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