

## **THE SITE SAFETY AND HEALTH PLAN**

### **COURSE OUTLINE**

- **Whether you're at home or at work, safety is always a major concern, especially when you're dealing with hazardous chemicals. You need to:**
  - Know what you can do to work with chemicals as safely as possible.
  - Be prepared in case something goes wrong.
  
- **That's why your facility has a site safety and health plan.**
  - It is a written plan of action for people who work around hazardous chemicals.
  - The plan sets out guidelines for working with chemicals safely and provides procedures for dealing with accidents.
  
- **Most of us have worked with some type of potentially hazardous chemical at one time or another... even if it's only been at home.**
  - At home you have to rely on the chemical's label to tell you what to do if a leak or spill occurs.
  - In the workplace, you need more detailed information.
  
- **Following the guidelines in the site safety and health plan will help you identify, evaluate and control safety and health hazards before they become a problem, so that you can stay safe.**
  
- **The goals of a site safety and health plan are to:**
  - Reduce workers' risk of chemical exposure.
  - Guard the public from the site's hazards.
  - Protect the environment from contamination.
  
- **To accomplish these goals, a site safety and health plan includes information on:**
  - Employee orientation.
  - Training.
  - Health and safety rules.
  - Correct work procedures.
  - Workplace inspections.

- **Because quick action is often needed during a hazardous release, the plan also discusses:**
  - How to contact your site's emergency response team.
  - What the team will do if an accident occurs.
  
- **Some of the most important information in the plan deals with "job safety". As part of this focus, the plan contains:**
  - A list of safety and health hazards for each job that is performed at your site.
  - The steps to take to minimize these hazards.
  - Emphasis is placed on the importance of employees taking "individual responsibility" for the safety of the work they are involved in.
  
- **But the mere existence of a site safety and health plan isn't enough. To operate safely, your company needs you and your coworkers to:**
  - Be alert.
  - Follow the safety rules that the plan lays out.
  
- **To make sure that everyone starts off on the right track:**
  - Your company holds special orientations for workers who have just been hired so that they can become familiar with your worksite.
  - In addition, each worker receives training that examines the hazards associated with their specific job.
  
- **It is important that you pay close attention to all of the training that your facility provides.**
  - Since it includes a review of your company's health and safety rules, it is key to keeping everyone safe.
  - But you aren't the only one who has responsibilities... your company has duties of its own.
  
- **One of these involves "medical surveillance".**
  - This begins with "screening" you for any existing medical problems before allowing you to work with hazardous materials.

- **As part of this medical surveillance, you will:**
  - Go through periodic evaluations to track any changes to your health as well.
  - Be given additional special exams if you are exposed to a hazardous chemical.
  - Be given a medical examination if you are re-assigned to another site or when you leave your job.
  
- **If you have developed a medical problem that you didn't have prior to working with the materials at your site, the results of these exams will help the doctor to determine:**
  - What caused the illness.
  - What type of treatment you need to receive.
  
- **In addition to monitoring your health, your company is also responsible for making sure that the equipment used on your site is in good condition and functioning safely.**
  - Equipment will be inspected periodically to make sure that it is running properly.
  - Records will be kept of past breakdowns and mechanical problems so that preventative maintenance programs can be developed to keep new problems from occurring.
  
- **Your company will also establish "correct work procedures" for the various jobs on your site, which will be included in your site safety and health plan.**
  - These procedures outline the safest way to do a job, and provide guidelines for job training, performance evaluation and accident investigation.
  - By learning the safest way to perform a job, you can help to prevent things like chemical spills and other accidents.
  
- **The correct work procedures for each job will be determined by conducting a "job safety analysis"... also known as a "job hazard analysis".**
  - The role of "job safety analyst" is usually assumed by your supervisor or an industrial hygienist.
  - The analyst will start the process by selecting a task and breaking it down into a sequence of steps.
  - After observing how each of these steps are actually performed, the analyst will identify any hazards that are inherent in the job.
  - Measures that can be taken to prevent or avoid the hazards will then be written down, so workers can refer to them.

