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Safety is a Team Effort

A true commitment to safety by the employees and the employer will help provide a safe working environment for all. Too often shortcuts become acceptable in order to meet deadlines. Bypassing safety devices and procedures may be unquestioned until someone gets seriously injured. The challenge for supervisors is to find these unsafe practices and to make it very clear that following good safety practices falls on everyone's shoulders.

Here are some ideas to make safety the responsibility of everyone:

- ◆ Actively involve employees in safety issues. When conducting a regular inspection, invite employees along and explain the hazards. Don't be quick to lay blame on any individual. Make the inspection something to learn from, not feel bad about.
- ◆ Rather than offering your ideas to solve a problem, encourage your teams to come up with their own ideas first. There may be many instances where they will come up with the right solutions as they are the ones directly in contact with the hazards.
- ◆ Communication is the key. Talk to your employees formally and informally on all safety related issues and don't shrug off concerns. Communication is vital.
- ◆ When it comes to workplace safety you should be on the same side of the fence. Don't let personal feelings get in the way of doing the right thing if it will ensure the safety of your crew, even if it means filling out a few more forms or accepting an official grievance.
- ◆ Upgrade your workplace safety training on a regular basis. Take advantage of company training sessions. Review the operator's manual for equipment you use, and company safety documents such as the emergency plan.
- ◆ Talk about safety with your team members. In the break room, at meetings and in one-on-one conversations, put the focus on safety.
- ◆ Don't let someone else, even your supervisor, make you do something you believe to be unsafe. If somebody tells you it's okay to enter a confined space unprotected, they are wrong. It's just possible your boss could use some more safety training too.
- ◆ Explain to employees that ultimately they are responsible for their own safety. All of the hearing protection, hand protection, and safety eyewear in the world is not going to help them if they don't wear it.
- ◆ Make safety meetings productive and interesting. Focus on identified safety issues, involve your employees in the meeting, and take action on decisions as soon as possible.

A workplace health and safety program cannot succeed without the full effort and commitment of everyone, from the boss to the employee. Supervisors must be constantly alert to possible hazards and find ways to eliminate or, at least, minimize them.



A supervisor has a challenge to help people who work for him or her find satisfaction in working safely. The effort will pay off many times in high morale and production, as well as in safety.

**ARMY SAFE
IS ARMY STRONG**