

## 22.1: Introduction to Managing Safety and Health

### Managing Safety

Merriman and Oxford dictionaries describe or define ‘management’ as the process of dealing with or controlling things or people. Wiki offers ‘Management’ as being the administration of an organization. On the other hand ‘managing’ is defined as both having authority or supervisory control and being successful at doing or dealing with something, especially if difficult. Implied in the description of both terms is success or goals met. But neither term suggests or implies how or what drives the management or managing activities, the guiding principle. Neither term describes the character or characteristics of the individual doing the managing or the organization under management.

In the last chapter, safety and health programs, emphasis was placed on best practices for creating and implementing safety and health programs. What was not discussed was what drives or is behind the best practice, i.e. what makes it a best practice and why take that action at all.

### Core Elements For Managing Safety and Health

Managing safety and health requires effective planning, short and long term strategy. It also requires goals and outcomes to be clear and SMART-specific and measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (timely). Hence a short and long term strategy that implements the plan for achieving safety and health objectives, creating effective safety and health programs, and managing safety and health should adhere to management best practices for efficiency but also be about care and concern for the workplace and its workers.

Several leadership principles that take on care and concern are revealed in different aspects of the core elements that shape safety and health programs. The first, Principled Centered Leadership as described by Stephen Covey, focuses less on what a leader or manager does in an organizational setting but more on what that person brings to the organization. It states in part: “Principled-Centered Leadership is premised on the belief that effective people (managers) sic, are guided both in everyday living and in work relationships by universal principles or “natural laws”, whereas ineffective people(managers) sic, tend to place their energies on finding situation-specific behavioral paths to success as they are confronted by an evolving set of challenges.” This principle speaks to universal or natural laws that are self-evident, such as those of wisdom, fairness, self-awareness, courage, personal strength, and the will to act. Employers and managers who adhere to or serve these natural laws are by far the best with whom to work.

The second principle is that which is rooted in the character of a manager or leader. Credibility as outlined by James M. Kouzes and Barry C Posner in the book titled the same, establishes that ‘honesty’ is essential to leadership. The “Credibility” titled book also calls out six leadership disciplines. Three of the six mentioned here, affirming shared value, serving a purpose, and developing capacity, can be seen in all eight of the core elements of managing safety and health.

Another management principle as outlined in the writings of Peter Block states that rather than being leaders managers become stewards. Specifically, he states that “traditionally leadership meant that managers are somehow responsible for their subordinates who look to the leader for guidance, direction, reward, evaluation, and protection. A manager and an organization committed to stewardship operate in a very different way. Stewardship is predicated on the idea that people in communities and in organizations are willing to choose service over self-interest. Stewardship means empowering people to be accountable for their own actions rather than asking them to be dependent on managers.” Empowering people to accountability is simply engaging them in the processes and outcomes.

Finally, the final distinguishing characteristic or principle of management as revealed in the core elements is that of the “One Minute Manager” as authored by Kenneth Blanchard and Spencer Johnson. The book focuses on management effectiveness. The book weaves a story of a young worker trying to determine which manager type produces more fruit. The type that is more focused on profit or the type that is focused on people. The worker ultimately decides that an effective manager is one who manages so that both the organization and the people involved benefit (win). This is achieved through setting one minute goals, giving one minute praise, and providing one minute critiques or assessments when needed. Effective management does not have to take a lot of time and energy but it does have to focus the time and energy spent to achieve quality of engagement.

The following core elements for managing safety and health are central to any strategy, process, or protocol for reducing accidents and injury in the workplace. These elements are also central to boosting morale, engagement, and stewardship. All are necessary for sustainable organizations. All reflect the management principles above.

### Management Leadership

- Top management demonstrates its commitment to continuous improvement in safety and health, communicates that commitment to workers, and sets program expectations and responsibilities.
- Managers at all levels make safety and health a core organizational value, establish safety and health goals and objectives, provide adequate resources and support for the program, and set a good example.

### Worker Participation

- Workers and their representatives are involved in all aspects of the program—including setting goals, identifying and reporting hazards, investigating incidents, and tracking progress.
- All workers, including contractors and temporary workers, understand their roles and responsibilities under the program and what they need to do to effectively carry them out.
- Workers are encouraged and have means to communicate openly with management and to report safety and health concerns without fear of retaliation.
- Any potential barriers or obstacles to worker participation in the program (for example, language, lack of information, or disincentives) are removed or addressed.

### Hazard Identification and Assessment

- Procedures are put in place to continually identify workplace hazards and evaluate risks.
- Safety and health hazards from routine, non-routine, and emergency situations are identified and assessed.
- An initial assessment of existing hazards, exposures, and control measures is followed by periodic inspections and reassessments, to identify new hazards.
- Any incidents are investigated with the goal of identifying the root causes.
- Identified hazards are prioritized for control.

### Hazard Prevention and Control

- Employers and workers cooperate to identify and select methods for eliminating, preventing, or controlling workplace hazards.
- Controls are selected according to a hierarchy that uses engineering solutions first, followed by safe work practices, administrative controls, and finally personal protective equipment (PPE).
- A plan is developed to ensure that controls are implemented, interim protection is provided, progress is tracked, and the effectiveness of controls is verified.

### Education and Training

- All workers are trained to understand how the program works and how to carry out the responsibilities assigned to them under the program.
- Employers, managers, and supervisors receive training on safety concepts and their responsibility for protecting workers' rights and responding to workers' reports and concerns.
- All workers are trained to recognize workplace hazards and to understand the control measures that have been implemented.

### Program Evaluation and Improvement

- Control measures are periodically evaluated for effectiveness.
- Processes are established to monitor program performance, verify program implementation, and identify program shortcomings and opportunities for improvement.
- Necessary actions are taken to improve the program and overall safety and health performance.

### Communication and Coordination for Host Employers, Contractors, and Staffing Agencies

- Host employers, contractors, and staffing agencies commit to providing the same level of safety and health protection to all employees.
- Host employers, contractors, and staffing agencies communicate the hazards present at the worksite and the hazards that work of contract workers may create on site.
- Host employers establish specifications and qualifications for contractors and staffing agencies.
- Before beginning work, host employers, contractors, and staffing agencies coordinate on work planning and scheduling to identify and resolve any conflicts that could affect safety or health.

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