- **Initially, the analyst will examine jobs that are performed on a daily basis.**
  - They will pay special attention to tasks where accidents and injuries frequently occur.
  - Later, the analyst will also take a look at jobs that are performed less often, so that they can create a set of safe work procedures for every function that takes place at the site.
  
- **Throughout this process the job safety analyst will observe the worker who normally does the job.**
  - Sometimes the analyst will perform the job along with the worker, to help determine the best and safest way of doing it.
  - For example, an analyst might observe a forklift driver who is moving hazardous materials from a loading platform to storage racks.
  - After the analyst has listed the steps the forklift driver will take, they will write down any hazards the forklift driver could face at each step... such as physical hazards or chemical exposures.
  
- **A physical hazard could be created if the driver is moving compressed gas cylinders as part of this process.**
  - If a cylinder were to fall, the valve could break or the cylinder itself could fracture, turning it into a dangerous projectile... almost like a rocket.
  
- **Another danger the forklift driver could face is chemical exposure.**
  - If the driver does not position his forks correctly he could puncture a container and expose himself to the hazardous chemicals inside.
  
- **In addition to examining the way work is performed, OSHA requires job analysts to inspect the work area associated with each job as well.**
  - This helps the analyst to identify hazards such as leaks or broken equipment so that they can recommend appropriate corrective action.
  
- **OSHA also requires that your entire facility or site be inspected periodically, to ensure worker health and safety. This includes checking for problems such as:**
  - Leaking or bulging drums.
  - Evacuation routes that are clearly posted.
  - Exits that are not blocked.

- **But despite the best of plans, accidents can still happen.**
  - So the site safety and health plan provides clear guidelines for emergency response workers to follow in the event of an incident involving hazardous chemicals.
  - As outlined by OSHA, there are five levels of "certification" for people who respond to hazardous waste incidents.
  - The responsibilities of personnel functioning at each level are described in the Plan.
  
- **"First Responder: Awareness Level" training must be given to all workers who are likely to witness a spill, leak or other accidental release of a hazardous material.**
  - Awareness level first responders must spend at least four hours learning the reporting procedures that should be used to initiate an emergency response.
  
- **The first group of workers who actually respond to spills are trained at the "First Responder: Operations Level".**
  - Their job is to keep a spill from spreading and to prevent unauthorized people from entering the spill area.
  - Workers involved in these operations level activities must undergo a minimum of eight hours of emergency response training.
  
- **After a spill is contained, "Hazardous Materials Technicians" will locate the point of release and plug, patch or otherwise stop it.**
  - These workers must undergo a minimum of 24 hours of training.
  
- **In many spill situations a "HAZMAT Specialist" may also be called upon, to act as a site liaison with federal, state or local government authorities.**
  - In addition to the same 24 hours of training that a HAZMAT Technician receives, a specialist will also get detailed training about the chemicals that are normally on-site at your facility.
  
- **The individual with the most authority in an emergency response situation is the "Incident Commander".**
  - This person goes through 24 hours or more of specialized training.
  - The training concentrates on how to control an incident scene and coordinate an entire emergency response operation.

- **Another important part of the site safety and health plan focuses on speeding up the response time in incident situations.**
  - This section of the plan lists the names and contact information for the people who are in charge during emergencies.
  - It also specifies that this information be posted near all telephones.
  - In addition to telephones, there should also be an alternate way to communicate during an emergency, such as a radio or alarm system.
  
- **The plan also includes a list of the emergency service organizations in your community that should be posted by the phones, such as:**
  - The fire company.
  - The police department.
  - A hospital.
  - HAZMAT teams.
  - Explosive experts.
  
- **Accidents involving hazardous chemicals come in all shapes and sizes, and there are also many ways to deal with the same type of accident.**
  - Another thing the site safety and health plan does is provide the best strategies for coping with the various types of incidents that might occur at your facility.
  
