

GUIDELINES FOR SAFETY COACHING (903 – APPENDIX A)

OBJECTIVE

To provide a framework for supervisors and managers to help them coach employees effectively. Implementing these strategies will help to correct unsafe behaviors and promote a safe working environment.

PURPOSE

Coaching is vital tool for the supervisor/manager to influence safety culture within the organization and to reinforce expectations to prevent employees from being in violation of personnel policies and, more importantly, to keep everyone safe. The purpose of safety coaching is to correct unsafe behaviors due to lack of employee training and/or failure to understand safety policy or procedure.

Coaching is intended to reinforce expectations and is not considered discipline. Coaching should be a regular part of the supervisor/employee day-to-day interaction. (Keep in mind, though, that some cases, such as those involving intentional or repeated safety violations, will require a disciplinary hearing. In those cases, unsafe behavior should still be stopped as soon as the supervisor becomes aware in order to keep the workplace as safe as possible.)

EFFECTIVE COACHING

Supervisors and managers should:

- Immediately correct any unsafe condition as they become aware, then provide coaching as soon as feasible.
- Ensure proper training is complete, including refresher training. Employees need to know the safety practices and correct work procedures, as well as how to use a job hazard analysis.
- Remember that not all employees have the same knowledge and skill, so specific guidance and coaching should be tailored to individual employee needs.
- Recognize that anyone who is not working safely in a work group can create risk for others, and also remind employees that it is important for everyone to look out for the safety of others.

EFFECTIVELY COMMUNICATING WITH EMPLOYEES

- It is necessary to take action when you notice an employee working in an unsafe manner or in an unsafe condition. Effective communication plays a crucial role in ensuring employees understand the issues and how to correct them.
 - Supervisors and managers should always coach employees in a professional and objective manner.
 - In addition to pointing out the problem, coach employees on how to improve their safety behaviors, so they fully understand safe work expectations.
 - If the employee is working unsafely because the rules are difficult to follow for some reason, this is an opportunity for problem-solving to improve the process itself.
 - Although coaching is not discipline, it still may be necessary to advise the employee that continued violations may lead to disciplinary action, up to and including termination. If coaching is successful, it is encouraged to give the employee positive feedback and confirm that they have improved.
- To successfully coach employees, tailor the coaching session to the uniqueness of the situation and the individual, explaining how an injury could impact them and the people around them.