

How to Maintain a Safety Program

A new safety/loss control program often produces a flurry of activities because multiple departments and employees are involved in its successful implementation. Management should address: how to maintain interest in the program. Without continued motivation and promotion, employees will begin to stop best safety practices. The danger is that their motivation and commitment will drop below pre-program levels over time.

To maintain interest, management has to be involved in the loss control activities so that employees recognize management's commitment and feel a direct benefit from the program. Interest will be aroused by activities that appeal to them personally.

Everyone is not motivated by the same incentives, so activities that encompass several motivating factors will improve overall participation.

The key motivating factors are:

- Self-Preservation:** Fear of personal injury
- Personal or Material Gains:** Desire for reward
- Loyalty:** Desire to cooperate
- Responsibility:** Recognition of obligations
- Pride:** Self-satisfaction and desire for praise
- Conformity:** Fear of being different
- Rivalry:** Desire to compete
- Leadership:** Desire to be outstanding
- Logic:** Special ability to reason
- Humanity:** Desire to help others

Programs should be planned using a systematic approach aimed at the factors that are most influential to the affected employees. A systematic process will be more effective than an unplanned approach.

Safety programs can have many types of promotions to create and maintain interest:

- a. **Posters** – Place them in high-traffic areas. The poster's topics should promote a theme or call attention to a problem. Change them on a regular schedule, based upon current needs.
- b. **Handouts** – They can be used in conjunction with posters to provide reinforcement. Usually they are included in payroll envelopes, but can be mailed to the employee's house, or are distributed to workstations.
- c. **In-house Newsletters** – A separate section can be devoted to inform employees of current and future loss control activities. They can include messages by top management, achievement toward goals and ideas that worked.
- d. **Suggestions** – Employees should be encouraged to submit written ideas and suggestions. Providing a location where they can deposit these ideas, gives them the feeling of having a direct line to management.
- e. **Group Safety Meetings** – Generally, these meetings are most effective when they involve top management, and are planned to promote or train. The meetings should only last short durations (up to a ½ hour).

- f. **Individual Safety Contacts** – They are performed by the employee’s supervisor on a weekly to monthly basis, with one topic as the foundation for discussion. These contacts should follow a planned loss-prevention schedule.
- g. **Safety Contests & Campaigns** – These can be designed to reward individuals or groups. The best results are achieved when everyone is involved and many types of activities overlap to promote the campaign or contest.

Programs should include management and all employees to help create the spirit of cooperation. Effective communication is a motivational tool. When management knows and participates in these programs, it displays to all the employees that safety is a company effort.

Employees must be motivated to reach the loss control goals established by top management. Programs designed to reach those goals must be systematic and effective. The more employees are motivated to participate in the loss control program, the more successful it will become.