



SAFETY MONTH IDEAS

Fundamental Principles of Safety Incentive & Awareness Programs:

- 1) The behaviors required to achieve a safety reward should be *specified and perceived as achievable* by the participants.
- 2) *Everyone* who meets the behavioral criteria should be rewarded.
- 3) It's better for many participants to receive small rewards than for one person to receive a big reward.
- 4) The rewards should be *displayed and represent safety achievement*. Coffee, mugs, hats, shirts, sweaters, etc. with safety message are preferable to rewards that will be hidden, used or spent.
- 5) Contests should not reward one group at the expense of another.
- 6) Groups should not be penalized or lose their rewards for failure by an individual.
- 7) Progress toward achieving a safety reward should be systematically monitored and publicly posted for all participants.

It must pass the "*The Dead Man's Test*" - If the rules of the incentive program is such, that even a dead man can win, then it does not pass the "*Dead Man's Test*". This excludes many of the typical programs that are based on the absence of injuries or illnesses, and do not require any real active performance criteria.

Avoid:

- 1) Popular lottery or raffle drawing. It results in one 'lucky' winner being selected and a large number of "unlucky" losers. *There is also a disadvantage in linking chance with safety*. It is bad enough that the word "accident" is used in the context of safety processes. *We should not add this inference that injuries are chance occurrences*.
- 2) Rewards should not be perceived as a means of controlling behavior, but as a declaration of sincere gratitude for making a contribution.
- 3) *The material rewards in an incentive program should not be perceived as the major payoff. Incentives are only reminders to do the right thing, and rewards serve as feedback and a token of appreciation for doing the right thing.*
- 4) Be careful that constructive feedback or counseling activities are not perceived as criticism on all levels, and especially at the personal level.

PROGRAM IDEAS FOR SAFETY MONTH & THEREAFTER

Kick-Off Activities:

Safety Awareness Workshops & Support Groups -

Hold safety awareness workshops with work groups that engender the participation and reflection that is usually found in support groups. Describe the economic, operational and personal consequences of the work practices that lead to injuries, i.e. poor or lack of communication, organization, teamwork, consistency, problem solving, focus on high performance, etc. Review the active process of risk reduction, the efforts necessary to minimize probabilities and hazards. Address the inherent difficulties in achieving consistent safe behaviors. Encourage a continued dialogue about the serious need to address the issue, and potential solutions, ideas and methods. This should dovetail into the safety committee and all channels for employee feedback. This should be done at the onset of the Safety Month, not the end.

Management Behavior Promise & Declaration -

As part of the kick-off, declarations and personal safe behavior promises can be composed by key management personnel and department heads and posted. A survey can be given to these management personnel, and their answers can be posted in an attractive, official declaration poster in conspicuous places to kick-off the safety month. This shows that safety month is truly inclusive, led by the management team, and not only a show for staff. It also forces management staff to reflect on *their* leadership role in general, and their role modeling specifically for the promotional period. Declarations could be answers to questions in the survey such as:

- What are some of your organization goals for safety month?
- What are some of your departmental goals for safety month?
- What are some of your personal goals for safety month?
- What will you do differently to encourage more consistent safer behaviors among your staff and colleagues?
- What personal safe behavior improvements will you attempt?

Upstream Perception Survey -

Upstream survey of supervisors' safety management performance can be conducted right before the promotional period. Findings can be tabulated, and supervisory responses can be made as the declaration, or part of the declaration and safety promise, in response to the initial feedback from staff. This enhances the management safety promise and declaration by tying it directly to staff feedback. (Sample upstream survey attached.)

Safety Perception Surveys -

This may be a good time to initiate an organizational safety culture survey. Valuable feedback from these surveys can be rewarded and highlighted throughout Safety Month. Or, the survey can be conducted in advance of Safety Month, and remedial actions and responses can be introduced to kick-off the Safety Month. See above. (Sample general perception survey attached.)

Awareness Promotional Activities:

Safety Share -

The *safety share* is a simple behavior-focused process that reflects emphasis on achievement. At the start of group meetings, the leader asks participants to report something that they have done for safety during the past week, or since the last meeting. Because the *safety share* is used to open all kinds of meetings, safety is given special status and integrated into the overall business agenda. People come to expect queries about their safety accomplishments and go out of their way to have an impressive safety story to share. This simple awareness booster, “*What have you done for safety?*” helps teach an important lesson that safety is not only loss control, an attempt to avoid failure, but can be discussed in the same context of achievement as productivity, quality, efficiency, competitiveness, profits. Thus, this underscores that health, safety and comfort of employees and residents are part of the operational mandate.

