

MAJOR PROGRAM POINTS

"CONDUCTING SAFETY AUDITS"

Part of the "GENERAL SAFETY SERIES"

Quality Safety and Health Products, for Today...and Tomorrow

Outline of Major Points Covered in the "Conducting Safety Audits" Course

The following outline summarizes the major points of information presented in the course on "Conducting Safety Audits". The outline can be used to survey the course before taking it on a computer, as well as to review the course when a computer is not available.

- **A single workplace accident can be devastating.**
 - Are you doing everything to help make your workplace safe?
 - It is important to know how to protect yourself and your coworkers.

- **A "Safety Audit" is an examination of your work area to make sure it is as safe as possible.**

- **All types of facilities use safety audits to:**
 - Evaluate their efforts to maintain a safe workplace.
 - Help them to make sure that they are in compliance with OSHA Standards and company policies.

- **For a safety audit to be successful, everyone's cooperation is needed.**
 - Your ideas and input are needed.
 - You have the experience and knowledge of the day-to-day operations in your facility.

- **You also use the tools and equipment in your work area.**
 - You should be familiar with the hazards they can present.
 - You can best describe any safety problems they have, as well as offer suggestions on how to fix them.

- **The first step in a safety audit is to do a "Workplace Analysis".**
 - This is an effort to locate any safety problems so that they can eventually be eliminated.

- **Most facilities will conduct these inspections regularly, to identify new or previously overlooked hazards.**
 - Notify your supervisor immediately if you discover any hazardous conditions during an inspection.

- **A workplace analysis should include an examination of the "System of Controls" that your facility uses to reduce or eliminate hazards, such as:**
 - Administrative Controls.
 - Engineering Controls.
 - Personal Protective Equipment.

- **Check for "Administrative Controls" first.**
 - These are rules that have been set up at your facility to protect you and your coworkers from injury.
 - They provide the most far-reaching level of protection.

- **For example, in an area with flammable substances there is usually a "No Smoking" policy.**
 - This rule is established to prevent a fire or an explosion.

- **When the work that you do involves a hazardous substance, administrative controls that might be used to minimize exposure could include:**
 - Shorter workdays.
 - Frequent breaks.

- **Administrative controls can be set up by a number of people:**
 - Management.
 - The company's Safety Director.
 - Your supervisor.

- **If you have any ideas that you feel could make your area a safer place to work, be sure to let these people know.**

- **As you continue the safety audit, look at what kinds of "Engineering Controls" are available at your facility.**
 - These are physical control mechanisms at your worksite, or on your equipment or tools, that are designed to protect you from hazards.

- **For example, if your work involves hazardous fumes, exhaust vents can be installed to remove harmful contaminants from the work area.**
- **Tools and machinery may also come with their own engineering controls.**
 - A forklift with a cage around the driver is a good example of equipment engineered with a worker's safety in mind.
 - Forklifts are often used to move heavy freight, and it could be fatal if something heavy were to fall on the operator.
 - The cage helps prevent falling objects from hitting the driver.
- **When administrative and engineering controls can not protect workers from hazards, "Personal Protective Equipment" (PPE) is also needed. This can include:**
 - Safety glasses.
 - Gloves.
 - Hard hats.
- **During a safety audit, you need to check that PPE is:**
 - Available.
 - Working properly.
- **The condition of PPE is also important. For instance, wearing safety gloves may provide a false sense of security if the gloves are:**
 - Old and worn.
 - Made from the wrong material.
- **Just throwing on a pair of gloves without first examining them will not guarantee complete protection.**
 - Always examine your equipment before using it.

- **During a safety audit, you should also check to see whether or not PPE is being used when it should be.**
 - At times, using PPE can seem like a hassle.
 - If someone has a small job, or wants to finish quickly, they may not want to "waste time" getting their PPE.
 - Accidents happen when you least expect them... and PPE can't protect you if you don't wear it.

- **Another important part of a safety audit is to inspect the tools and machinery that are used in each work area.**
 - They are important factors in the safety environment.
 - Equipment that is worn out or set up incorrectly can be extremely dangerous.
 - Safety features, such as machine guards, should always be in place.

- **An effective audit should also include a close look at a facility's "Equipment Maintenance Program."**
 - Defective equipment can be hazardous; it should be repaired quickly to avoid accidents.
 - It is every worker's responsibility to report equipment problems as soon as they are discovered.

- **Even if your facility gets high marks in a safety audit, accidents can still occur.**
 - That is why "Emergency Response Procedures" are so important.
 - Everyone needs to be prepared to deal with an accident.

- **During an audit, check to see if emergency phone numbers are posted at your site. They should include your local:**
 - Ambulance corps.
 - Fire department.
 - Police department.

- **Emergency exits should be kept clear in case of:**
 - Fires.
 - Other emergencies.

- **Check to see that workers know where to quickly find emergency equipment, including:**
 - First aid kits.
 - Fire extinguishers.
 - Safety showers.
 - Eye wash stations.
 - Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs).

- **Quick medical care can minimize harm if an injury or illness occurs. This care can be provided by:**
 - Company personnel.
 - A local emergency medical service.

- **If someone is injured on the job, a record is kept on file as part of your company's medical program.**
 - A good medical program will also note changes in a worker's health status.

- **During a safety audit, these records will make it easier to recognize a pattern of illnesses or injuries that could be directly related to a particular job or work area.**
 - For example, if medical records reveal that several workers injured themselves using the same equipment, it could indicate that a problem exists.
 - Once the problem is identified, steps can be taken to make the equipment or process less hazardous.
 - This reduces the potential for future accidents.

