

## Communicate Your Commitment to a Safety and Health Program

### Step 1.

Build your case for a safety and health program

### Step 2.

Write a safety and health policy

A written safety and health policy can help you show your commitment. A policy can signal that safety and health is a top priority and core value for your whole organization. It can be the foundation for creating and improving your safety and health program over time.

A sound policy should include statements about:

- Why safety and health is important to you and your business.
- Your approach to safety and health in the workplace.
- Protection for workers from retaliation for speaking up about safety or stopping unsafe work.
- Roles and responsibilities for everyone in your program.

#### To Do

- ☐ Write a draft policy that reflects your values, commitment, and approach to safety and health.
- ☐ Get feedback on the draft policy.
- ☐ Sign and date the policy.

Use the questions below, and the sample language provided for each, to help you write your policy. These sample statements are suggestions only; develop statements that meet the needs of your business and workforce. Keep in mind that your policy is not set in stone. You'll be reviewing its impact over time, and updating it to respond to changes in your business and the world it operates in.

### Example questions and language to help you write your policy

#### 1. How would you describe the importance of safety and health in your business?

"The safety and health of our employees is the first consideration in the operation of this business."

"Safety and health in our business must be a part of every operation."

"Our objective is a safety and health program that will reduce the number of injuries and illnesses to an absolute minimum."

"Our business will comply with all safety and health laws that apply to our workplace. To do this, management will constantly be aware of conditions in all work areas that can produce injuries."

#### Your Statement

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### Step 2.

#### Write a safety and health policy

#### 2. What is your approach to preventing injuries and illnesses in the workplace?

"Our safety and health program will include (choose/add all that apply):

- A program of safety and health inspections to find and fix unsafe working conditions or practices, control health hazards, and comply fully with the safety and health standards for every job.
- Training all employees in good safety and health practices specific to our work environment.
- Providing mechanical and physical safeguards where suitable.
- Providing necessary personal protective equipment and instructions for its use and care.
- Investigating, promptly and thoroughly, every incident to find out the root cause and correct the problems and avoid an incident in the future."

#### Your Statement

#### 3. What are the roles of workers and managers in your safety and health program?

"Management is ultimately responsible for safety and health in our workplace. However, a safety and health program is more effective when some responsibilities are shared (choose/add all that apply):

- Top management accepts responsibility for leadership of the safety and health program, for its effectiveness and improvement, and for providing safe conditions.
- Supervisors are responsible for developing the proper attitudes toward safety and health in themselves and in those they supervise. They must ensure that all operations are performed with the highest regard for the safety and health of everyone involved, including themselves.
- Workers are responsible for following all policies, procedures, and the safety and health program and always practicing safety while performing their duties."

"Workers are the experts on the tasks they perform and the tools, equipment, and materials they use. We therefore encourage workers to report safety and health concerns and make suggestions for making the workplace safer. They can do so directly with their supervisors, or anonymously using our suggestion box."

#### Your Statement

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**4. How will you assure workers that there will be no retaliation or adverse consequences from speaking up or stopping work for safety and health concerns?**

"No employee is required to work at a job he or she knows is not safe or healthful."

"We will not tolerate any retaliation, ridicule, or retribution for reporting a safety hazard or stopping work you believe to be unsafe."

**Your Statement**

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**5. Add any additional statements relevant to your business, industry, or workplace below.**

**Your Statement**

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#### Get feedback on your draft policy

After you've answered the questions above, and any others you decide are important, put your policy statements together (see next page). Share the draft policy with your team from step 1 to get feedback. Revise your statement, including ideas that will help the policy speak to everyone. Once you are satisfied, sign and date your policy, and get it out to everyone in your business.

#### Feedback

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#### Case Study: Building Support for a Safety and Health Policy

Markham Apparel, Inc. is a 12-person company that provides cutting and sewing services for sportswear manufacturers. The **owner formed a team of three people**—herself, the production manager, and a long-time warehouse worker who had made many suggestions for safety improvements over the years.

The owner wanted to get the message across to workers that they can—and should—stop production if they felt an operation was unsafe. She proposed the following policy statement:

*"We expect our employees to stop a job if they see an unsafe operation or behavior. We value the courage of anyone who does this. If there is a stop-work action, we will follow a written procedure for notifying management, investigating and correcting the hazard, and following up on lessons learned."*

The production manager was concerned that such a policy could hurt the company's ability to fulfill its contracts on time and lead to lost clients. **The team discussed this concern at length.** They all agreed with the company's new focus on finding hazards before they became a problem, to avoid the disruptions and costs that go along with injuries. Therefore, in practice, stopping production would not happen often, but they also agreed that, if it became necessary, it was the right thing to do. **The team went on to set up the procedure to follow in the event of a stop-work action.**

## Step 2.

### Write a safety and health policy

Use this space to draft and then revise your statement.

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Date