Tool Box Talk

SAFETY CULTURE

What is Safety Culture?

Safety culture is a people based safety process. The safety culture of an organization is the product of individual and group values, attitudes perceptions, competencies and patterns of behaviour that determine the commitment to, and the style and proficiency of an organizations health and safety management.

Safety Culture Assessment

There are a few key ingredients to creating a successful safety culture within an organization. Commitments on a management level, employee level and personal level are all key elements of an effective safety culture.

Management Support for Safety - Managers need to be seen to demonstrate their commitment through their actions and lead by example and when it comes to health and safety. Without an active commitment from management to achieve a safety culture, there will usually be lower levels of motivation or concern for health and safety throughout the organization. Management commitment can be indicated by the resources (time, people, money) and support allocated to health and safety management. If management is not sincerely committed to safety, employees will generally assume they are expected to put business interests first, and safety programs will be undermined.

Employee Support for Safety - Active employee participation and good communication between employees at all levels is key to developing a safety culture. In a positive safety culture, questions about health and safety should be part of everyday work conversations. This can include observations, feedback, open communication and accountability. It is important to build ownership and use the expertise and unique knowledge each employee has. In companies with a strong safety culture, you will find that both management and employees feel that their safety program and achievements are the result of a joint effort.

Personal Responsibility for Safety - It is vital that every individual, regardless of their position or job, has a personal commitment and responsibility for the safety of themselves and others. Safety is a value that needs to be held by everyone. Ask yourself: What is my attitude towards safety? What is my company's safety culture? What prevents employees, supervisors, managers and company owners from achieving total safety in the workplace? How can I improve our safety culture today?

Safety culture is not enforceable, but an effective health and safety management program is. Improving workplace safety procedures, programs and systems can positively impact a company's safety performance and safety culture. It is important to ensure safety manuals, on site documentation are always readily available to employees. Audits, inspections, policies, procedures, training, safety committees and incident reporting can be used to improve these tools and enhance your safety culture.

Related Legislative Requirements:

Part II Section 13(1) of *The Occupational Health and Safety Act, 1993* **- Duty to Provide Occupational Health and Safety Programs:**

"An employer at a prescribed place of employment shall establish and maintain an occupational health and safety program or a prescribed part of an occupational health and safety program in accordance with the regulations"