

JUNE 2019

# Risk Management Bulletin

## Safety Refreshers

Are you refreshing your employees on a regular basis? When a new hire comes on board they are inundated with massive amounts of new information about the company, from personnel policies to safety rules.

Many employers spend a good bit of time providing safety training for new staff. This includes the mandatory OSHA required topics. The problem is retention of these vital safety instructions is limited. After all, the brain can only handle so much information in such a short period of time.

### OSHA Mandates

This is why refresher training for certain exposures is mandated by OSHA on an annual basis and why employers should look at all their key safety programs on at least an annual basis to ensure individuals understand the hazards and controls in the workplace.

It is also important and actually part of the OSHA standard to provide “refresher” training when a worker exhibits unsafe behaviors related to a specific standard. For example, an employee is not wearing the required personal protective equipment (PPE) correctly should be re-educated. Not following proper lifting techniques... re-educate. Jumping off a piece of equipment... re-educate.

Monthly or weekly tool box safety meetings are a great way to document refresher training, but the best education in my experience is the hands on “behavior coaching” in the field by the direct supervisor. Holding supervisors accountable for observing behavior and coaching employees to improve performance is a great risk management tool. The problem is many employers have not provided any instruction for their supervisory staff in effective coaching, setting them up for failure. An effective safety program will encourage your supervisors to observe behaviors in the field as a safety refresher on a daily basis.

Training is a good thing, but it is important to remember that in the safety hierarchy, employee training is actually at the bottom of the list. We should always look for ways to eliminate hazards, substitute with less hazardous processes, or implement engineering controls first.



Training in many senses is the last line of defense, much like personal protective equipment, so it is important to do what we can to reduce the injury risk before determining who or what to train.

If you are looking for resources to assist with your safety program or assistance with other loss control or risk management issue, please feel free to call or drop me a note.

For more information about Safety Refreshers and other solutions from Marsh Wortham, contact your local representative or:

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