

PRESENTER'S GUIDE

"SAFETY AUDITS"

Part of the General Safety Series

OUTLINE OF MAJOR PROGRAM POINTS

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The following outline summarizes the major points of information presented in the program. The outline can be used to review the program before conducting a classroom session, as well as in preparing to lead a class discussion about the program.

- **Workplace safety is too important to try and figure it out on the fly, or to leave it to chance.**
- **Of course, one "systematic" approach to improving safety is to "learn from your mistakes".**
 - When an accident happens, you can look at why it happened, and introduce policies, procedures and equipment to ensure that another one doesn't happen the same way again.
- **But when you're trying to strengthen your organization's safety culture, you don't want to wait for trouble to occur before making improvements.**
 - That's why safety-conscious companies are taking a more proactive approach, by conducting "safety audits".
- **Safety audits analyze hazards, identify strengths and weaknesses in the existing safety program, and recommend ways to improve it in the future.**
 - Everyone in your facility can contribute to making a safety audit work.
- **Your facility can't find solutions to problems it doesn't know about.**
 - That's why a "workplace analysis" is the first step in any safety audit.
 - It's basically a comprehensive search for hazards in the workplace.

- **A workplace analysis typically starts with a physical inspection of the work environment.**
 - It looks for general hazards in the facility, like cluttered, damaged or uneven flooring, and insufficient lighting.
 - It also examines tools and equipment to ensure that they are right for the jobs that are being performed, and that they are in good condition.

- **The analysis can even include an assessment of the ergonomics and organization of individual workstations.**

- **In addition to a physical inspection, a workplace analysis can also examine the policies and procedures that are used at your facility.**
 - They're critical for on-the-job safety, too.

- **In most cases, your company's Safety Director, facility manager or department supervisor will be responsible for conducting the analysis.**
 - You can help them in several important ways. After all, you do your job every day.

- **Your knowledge and opinions are important to your company's safety program.**
 - They may request that you conduct an inspection of your own work area, tools and equipment.
 - You could be asked to think about how you do your job, and make any recommendations about how it could be done more safely.

- **It's important that you immediately report any problems that you notice to your supervisor, facility manager or the company's Safety Director.**
 - That's why they asked for your help in the first place!

- **Another area a workplace analysis will focus on is your facility's "systems of controls".**
 - These are physical or procedural controls that your facility uses to minimize the hazards that are associated with the work you do.

- **They are called "systems" of controls because they work together to protect you. None of them are meant to stand alone.**
 - They typically include administrative controls, engineering controls and personal protective equipment.

- **"Administrative controls" are the rules and procedures that are set up to make your facility as safe a place to work as possible.**
 - An example would be to put a "no smoking" policy in place in areas that contain flammable materials, to help prevent a fire or explosion from occurring.
 - Minimizing exposures to hazardous materials by using shorter work shifts or rotating work schedules is another example of the use of administrative controls.

- **"Engineering controls" are physical control mechanisms that are in place in your facility or on your equipment that help protect you from hazards.**
 - For instance, if your work involves hazardous fumes, exhaust vents may have been installed to remove these contaminants from your work area.
 - A safety guard to protect you from a machine's dangerous moving parts, such as gears or sharp blades, is another type of engineering control.

- **It's important that you utilize all of the engineering controls that your facility has in place.**
 - They are there to help keep you from being injured, and should never be disabled or removed.

- **Personal protective equipment (PPE) is the third type of control that's used in a facility to prevent injuries.**
 - Remember that even though we put on PPE before we work, it is actually the last line of defense against injury.
 - It's used to protect you from problems that might occur even though administrative and engineering controls are in place, not instead of them.

- **As part of a workplace analysis your supervisor will want to make sure that you're using the correct PPE for the work you do, and using it properly.**
 - You should also examine your PPE yourself, to check to see that it is in good condition.
 - Gloves that have worn thin or cracked safety glasses will not protect you, and can give you a false sense of security.
- **While you may not have had a part in setting up the controls in your facility, it is important that everyone in your facility use them.**
 - As part of a safety audit you may be asked to monitor how the controls are working in your area.
 - If you find any potential problems, be sure to report them.
- **You may be asked to assist with an inspection of your own work area, as well as the equipment that you use.**
 - This is a part of the safety audit where your help is especially important.
- **Check to see that all pathways are free from clutter.**
 - Blocked aisles can create an immediate tripping hazard.
 - They can also prevent people from getting to safety showers, eyewash stations, fire extinguishers and exits, and that could be devastating in an emergency!
- **Make sure to use extension cords properly.**
 - They aren't meant to be permanent fixtures, just "temporary outlets".
 - Put them away as soon as you're finished with them.
 - If you need to string a cord across a walkway, be sure you tape it down so nobody trips.
 - And remember, electricity and water don't mix, so don't run a cord through a puddle.

