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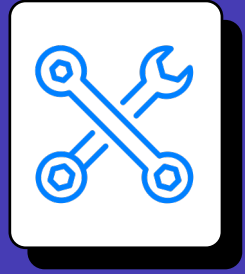
HOW TO IMPLEMENT A HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TOOLKIT

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THE ELEMENTS OF A HEALTH AND SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TOOLKIT

To provide your employees with a safe working environment, it's essential to implement a safety management system.

A safety management system is a compilation of organised, company-wide processes that give organisations the ability to carry out daily business functions alongside effective risk-based decision-making. Often, safety management systems provide organisations with products or services that help them maintain safe operations at the highest level.

To ensure a smooth implementation process, it's vital that a well-constructed and detailed plan is laid out. This plan must also clearly indicate why implementing a safety management system is so imperative, so as to get the green light from senior management or stakeholders for it to be brought in.

What is the Purpose of a Safety Management System?

Having a safety management system in place makes getting a clear overview of the health and safety across an organisation achievable. The ultimate goal of implementing a safety management system is to identify a systematic approach to managing health and safety risks within the workplace.

While health and safety is integral to all organisations, some industries have a naturally more dangerous working environment than others, like manufacturing and construction. It's these industries where the implementation of a health and safety system is integral to operations.

Having a safety management system in place is also key to ensuring regulatory compliance to the EHS authorities where your organisation is based, whether it be OSHA, HSE or Safe Work Australia. Given the sheer importance of a safety management system, taking advantage of a software that helps organisations simplify and keep track of the implementation process can be very beneficial indeed.

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CAPABILITIES OF A SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Employee Engagement

Enforcing a safe working environment has to be the number one priority of a safety management system. It's essential that employees engage in the organisation's attempt to create a strong safety culture.

There are many ways to boost employee engagement when it comes to health and safety. One way would be for companies (in line with the relevant OSHA, HSE or Safe Work Australia guidelines) to create an Employee Safety Committee. This would provide a forum for members of the management team and employees to come together and resolve any issues around health and safety.

Providing the right resources is one more effective way to help employees engage with health and safety. Whether it's training manuals or equipment, providing staff with effective tools will encourage them to be more safety conscious.

Employee Training

In any safety management system, there is a wide range of training that must be provided to employees in order to comply with regulations. This training should focus on areas relevant to your particular organisation or sector. Typical areas of employee training would include electrical safety, removal of PPE and safety symbols, to name a few.

Providing training ensures that staff members understand exactly what is expected of them and what actions to put in place to ensure compliance. Putting time into sharing clear guidelines, providing courses and carrying daily team briefings ensures your team has all the information required at their disposal to stay safe.

Compliance with Regulations

A quintessential part of any safety management system is **compliance.** Your safety management system should always align with the relevant regulatory body, such as OSHA, HSE or Safe Work Australia.

Complying with regulations is an ongoing process, as guidelines are regularly revised in order to ensure the most effective safety practices are being recommended. For your safety management system to be successful, it is vital that your EHS department consistently remains up to date with the most recent advice.

Safety Audit

Safety audits are also a non-negotiable stage of the safety management system. This step involves taking proactive measures to identify any potentially dangerous or unsafe working conditions, such as leaks, uneven surfaces or spills. Safety audits require regular **safety inspections** to ensure all possible hazards are identified quickly and actions are taken to either control or eliminate all risks and hazards.

Incident Reporting

Incident reporting is invaluable to the overall success of a safety management system.

Safe working environments rely on precise tracking of all incidents, from initial reporting to alerting and responding. Through this initial reporting, the safety management system can prioritise safety process improvements and reduce the likelihood or reoccurrence through appropriate action management.

Relevant guidelines from bodies such as OSHA, HSE and Safe Work Australia address the requirements around maintaining records of workplace injuries and HSE departments should be aware of these in order to remain compliant with workplace incident protocols.

Analysis

To maximize the benefit of incident reporting, gathered data should be analysed, to provide a clearer understanding of incident rates and patterns within your organization.

While it's fairly straightforward to identify and eradicate areas that are causing recurring incidents, an effective safety management system allows for proactive analysis that can identify potential hazards. Analysing data for trends will allow your organization to anticipate future hazards.

Communication

Within each element of a successful safety management system, there must be clear and effective communication of the safety hazards, guidelines and warnings – as well as regular updates on the progress status of each area.

