



Risk Control Services Technical Bulletin

Tips for a Successful Safety Incentive Program

Background

The following tips originally from ISO Services Properties, Inc. may aid in creating and implementing a successful safety incentive program. The process of planning for this program should include both top management and workers.

LEGAL. Obtain legal advice covering IRS issues surrounding gifts, awards, or other items used in the program.

GOALS. Establish measurable and attainable goals, such as reducing OSHA recordable incidents by 50 percent compared to the last three-year average; or scoring 80 percent or more on housekeeping audits over a six-month period.

BUDGET. Establish budget restrictions. Base it on a portion, such as 50 percent, of the anticipated savings from reaching safety goals.

ELIGIBILITY. Determine who will be eligible for awards. For example, will eligibility be based on individual or group safety performance?

RULES. Establish written rules, such as whether employees will compete against their past safety records, will departments compete against each other, time limits for the campaign, and post them for all to see and review. Try to anticipate potential problems when setting these rules. For example, if two departments tie for an award, will there be a tiebreaker or will both receive awards? Also, decide who will judge the competition.

AWARDS. Allow workers to participate in the selection of awards, bearing in mind the established budget. Awards do not need to be expensive; they may be as simple as a parking space on "management row" for the winner. While luxury items employees normally wouldn't buy for themselves should be considered, offering cash is not recommended. It's often helpful to divide anticipated savings by the number of eligible workers to establish a per-employee value to use when choosing awards.

STARTING. Before you implement the program, make sure you have all needed materials, including actual awards, tracking programs, judges, and informational handouts. Start with a flourish of promotions and consider giving away small tokens to capture employee interest.

PROMOTING. Keep employees' interest up by regularly giving them information on their progress toward incentive goals.

WINNERS. Announce winners and issue awards promptly. Interest may wane if there is a lag between the campaign's end and the presentation of awards. Prompt conferral of awards also helps generate interest in the next campaign. The best results are obtained when top management not only supports the program, but is visible in promoting it and handing out awards.

POSTING. Post final standings promptly so that everyone knows where they finished.

RECOGNITION. Provide recognition, in addition to prizes. Have top management present awards, and give winners publicity in newsletters and on bulletin boards.

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