- **There's more to doing a safety audit than inspecting your workplace and equipment.**
 - You also need to take a good, long look at yourself.
 - You should make a "personal audit" to examine how safe you are as a worker and how aware you are of your work area.

- **Start by reviewing your facility's work rules and standard operating procedures (SOP's).**
 - They help you do your job more efficiently.
 - They also help to prevent misunderstandings and mistakes that can lead to accidents and injuries.
 - Make sure you know the SOP's inside and out.

- **Standard operating procedures are there for a reason.**
 - Don't ignore them because you think they aren't important.
 - Following them is essential.
 - They apply to everyone.

- **Never skip a procedure just because you're in a hurry.**
 - Remember, safety is always the top priority.

- **As you continue your "personal audit", evaluate your knowledge of your worksite.**
 - Are you able to locate all exits and fire escapes?
 - Make sure you can find them in the dark, because one day you may have to.

- **You need to know where safety showers and eye-wash stations are located as well.**
 - You'll want to find them in a hurry if you or a coworker are splashed with a hazardous chemical.

- **Find out where the nearest first-aid kit is located.**
 - If an emergency occurs, you won't want to waste time looking for it.

- **You need to know where fire extinguishers are kept too.**
 - Review your knowledge of the various types of extinguishers.
 - Using the wrong type could actually spread a fire instead of putting it out.
 - Only use fire extinguishers if you have been trained and authorized to do so.

- **The safety training that your facility conducts can help make you aware of potential hazards, as well as how to prevent accidents.**
 - During your self-assessment, consider how much you've learned about handling safety problems.

- **Topics your facility provides training on may include:**
 - General safety issues such as back safety, hearing conservation and personal protective equipment.
 - Regulatory matters such as "Hazard Communication" and "Lock-Out/Tag-Out".

- **It's important that you take your company's safety training program seriously, so that you are well prepared for any problems you may encounter.**

- **Sometimes, no matter how well-trained we are, or what steps we take to protect ourselves, and no matter how careful we are, accidents still happen.**
 - Making sure everyone at your facility is prepared for accidents and other emergencies is an important part of conducting a safety audit.
 - Although this may normally be the responsibility of others at your company, there are things that you can do to help.

- **Check to see that emergency numbers are posted by all of the telephones in your work area.**
 - This includes EMT, fire and police departments.
 - In some places you can reach any of these services by simply dialing 9-1-1.

- **Internal emergency numbers, such as the Safety Department, Security and your company's fire and rescue team should also be posted.**
- **It's also important to make sure that all accidents or injuries are reported, even minor ones... so that they can be "investigated" to determine what caused them.**
- **You should report any "near misses" as well.**
 - A "near miss" is an incident which under slightly different circumstances could have resulted in an injury, or damage to equipment or materials.
 - After all, your company can't fix a problem they don't know about.
- **A safety audit should also verify that an "accident investigation" process is in place at your facility.**
 - An accident investigation is very similar to a safety audit.
 - Although it is performed after an accident has occurred, the purpose is still the same... to prevent future accidents.

*** * * SUMMARY * * ***

- **A successful safety audit requires a "team effort"... and you are an important part of the team.**
- **A safety audit starts with a "workplace analysis", which includes:**
 - A physical inspection of your work environment.
 - An examination of your facility's policies and procedures.
- **An audit will also look at your facility's "systems of controls".**
 - This verifies that everyone at the site is following administrative controls, using engineering controls and wearing appropriate personal protective equipment.

- **To monitor how safe you are keeping yourself, conduct a "personal" safety audit regularly.**
- **Know where all fire exits, first aid kits, safety showers and other emergency equipment is located.**
- **Always report any safety problems to your supervisor, manager or safety director.**
- **Workplace safety is important for everyone at your facility.**
 - Taking an active part in a safety audit can be your way of helping to insure that you and your coworkers go home safe at the end of every day!