- **In the event of a chemical spill, it is important to call someone who can handle the situation before it gets out of control.**
  - The first person the plan will tell you to contact is the Incident Commander.
  - The commander will assign the tasks that must be performed to employees who are certified to deal with hazardous chemicals.
  
- **The first worker to arrive at the scene of an incident will be a "first responder" who has had operations level training.**
  - They will secure the spill as well as evacuate the area and restrict access to it.

- **The next thing the plan will tell you is that as soon as the area is secured, the spilled chemicals must be identified, along with the hazards that they present.**
  - This process is called "site evaluation".
  - This evaluation plays a key role in how a site safety and health plan will tell you to approach a spill, since it is essential to know what you are dealing with before you can clean it up.
  - Once the evaluation is complete, the cleanup team will come in and clean up the spill.
  
- **To determine the best methods to use, the team will consult the "spill guidelines" that are contained in the plan. Among other things, the guidelines list:**
  - The names and amounts of chemicals that are used or stored at your site.
  - What to expect in the event of an accident involving each type of chemical.
  
- **Depending on the size of the spill, cleanup methods the plan might suggest could include:**
  - Soaking up the spill with spill socks and blankets.
  - Neutralizing the spilled chemicals.
  - Transferring hazardous liquids into barrels.
  
- **To help combat the confusion that can occur during a spill, the Plan requires that employees be assigned their roles in the emergency response process ahead of time.**
  - No matter what role they play, all workers will need to put on personal protective equipment (PPE) before they enter a spill area.
  - They need to know what PPE is available, how much protection it will provide and how to use it.
  
- **There are many forms of personal protective equipment.**
  - Combinations of PPE that are used together are grouped into four levels... A, B, C, and D... according to how much protection they provide.
  - Level A is the highest level of protection and Level D the lowest.
  
- **For example:**
  - To attain Level A protection you need to wear a totally-encapsulating chemical protective suit.
  - Level D requires only a simple work uniform.

- **Consult your company's site safety and health officer if:**
  - You have questions about the PPE required for the job you have been assigned.
  - You have trouble putting your PPE on during practice.
  - You need to wear a respirator, your officer will also make sure that you are properly fit-tested.
  
- **Once a responder has the PPE that they need, the site safety and health plan will instruct them to proceed to the area where cleanup materials are stored.**
  - This information can also be found in the plan.
  - Knowing where these materials are located before an incident occurs will, help the cleanup run more smoothly.
  - The responder will then carry out their assigned responsibilities.
  
- **When the cleanup is complete, any waste needs to be disposed of. The plan will also set out guidelines for this.**
  - If disposal can't occur immediately, the waste can be stored at your facility.
  - It is important to remember, however, that the storage time in most states is limited to 90 days.
  
- **The plan also includes information on other things that should be done when a cleanup is over.**
  
- **Everyone who was involved will have to undergo decontamination.**
  - This usually takes place in what is called a "contamination reduction corridor" (CRC).
  - The CRC restricts decontamination activities to a limited area, and helps to keep contaminated workers and equipment from leaving the site.

**\*\*\*SUMMARY\*\*\***

- **Working with hazardous chemicals can be dangerous.**
  - If you aren't familiar with your company's site safety and health plan, you won't be much help if an incident does occur.
  - But by knowing all of the safety rules, and understanding your responsibilities, you can protect yourself and your coworkers ... and stay safe.
  
- **Pay close attention to your company's orientation and training programs... and have a clear understanding of what your responsibilities are.**
  
- **Be sure to follow correct work procedures.**
  
- **Wear proper personal protective equipment whenever you are involved in hazardous chemical operations.**
  
- **Notify the appropriate personnel if you notice a problem in your work area.**
  
- **Following your site safety and health plan will help you to work safely with the chemicals at your facility, and prevent accidents while you're on the job... so you can keep yourself from becoming just another chemical hazard statistic.**