New Employee Orientation – New/Transfer Employee

Establishing an effective new employee orientation program is an essential component of any organization’s efforts to maintain a safe workplace. Statistics show that as much as 60% of on-the-job injuries occur to employees with less than 1 year of experience on the job.

Why is Employee Orientation Important?
Orientation for new employees is important because it enables the supervisor to communicate information about your organization, the position the new employee is to fill, and safety concerns specific to the job. It allows you to convey information about the background and structure of the company, as well as the chain of command. It introduces the new employee to the company’s safety rules, equipment, processes and preventive practices associated with their job task. Employees who bring their past “work experience” need the same indoctrination into the way things are done in your organization. Your goal is to ensure that all workers follow operational and safety practices, which in turn will help safeguard your workforce.

The Orientation Process
Effective orientation starts with laying a foundation for the program. Care must be taken to prepare the proper materials and setting for the training. Handing the employee a safety pamphlet, list of safety rules or sitting them in front of a television to watch a video is really an ineffective way to orient them to what they will be exposed to on the job. Topic-specific videos can be an effective tool for the orientation process, but they cannot be substituted for the orientation process. No video can present a proper image of what a job would entail as would a walk through the plant viewing the operation.

Some companies will give a very informal orientation session where the employee’s supervisor explains all aspects of the company, personnel procedures, and where he or she will work. Others have very formal orientations whereby the supervisor takes the employee through a checklist of pertinent topics. The advantage of the formal procedure is that it ensures continuity in the orientation process between supervisors as well as ensuring that all important topics are addressed. Orientation materials must be clearly communicated, both verbally and in writing. Company rules and policies must be thoughtfully written at a level the employee will understand and they should encompass the exposures he or she will encounter. Having sample labels and material safety data sheets, commonly used protective clothing or equipment on hand for the orientation is an excellent way to demonstrate a point. Make sure such orientation material is available in Spanish, Korean, Hmong or other necessary languages.

Any good speaker will take the time to practice his or her presentation. The same should hold true for the orientation process. Supervisors must practice their communication skills to ensure that new hires will clearly understand the important information relayed to them. Never assume that any safe work procedure is just “common sense.”

The Training Process
Being an effective trainer is not easy. But effective trainers can learn by practice, experience and feedback. Remember the basic rules of any training session. Communicate to the employee what they are going to learn:
1. Teach them verbally, visually, and with handout materials
2. Show them by example
3. Have the employees demonstrate their knowledge
4. Correct and follow-up until the employee’s performance is acceptable
5. Ask for feedback
6. Follow-up at specific times, repeating steps 1 - 5 above.

The orientation process needs to be conducted before the employee actually starts work. Many times organizations wait until they have enough individuals available to conduct a training class. Waiting for a class to fill up could result in an otherwise avoidable injury and/or property damage. Orientations can be coordinated to include the Human Resources department, the Safety department and the employees’ immediate supervisors. If a language barrier exists, use a bilingual employee to assist in the orientation process.

**What to Train On**
The scope and extent of any orientation training will be largely dependent on the position an individual is filling. Obviously, a person taking a position as a punch press operator would require a greater degree of orientation and training than a person assuming a position as a draftsman. The new employees must be familiarized with general rules of conduct, safety concerns specific to their job, general safety rules and other administrative items.

**Topics for orientation may include:**
- Company rules of conduct and disciplinary procedures
- General employee safety rules
- Rules of safe practices specific to job operations
- Prompt reporting of all work related accidents to their supervisor
- Modified duty responsibilities for the employee
- Body mechanics and material handling techniques
- Specific equipment training and certification (forklift, overhead crane, vehicle, etc.)
- Special hazard training for chemical safety (review of MSDS, etc.)
- Use and care of required personal protective equipment
- Training specific to government programs (OSHA, Lockout/Tagout, Bloodborne Pathogens, Respiratory Protection Program, etc.)
- Location of fire alarms and fire extinguishers
- Location of first aid kits
- Emergency evacuation procedures

**Location for the Orientation**
Training conducted in a quiet office or small meeting room is more likely to facilitate an employee’s retention than training conducted in a crowded lunchroom during break time. Training can be delivered in a one-on-one session or in a classroom environment. Training specific to job tasks is best handled in the plant, at the machine. This will provide an excellent means to communicate to the employee the specifics of the job and what the company holds as expectations. Hands-on training also provides immediate feedback to the supervisor as to how well the employee understands the tasks of the job. Such hands-on training is oftentimes necessary to comply with regulations, e.g., forklift training, crane operation, etc.