Regular communication helps ensure that vital information isn't ignored or misunderstood. Clear communication enhances EHS departments chances of avoiding accidents.

You can also encourage employees to vocalise important health and safety concerns and report on near-misses by providing clear health and safety communication channels.
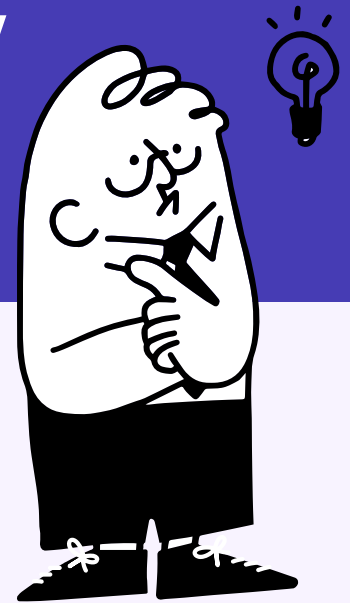
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HOW TO IMPLEMENT A SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Implementing a successful safety management system requires a systematic, detailed and organised approach.

For best results, this process is broken down into key areas that need to be covered.

STEP 01
Gain Management Approval

STEP 02
Define Specific Requirements of the System

STEP 03
Implement the Safety Management System

STEP 04
Evaluate Performance

STEP 05
Management Review

STEP 06
Maintain a Structure for Employee Feedback

STEP 07
Keep Your Safety Management System Procedures Up to Date

GAIN MANAGEMENT APPROVAL

Before embarking on the creation of a safety management system, relevant senior management must give their approval and full commitment to creating and sustaining a strong safety culture in the workplace and implementing a safety management system.

This stage includes presenting to senior management the benefits of putting a safety management system in place.

Reference should be made to:

Legal requirements

Safer working environment

Increased productivity

Happier employees

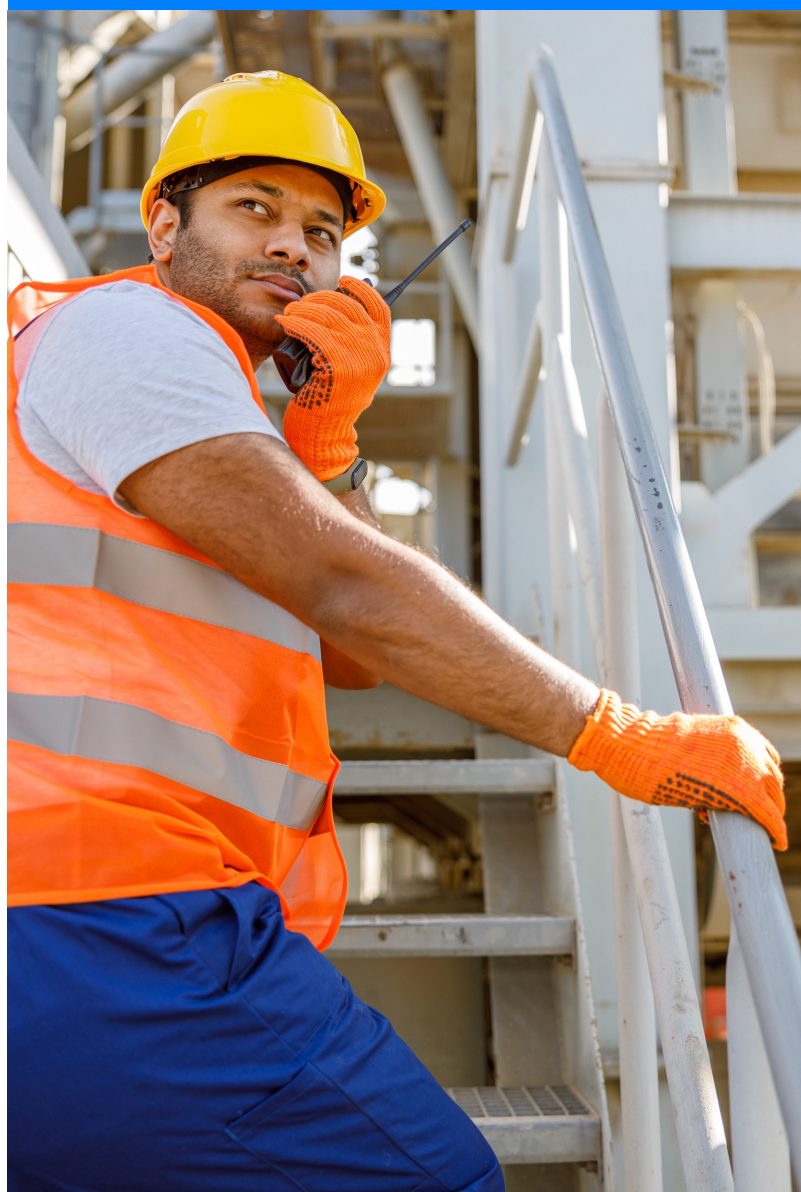Reduction in financial costs due to a decrease in incidents

