Five Ways to Improve Your Safety Inspections



Conducting regular safety inspections is a key component of any workplace safety program. Unfortunately, safety inspection methods leave a lot to be desired at many workplaces. Although the specific details of the inspection process will vary from operation to operation, here are five strategies just about any employer can use to improve inspections.

Hazards

There are numerous hazards and potential hazards at most workplaces. Their severity differs with the workplace and work being performed. Conducting regular inspections and following up with corrective actions can reduce the hazards and potential for injury, illness, property and equipment damage.

Be a Better Supervisor

1. Do Your Own Inspections (Don’t Rely Just on Safety Committees)

Internal safety inspections are often the domain of employee safety committees. But they shouldn’t be the only inspection game in town. It’s important management and supervisors are involved in inspections to lend a more trained eye and focus on the bigger picture, including consistency with the company’s overall safety program.

2. **Make Sure Inspection Forms Reflect Conditions of *Your* Workplace**

It’s important to document all inspections regardless of who carries them out. Although they can be a helpful starting point, generic, boilerplate inspection forms need to be tailored to fit your operations. Other inspection form pointers:

- Make sure forms account for both regulatory requirements and your company’s safety program.
- Leave plenty of blank space for comments and observations.
- Make sure it’s clear any problems identified must be noted on the inspection forms.

3. **Give Advanced Notice of Safety Committee Inspections**

Safety committee inspectors are often frustrated by the lack of cooperation from workers and supervisors. Giving advanced notice of inspections goes a long way to solving that problem because it enables supervisors to plan for and minimize

disruption caused by having the inspectors in the area, e.g., by manipulating the work schedule so that machines to be inspected are freed up at the appropriate times.

4. **Have “Fresh Eyes” Conduct Periodic Inspections**

One advantage of having supervisors conduct inspections of their own areas is that they’re familiar with the work and hazards and this expertise enhances the inspection process. But there’s also something to be said about having “fresh eyes” inspect the workplace. Have supervisors trade off and inspect each other’s areas or assemble an inspection teams that include members from outside the department.

5. **Instill the Idea that Everyone Is an Inspector**

The word “inspection” implies a formal, structured process. But all workers regularly conduct inspections without realizing it. For example, they look over their work stations, PPE, and equipment before starting their shifts. You can leverage this general awareness by instilling in workers the idea that simply being observant and paying attention to their surroundings is a type of inspection.

Final Word

The workplace safety inspection is an opportunity to evaluate the company’s whole OHS program. Adopting these five suggestions can go a long way toward making the most out of this opportunity.