

Manager/Supervisor Risk Management

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A twice weekly e-mail training for YCPARMIA members

TOPIC: SAFETY – TYING IT ALL TOGETHER

We have spent the last six months going over safety issues while acknowledging that a great many do not apply to particular member's situations. There is, however, one common thread for all of YCPARMIA's entities: the State requires that all employers provide a safe and healthy work environment. The various Cal/OSHA programs that we have summarized are the areas that the State has chosen to regulate because of the potential exposure that they represent for employee injury. They give the employer a framework to address certain situations that have been recognized as uniquely hazardous.

Ignoring all of those special requirements, the effective safety program goes back to the practices required in the standard IIPP:

- Someone is identified as responsible for safety;
- There is evidence of management commitment;
- There is a system of communication that allows employee input to the person in charge;
- There is an internal system to monitor the worker's safety practices;
- There is an internal system to identify and respond to safety hazards;
- There is an internal system for investigating accidents and near misses; and
- Records are kept.

We can simplify this further:

- Someone with entity-wide management authority,
- Getting safety input from a variety of sources and levels,
- Is able to document the effective safety efforts of the entity while holding all accountable.

Having all of the right programs and practices in place does not necessarily create a safer work environment. To be effective the entity needs to establish a "safety culture" with buy-in and commitment from all levels of the organization. Safety is not a special project or program; it has to be an integral never-ending part of every work process – from building a road to typing a report. Workers' have to take responsibility for their own safe work practices; managers and supervisors have to hold the workers accountable – and often protect them from themselves. All have to cooperate to address hazards, and develop safer practices. It is relatively simple because it falls under common sense. It just requires an ongoing commitment.

Next Topic: Safety – Roadblocks and Detours