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Employee Motivation

» Controlling Your Workers' Compensation Costs Through A Better Work Environment

Why is it that after you've trained your employees through Job Hazard Analysis some are still having accidents or committing unsafe acts?

The answer is: some employees aren't motivated to follow your established work procedures and policies.

What Is Motivation?

Motivating employees is the process of supplying the incentives that will encourage, inspire and influence individuals to act in a desired behavior to achieve a desired goal. Motivation is not the process of manipulating people to your advantage and against their own interest and free will.

It's difficult to force employees to work safely, but you can provide a work environment in which employees decide to work safely and conform to procedures and policies.

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Is Motivation Really the Problem?

Have you examined your employee selection and placement procedures? Has your current program been successful in matching skills, qualifications and knowledge to the job? Have job standards been established?

Do you have an employee orientation program that includes safety rules? Is the safety policy explained and reinforced? Inexperienced workers have a much higher accident rate than experienced employees. Do you concentrate on safe behavior? Have you questioned an employee who has recently completed the orientation to determine its effectiveness? How do you follow up?

Have Job Hazard Analyses been completed to identify safety hazards and to assist you in your safety training efforts?

Have machine guards that are easily removed by employees been replaced with guards that are not removable except with special tools? Is the correct materials handling equipment available? Are tools and equipment well maintained and in good condition? Is the workplace designed to meet the needs of people rather than people meeting the needs of the workplace?

Some Theories on Motivation

There are many theories on motivating employees. One theorist believes the structure of organizations creates conflicts with the needs of the employees, who become passive and develop an attitude that everything the company does is wrong.

Accidents can occur due to poor attitudes, inattention or the disregard of company rules.

One solution involves group decision making, soliciting worker perceptions of problems and solutions, and worker input on implementing decisions.

Another approach focuses on "hygiene factors" that reduce dissatisfaction with the work environment, but then simply generate neutral feelings among workers after they reach a level that the workers feel is appropriate. According to this theory, the hygiene factors are: company rules and policies, quality of supervision, interpersonal relationships, salary, benefits, working conditions and job security. This is the basic work environment you create.

On the other hand, the motivational factors are: achievement, recognition, growth and advancement possibilities, quality of work and responsibility. These factors are believed to motivate individuals toward a high level of fulfillment on the job.

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Reducing Your Risk of Loss



Some Theories on Motivation (cont.)

If unsafe working conditions are present, there will be strong dissatisfaction among employees concerning safety. If quality supervision is lacking, there will also be strong dissatisfaction regarding productivity and safety rules.

Building achievement, responsibility, employee input, recognition and quality of work into your safety program and management system will motivate your work force toward safety.

Benefits

Most motivational techniques offer common sense solutions. They establish a workplace built on a sense of achievement, recognition, responsibility, group decision making and job enrichment. By building motivation into the work environment your employees will respond favorably and your safety record will likely improve.

Reduce Your Risk for a Loss

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