

SAFETY INCENTIVE PROGRAMS

Suggested Guidelines

Once you have a written safety program firmly in place that includes policies, procedures and a safety committee that meets regularly, you may want to consider a safety incentive program. The primary reasons for an incentive program is improving morale, promoting safety awareness, and improving employee receptivity of an established Safety Program.

The first thing you should do when developing an incentive program is establish realistic goals for your program. The objective of an incentive program should be to focus attention on program elements where losses are being experienced. This may be achieved by implementing safe work practices, eliminating workplace hazards, or reducing absenteeism. A survey of companies using incentive programs showed the following:

1. 77% believed that incentive programs were effective.
2. 55% experienced a reduction in workers' compensation costs.
3. 73% said absenteeism had decreased.
4. 96% said safety awareness was increased.
5. 84% saw a reduction in accidents.
6. 70% said the programs were cost effective.

This data may go a long way toward helping management decide whether or not an incentive program is worth the cost. Of those that said they did not use incentive programs, most said the reason was they felt the cost prohibitive and/or a lack of support by upper management and at the same time showed an increase in workers' compensation costs.

The next step in establishing an incentive program is deciding the type of program and the rewards to be given. The following are some example programs:

1. **Safety Bingo:** A bingo card is issued to each employee. Each morning a number is called and the master list is marked. Each day that a reportable accident occurs there will not be a number drawn the following day. Any employee who has a reportable accident will surrender their card and sit out the current game. The jackpot starts at \$25 (or any amount) and \$1 is added each day there is a number called. To win each space on the card must be covered.
2. **Safety Drawings (Team):** Teams can be established by random employees or departments can be grouped together. Each team should have at least 10 employees. If

any member of the team has an accident during a specified time period (monthly, quarterly, etc.), the whole team is disqualified from that drawing. At the end of the specified period all teams remaining would be eligible for the drawing. This could be a certain amount of money or other prizes.

3. **Safety Drawings (Individual):** Same as team just on an individual basis. Only one person would win per specified period.

Keep in mind that the rewards given should have meaning to employees. Awards need not always be monetary, sometimes emblems, plaques can become status symbols if awarded properly.

Awards for any of these programs could be the following:

1. Cash.
2. Gift Certificates.
3. Products (Shirts, Hats, Mugs, Plaques, Etc.).
4. Events (Parties, Cookouts, Etc.).
5. Time Off.

When developing a safety incentive program certain critical elements must be considered:

1. The program needs to be interesting, entertaining and rewarding in order to keep the employees involved over a long period of time.
2. The program needs to be visually dynamic and have constant reminders, such as posters showing goals and progress towards those goals.
3. The program will need to be administered easily.
4. There needs to be consistent enforcement of rules and accountability on part of the employees.
5. The program needs to encourage initiative for communication and feedback from the employees.
6. The program needs to encourage teamwork between management and the employees. It's important for the employees to see that the management cares about safety.
7. The program needs to generate healthy peer pressure. This can help reduce careless accidents significantly.
8. Last, the program needs to be flexible and expandable. This will allow management to make whatever changes may be necessary to the program.

INCENTIVE PROGRAMS CHECKLIST

I. Need

- * Do you have written safety program in place?
- * Do you have a safety committee?

II. Determine Goals of your Incentive Program

- * Decrease Incidents
- * Improve Employee Safety Awareness

III. Determine Type of Incentive Program

- * Safety Drawings
- * Safety Bingo
- * Basic Departments
- * Basic Everyone

IV. Determine Type of Rewards

- * Time Off
- * Products
- * Gift Certificates
- * Events
- * Cash

V. Considerations about Incentive Program

- * Needs to be interesting / entertaining / rewarding
- * Needs to be visually dynamic / daily
- * Administrative ease
- * Enforcement / Accountability
- * Needs to encourage initiative
- * Needs to encourage teamwork
- * Needs to generate healthy peer pressure
- * Needs to be flexible and expandable