

Developing Effective Safety Rules and Regulations

Safety rules are necessary for any organization. Most companies have general or specific safety rules, but many are canned; that is, are taken verbatim from another source and do not reflect the hazards of the operations or management's safety policy.

The writing of rules should be assigned to several people working together. The collective experience and judgment of several people results in a more balanced, accurate and complete set of rules. The responsibility for their enforcement lies with management. This should be clearly evident in management's safety policy statement. The following suggestions should be considered when formulating the rules.

- A. Prior to starting the actual writing, applicable portions of federal, state and other regulations should be studied and incorporated.
- B. Experience employees and supervisors should be solicited for their suggestions.
- C. Only rules that are logical and enforceable should be solicited for their suggestions
- D. Rules should be easy to understand. Short sentences, simple words and commonly known expressions will achieve understanding.
- E. Positive statements rather than negative whenever possible. They should state what is to be done, rather than what is prohibited.

Once written, the rules should be reviewed by a few employees to make sure that they are clear.

Safety rules are not effective unless they are enforced. Since supervisors are assigned that responsibility, it is important that they be thoroughly familiar with all the rules. Their good example will make enforcement easier. Too often, violations of the rules are overlooked until an accident happens. If the employees are corrected for each infraction of a safety rule or safe practice as soon as it is observed, there will be few occasions which will require discipline.

All employees should receive their own copy of the rules and additional copies should be posted on bulletin boards as a constant reminder. A good practice is to have employees sign a receipt indicating they have had the rules explained to them, and that they understand and agree to obey them. The signed statement should be placed in the personal file. Formulating and putting into writing your own rules has several advantages:

1. The interest and philosophy of management will be evident
2. The rules can be structured to the hazards of the operations
3. Written rules will allow for more consistency than oral ones