

Worksheet #				
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Define Program Goals

Take these steps to define your program goals:

1. Set specific, realistic, measurable goals for your safety and health program (Worksheet 2a).
2. Communicate your commitment to reaching your program goals (Worksheet 2b).

To-Do

- Turn statements in your policy into goals.
- Make goals “SMART” where possible.
- Use both lagging and leading indicators.
- Set short- and long-term goals.

Set specific, realistic, measurable goals for your safety and health program

Management leads by setting specific, realistic, measurable goals to improve safety and health in the workplace. This makes sure expectations are clear for managers, workers, and the program overall. It also lets you gauge progress and see areas where changes are needed.

To begin, review your safety and health policy

What statements in your policy could be turned into a goal? List them in the table on page 4. Then brainstorm goals that correspond to them, focusing on specific actions that will improve workplace safety and health. For example, if your policy says, “Our safety and health program will include inspections to find and fix unsafe working conditions” you might set a goal to inspect every work area at least every three months. See the table at the end of this worksheet for more examples.

Wherever possible, make your goals “SMART”

- **Specific.** There is a clearly defined outcome.
- **Measurable.** There are metrics for evaluating progress toward the goal.
- **Actionable.** The goal is concrete and action-oriented.
- **Realistic.** The goal is practical in its scope, its time frame, how it applies to the workplace, and the changes it aims to bring about.
- **Time-oriented.** You’ve set a specific time frame for reaching the goal.

Examples

Not a SMART goal: “Write a safety manual.”

A SMARTer goal: “Develop an electrical safety manual and distribute it to all workers by December 30, 2022.”

In setting goals, use both lagging and leading indicators

Lagging indicators measure events in the past, such as the number or rate of injuries, illnesses, and deaths. They can alert you to a hazard or a failure in your safety and health program, but only after the fact.

Leading indicators measure events leading up to injuries, illnesses, and other incidents. They can tell you if your program is on the right track. They can also reveal problems you can address before they lead to an incident.

Pro Tip

A good program uses leading indicators to drive change and lagging indicators to measure program effectiveness.

For more information, visit OSHA’s “Using Leading Indicators to Improve Safety and Health Outcomes” page at <https://www.osha.gov/leading-indicators>.

Examples of lagging indicators	Examples of leading indicators
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of worker days lost due to injuries• Number of chemical releases• Annual workers’ compensation losses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of hazards found and corrected• Number of chemical inspections• Time it takes for management to respond to a safety hazard report• Percentage of workers finishing safety training• Number of close calls/near misses reported

Consider setting both short-term and long-term goals

You can’t achieve all your goals at once. Choosing some to reach right away will give you and your team a sense of accomplishment and motivation to continue working on longer-term goals.

- **Short-term goals** take weeks or months to achieve. Example: “Within one week, send a reminder message to all workers about how to report workplace hazards.”
- **Long-term goals** take longer—six months to a year or more. Example: “Over the next year, double the number of hazards that workers report.”

Also keep in mind that you'll be able to refine and add to your goals as you better understand the workplace. As you develop your safety and health program, you'll get input for your goals through incident investigations, injury/illness logs, worker concerns, inspections, and other activities.

In the following table, begin working on specific short- and long-term goals. Make sure you include both leading and lagging indicators (as applicable).

If your business has multiple work areas (a production area, an office, a warehouse, a loading dock), you may need to set different goals for them. The first row of the table shows an example—goals for the loading dock vs. the production area vs. the office.

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Statement in your safety and health policy	SMART goal	Leading/lagging indicator?	Short-term or long-term goal?
“We will strive to reduce the number injuries and illnesses to an absolute minimum.”	Within the next two months, set up a system for workers to report hazards.	n/a	Short-term
	Over the next three months, conduct a hazard analysis and training to eliminate forklift-related injuries at the loading dock.	Lagging indicator	Long-term
	Within one month, get the OSHA On-Site Consultation Program’s help with a hearing protection program for the production area.	n/a	Short-term
	Within three months, begin an ergonomics program to address carpal tunnel syndrome and back strain among office staff.	n/a	Short-term
	Double the number of reported hazards in one year.	Leading indicator	Long-term
	Double the time spent identifying hazards (for example, the time devoted to workplace inspections) in one year.	Leading indicator	Long-term
“We will provide mechanical and physical safeguards wherever they are needed.”	Within one month, check safety information in manuals for all your mechanical equipment to learn if any safeguards are missing.	n/a	Short-term
“We will train all workers in safe work practices and procedures.”	Ensure that all workers complete required training annually.	Leading indicator	Long-term
“We will investigate all safety-related incidents to determine the cause and prevent similar incidents in the future.”	When an injury occurs, ensure that the worker’s supervisor begins an investigation within 24 hours.	Leading indicator	Short-term

Statement in your safety and health policy	SMART goal	Leading/lagging indicator?	Short-term or long-term goal?

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