**Documentation**
In today’s legal climate, documentation of training is no longer just a suggestion, it’s a necessity. Documentation ensures employees have gone through prescribed training programs and is often the key to a company’s effective disciplinary program. A good way to ensure proper documentation is to use an orientation checklist. Items covered are checked off
and both the employee and supervisor sign and date the form, acknowledging that the training was carried out at that time. Such forms should be maintained in the employee’s personnel file (along with any documentation for updated training) for a minimum of 5 years.

**How to Handle Job Transfers and Re-Hires**

It is not uncommon for employees to accept different positions and responsibilities within a company. Tenured employees are not insulated from potential losses that can occur on the job, and they require the same specific job training and orientation that a new employee would receive. Training specific to company background and structure may not be necessary, but training specific to job tasks, safety training & certification, chemical safety, etc. would be necessary. If an employee leaves a company and comes back within 6 months to assume the same position, training may not be necessary unless there have been significant changes in operations, the business, or reporting structures. Employees re-hired out past 6 months should be re-routed through the orientation program regardless. Once again, proper record retention is important.

**Follow-Up and Feedback**

Never assume that a new employee has retained all the training information provided to them. Typically, the training is condensed into a several hours to an all-day session (consideration should be scheduling training to coincide with work-hardening tasks). Instructions provided may be complex and require multiple repetitions before they are fully understood by the employee. The supervisor needs to ask questions of the new employees to ensure they understand the rules and procedures detailed in the training sessions. Many times, a simple test with several important questions can verify that the employee understands. After the initial orientation, it is a good idea for the supervisor to keep in close contact with the new employee, observing activities and verbally confirming understanding of information. Unsafe behaviors or activities need to be addressed immediately in a positive and constructive manner. Supervisors also need to periodically request feedback from the employees as to their understanding of job requirements.

**Conclusion**

A comprehensive employee orientation program is an essential part of ensuring a workforce of properly trained and educated employees. Never assume an experienced employee does not need any form of orientation. Nothing can replace a quality, detailed description of what a company requires and expects from their employees. A formal orientation program will address these needs. Orientation must be completed before the employee actually begins work, and it must be documented. Care should be taken as to the appropriate person given the responsibility for this training. Experienced and tenured employees with bad habits may unintentionally teach new employees those same bad habits. Training should be focused and follow established guidelines.
New Employee Orientation Quiz

Please choose the correct answers for the following:

1. On the job safety is the responsibility of the employer, not the employee.
   - True   - False

2. The company’s safety rules are basic guidelines, and don’t have to be followed specifically.
   - True   - False

3. Guards on equipment should be removed if they get in the way of the operation.
   - True   - False

4. OSHA - Occupational Safety and Health Administration, is the agency that regulates workplace safety.
   - True   - False

5. Areas designated “mandatory use of personal protective equipment” means it has to be worn when an exposure to injury exists.
   - True   - False

6. The health hazard a particular product may pose to the employee can never be determined.
   - True   - False

7. Safe employees continually identify hazards in their workplace and bring these to the attention of management.
   - True   - False

8. It is okay to use a tool, piece of protective equipment, or machine that’s damaged and not working right.
   - True   - False

9. A company’s responsibility is to provide the employee with safety training; the employee’s responsibility is to show up for it.
   - True   - False

10. Workplace safety is everyone’s responsibility.
    - True   - False
Our safety evaluations, reports and recommendations are made solely to assist your organization in reducing hazards and the potential of hazards and accidents. These recommendations were developed from conditions observed and information provided at the time of our visit. They do not attempt to identify every possible loss potential, hazard or risk, nor do they guarantee that workplace accidents will be prevented. These safety evaluations, reports and recommendations are not a substitute for ongoing, well-researched internal safety and risk management programs. This report does not warrant that the property inspected and its operations are compliant with any law, rule or regulation.

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Safety Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name (First, Middle, Last)</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Age</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Department Assigned:</td>
<td>Type of Work:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transfer to Department:</td>
<td>Type of Work:</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
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This report shall be completed by the Supervisor and the new/transfer employee on the first day of employment.

I have been instructed in the following areas, where applicable: Yes N/A

- Company safety policies and programs
- Safety rules, both general and specific to job assignment
- Safety rule enforcement procedures
- Proper work shoes and other personal protective equipment
- Use of tools and equipment
- Handling of product
- Lifting, and the use of lifting equipment such as hoists and cranes
- Required OSHA program Training
- Emergency Action Plan
- Fire Prevention Plan
- Importance of housekeeping
- Safe operation of vehicle
- Special hazards of job

____________________  ________________

- When and where to report unsafe conditions
- How, when and where to report injuries

Supervisor | Date | Employee | Date

Important: If this employee is transferred to another type of job, a new safety checklist must be completed.