The costs of not implementing a safety management system should be highlighted to upper management. It may also be beneficial to provide examples of instances where companies failed to create a safe working environment and paid a high price for it – such as the **300 employers** who racked up to **$4 million in penalties** between them after breaching U.S workplace safety regulations by putting their workers at risk during the pandemic. (Reuters)

DEFINE SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS OF THE SYSTEM

A number of variables must be considered to determine the specific requirements of a safety management system.

These include the size of the business, the number of employees, the sector and the equipment used by employees – known as a job hazard analysis. Using a risk matrix to categorise all possible hazards and risks will give your EHS department a clearer overview of the requirements of your specific company.

IMPLEMENT THE SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Once the entire program has been created, it must be implemented into the workplace, starting with appropriate training and communication.

Alerting your employees to the new system will ensure that it runs smoothly and to its' full potential. All employees should be fully aware of each stage of the process and what will be required from them over the course of their working day so the system can operate as intended.

Elements of a safety management system include:

- Employee engagement
- Employee training
- Compliance with regulations
- Safety audit
- Incident reporting
- Analysis
- Communication

EVALUATE PERFORMANCE

Once the system has been implemented, it's important to regularly measure performance.

By tracking this activity, your team can identify areas that need further improvement, surveillance or adjustment for greater impact. Analysing results will give your EHS department a better understanding as to whether the system is working as intended and whether additional tools are needed.

Calculating the Return on Investment (ROI) of the safety management system may also prove helpful in establishing whether the system is beneficial for the company. This data will likely also be required by senior management to assess the safety management system from a fiscal perspective.

MANAGEMENT REVIEW

This step focuses on the process of evaluating the overall effectiveness of safety management by senior management. This process is performed over a specific period of time, usually quarterly or yearly.

Factors that senior management may hone in on are:

- Overall trends in workplace incident rate
- Employee feedback/satisfaction
- Effectiveness in identifying hazards and areas of deficiency
- Reduction in expenditure related to workplace incidents

MAINTAIN A STRUCTURE FOR EMPLOYEE FEEDBACK

Employee feedback is an important element of a well-functioning safety management system.

Your safety management system must allocate options for employees to easily provide feedback. Having regular evaluations regarding your overall safety culture and any suggestions for improvement from employees will encourage them to get involved and take health and safety seriously.

KEEP YOUR SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM PROCEDURES UP TO DATE

Because safety regulations are constantly evolving, any effective and compliant safety management system should be regularly updated to remain in line with the latest measures.

Minimal friction should be caused when updating changes that have been identified through the process.

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HOW CAN EVOTIX HELP?

Rolling out a safety management system is not always easy. It involves a range of vital steps, requiring sharp attention to detail, a high level of organisation and careful planning to achieve successful implementation.

Software is a beneficial tool that can not only significantly streamline the process for you, but also help support your team throughout each step of the journey. **Evotix's software solution** ensures that every stage of the process is accompanied by precise and detail instructions, ensuring your EHS department has the smoothest implementation experience possible.

Conclusion

A safety management system is invaluable to a well-functioning organisation, as it reduces hazards and risks, as well as minimizing costs and contributing to the overall morale of your employees. An implementation system provides your organisation with a robust and structured process with which to tackle everyday health and safety concerns.

That doesn't, however, mean that implementing a successful management system can't sometimes feel daunting. With a range of factors to consider, investing in a software solution is an excellent way to manage and streamline implementation.

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By providing an intuitive, simple and engaging software solution for humans – we transform your workplace and empower your people.

Evotix is committed to creating an EHS journey that's more than just a checkbox. We proactively solve your organization's EHS challenges to create a safer and smarter future.

We know that behind every accident, there is a name and a family – which is why we're passionate about making them a thing of the past.

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