Safety Thank-You Cards from Management & Supervisors -

These simple single sided cards should have adequate blank spaces available in order to describe what behavior that the commendation is specifically for, along with a personal note of thanks. On the back of this card can be a sticker which the recipient can affix to anything, possibly and hopefully, amassing a large number of them. These should be given out by supervisors and management personnel.

Safety Thank-You Cards from Coworkers -

A different version of the same type of program, is to have a poster board or more discreet system when appropriate, wherein employees can initiate their own *Safety Thank-You Cards* to another employee, again, with a personalized message specifying the behavior that has been recognized. You may want to have distinguishing cards and stickers for cards given out by management, and cards given out by coworkers. In this way, an employee can gain a more distinct sense of recognition from both camps.

Safe Behavior Promise -

This simple activator approach began with promoting the use of safety belts, and has had remarkable success in other applications, such as the use of eye protection. Work teams can institute a “*Safety Declaration*” and have employees sign a department or unit specific poster at their department or facility entrance specifying a safe behavior commitment for the day, or week. For example, “*We use lift equipment whenever called for in the care plan*” or “*We always use the proper personal protective equipment when cleaning, gloves and goggles. . .*” or “*We always ask for assistance lifting whenever we need it.*” You need to maintain salience by changing the public commitment message frequently (weekly).

Safe Behavior Promise Card -

The promise card is used for involving people in a commitment to perform a particular behavior, also. The target behavior to increase in frequency could be selected by a safety director, group leader, or through a group consensus discussion. This behavior is written on the promise card, perhaps by each individual in a group. Group members decide on the duration of the promise period and write the end date on the card. Then each group member should be encouraged, not

coerced to sign and date their cards. This group application of safe behavior promise can strengthen a sense of group cohesion or belongingness. Follow these procedural points for optimal results:

- Define the behavior specifically
- Involve the group in the discussion of the personal and group value of the behavior
- Make the commitment for a specified period of time that is challenging but not overwhelming
- Assure everyone that signing the card is only a personal commitment, not a company contract
- There should be no penalties (not even criticism) for breaking a promise
- Encourage everyone to sign the card, but do not use pressure tactics
- Each signer should keep the promise card in his or her possession or post it in their work areas as a reminder.

Safety Poster Contest -

Hold a contest that any work group can participate in. Delineate recognition, and token prizes to the first, second, and third prize winners, and have as many honorable mentions as appropriate when the results are assessable. Posters can be collages, photos, etc. Promote the wide possibilities, provide the materials, and encourage the creativity and teamwork.

Health & Safety Awareness Fair -

Hold a health fair with sponsorship and assistance from local community organizations and health organizations, including: women's health clinic; violence crisis center; Alcoholics Anonymous; Alzheimer's Association; Department of Health; hospital outreach programs; fitness centers; Weight Watchers'; Fire Dept.; MS Foundation; Diabetes Foundation; American Lung Association; smoking cessation programs and information; American Heart Association; nutritional counseling; blood pressure checks; cholesterol counseling; child safety; ergonomics; etc.

Near-Miss Awareness Program -

A program can be based on the number of near misses reported. Employees receive recognition (a small prize or points) when reporting near misses they have witnessed or were involved in. The idea is to heighten awareness and provide more information for prevention activities. This is especially important in organizations where reporting of injuries itself is perceived as being negative. Prevention activities may include group or employee counseling, special or retraining, rearrangements of schedules and activities within a department or between departments, re-planning a job, redesigning a work space, improve key points in the communications link, etc.

Random Acts of Kindness -

These awards may be given at any time by any supervisor to staff and/or by manager to supervisor and/or staff to staff, or staff to supervisors and management, for random acts of kindness, good will, good safety performance, good practice of work procedures. This acts as a positive reinforcement to any accident reduction program.

Redemption Program -

In any and all of the above and other similar programs, a point system can be maintained whereupon certain achievements will garner a certain number of points. Points can then be traded for soda, food, movie tickets, etc. of their choosing.

Notes:

Middle-Managers

Do not overlook the need to specify and reward desired behaviors among management, especially front-line supervisors, in encouraging and seeking out the same of employees. This differs from the desired behaviors in individual work habits of employees. Desired behaviors from management and supervisory personnel, include providing positive reinforcement, encouragement and consistent expectations to staff, respecting and cooperating with other departments for better safety performance, etc.

Continuous & Expanded Employee Involvement

As the program evolves, many of the items that management has designed, both graphically and in terms of setting criteria upon ground rules for programs, can possibly be passed onto employees. Such activities may be too confusing and have a greater propensity to be misperceived if presented to employees at the start of such an effort. However, these are the areas that can be seen as further mobility, choice, activity, involvement as employees become familiar and comfortable with the goals of the program, its actual intention, and how they work