- **As the safety audit continues, you need to take a close look at the safety and health training at your facility.**
 - A continuing education and training program is one of the best ways to improve a facility's safety performance.
 - The training program should cover the safety and health responsibilities of all the people who work at the facility... or who affect its operations.

- **Training topics may include general safety and regulatory compliance issues such as:**
 - Back safety.
 - Proper lifting techniques.
 - Personal protective equipment.
 - "Right-To-Know" (chemical hazards).
 - Lock-Out/Tag-Out.

- **But no matter how effectively someone has been trained, things can still go wrong.**
 - If an accident occurs, it should be used as a learning tool.
 - When an accident investigation is conducted properly, it can be very helpful in preventing similar accidents in the future.

- **So as part of a safety audit, you should determine whether or not accidents are investigated at your facility.**

- **A supervisor usually conducts the investigation, but others need to get involved if they have any helpful information about:**
 - Details concerning the location of the accident.
 - The job being performed when the accident occurred.
 - The workers who were involved.

- **Information gathered during an accident investigation can be used to identify:**
 - Common sources of hazards.
 - Where hazards are located.
 - Jobs that experience a high number of injuries.

- **We can even learn a lot from a "Near Miss"... an accident which under slightly different circumstances could have resulted in:**
 - Injuries.
 - Damage to equipment or materials.

- **Until the conditions that contributed to the "near miss" are corrected, they are an accident waiting to happen.**
 - It is important that all "near misses" are reported.
 - A safety audit should verify that a reporting procedure is in place.
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- **Another important way that you can help with your facility's safety audit process is by doing a "Self-Assessment".**
 - This is a "personal safety audit" that examines how safe you are as a worker.
 - It also looks at how aware you are of the safety issues in your area.
- **The first part of a self-assessment is making sure that you understand your facility's safety policies.**
 - You can not obey the rules if you do not know them.
- **Ask yourself how well you follow "Standard Operating Procedures."**
 - These procedures are designed for your safety.
 - They will not work unless you adhere to them.
- **Sometimes it can be tempting to skip safety procedures in order to get a job done quickly.**
 - You may be so comfortable with your work that you overlook some safety precautions.
 - Remember, omitting a safety procedure can be a shortcut to disaster.
- **It is also important to examine the protective equipment that you use in your work.**
 - Is it the right equipment for the job?
 - If so, are you using it properly?
 - The wrong PPE, or PPE that is not being used correctly, will not protect you.
- **For example, using ordinary safety glasses while you are welding will not provide enough protection... and can result in a serious injury.**
 - Instead, "welding goggles" should be used.
 - They are specially designed to filter out the intense light that is generated during welding.

- **While you are doing your self-assessment, evaluating your knowledge of the worksite is also important.**
 - You may think that you know your area inside and out... but take a closer look.
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- **Can you locate all exits and fire escapes?**
 - Make sure that you can find them in the dark.
 - One day you may have to.
- **You should also know where safety showers and eye wash stations are located.**
 - If you are splashed with a hazardous chemical, you will have to find them in a hurry.
- **You need to know where the fire extinguishers in your area are kept, as well.**
 - But you should only operate fire extinguishers if you are trained and authorized to use them.
- **Review your knowledge regarding various types of fire extinguishers.**
 - Do you know which extinguishers to use with different classes of fires?
 - The wrong fire extinguisher could actually make things worse.
 - For example, if you use a water-based fire extinguisher on an oil fire, it will actually spread the fire.
- **As part of your self-assessment, check to see if pathways in your work area are free of clutter. Make sure important areas are not blocked, including:**
 - Exits.
 - Safety showers.
 - Eye wash stations.
 - The space around fire extinguishers.
 - You never know when an emergency will occur.

- **Be sure you know what to do if someone is injured.**
 - In an emergency, every second counts.
 - Know where to find a first aid kit...and what to do with it.
 - This can be the difference between a minor injury and a permanent one.

- **While doing your self-assessment, ask yourself if you let minor incidents or "near misses" go unreported.**
 - If you really want your facility to be safe, you need to report all safety problems.
 - This includes even small incidents, as well as hazards that you know exist in other work areas.

- **People often associate the word "audit" with being caught doing something wrong.**
 - But a safety audit is really used to help discover what can be done to make your workplace safe.
 - Even if your work area is perfectly safe, it is important to continue doing safety audits... so it stays that way.

- **Remember that for a safety audit to be successful, your cooperation is essential.**
 - You are the person who is most familiar with your tools, equipment and work area.

- **Regular inspections should be made of all work areas.**
 - Hazardous conditions that are discovered should be corrected immediately.

- **Hazards at your worksite can be reduced or eliminated by following a system of controls, including:**
 - Administrative controls.
 - Engineering controls.
 - PPE.

- **Self-assessments are an important part of the audit process.**
 - You need to evaluate how safely you work and how prepared you are to handle emergencies.

- **Know your company's safety policies.**
 - You can not obey the rules if you do not know and understand them.

- **Make sure that the tools and equipment you use are the right ones for the job.**
 - They should be in good working condition.
 - You should know how to use them properly.

- Report all accidents and "near misses" so that they can be investigated.
 - This information can be used to help prevent accidents from happening in the future.

- **A safety audit shows how safe our work areas really are.**
 - Help yourself and your coworkers by getting involved.
 - Take responsibility!

- **It is up to you to help to make your facility as safe as it can be!**