Think of the Next Person Meeting Kit



There are many things that need to go right for a worksite or company to maintain a high level of safety and experience zero or a low number of injuries over a long period of time. One characteristic of a workforce that is very important to achieve low injury numbers is having employees who consider how their decisions affect others. When workers think about each other when preparing for a task or doing a task, everyone wins. An important rule of thumb when making a decision is “to think of the next person”.

“THINK OF THE NEXT PERSON”- DEFINITION

Preplanning is one of the most important things individuals can do at work to ensure safe and efficient operations. One aspect of preplanning is thinking about the others who may be impacted by your decisions or the work that you are doing. When you make a choice to do something at work you should not only just consider what is easy or convenient for you, but it should also be taken into consideration how that choice may affect another person.

¨THINKING OF THE NEXT PERSON¨ IS AWARENESS SAFETY

A safe workplace is an efficient workplace. When the proper safety protections are in place, workers feel safe doing their job, are more productive, are more likely to take personal accountability and be engaged in work. Having a safe workplace is an ongoing process which involves a culture of safety, safety awareness, as well as safe practices and procedures. Safety awareness is a constant realization that every worker should have at all times. It involves being constantly aware of how they are working, and being able to recognize the hazards they face. Safety awareness is absolutely essential in mitigating safety-related risks.

WORKPLACE EXAMPLES THAT OCCUR EVERY DAY TO WORKERS

Manual handling risks. A vendor is onsite and is delivering heavy boxes. A supervisor makes a quick decision to have the boxes placed in a small room out the way of the operation that day. As work goes on, more objects and obstacles are placed around the boxes without thought. One day the boxes must be retrieved, however, there are too many things in the way for a forklift or piece of machinery to access the boxes. Because of this, the boxes must be lifted by hand by laborers and carried to a spot where they can be accessed. This puts the laborers at unnecessary risk for a sprain or strain injury.

Property damage incidents. A busy construction site that has hundreds of workers on it has been experiencing property damage incidents. A safety manager who is reviewing these incidents notices most of the items damaged are tools and equipment set down by laborers when they are not being used. These items are not expected to be in these areas and are not seen by heavy equipment operators who end up striking them.

EXAMINATION OF EXAMPLES

In these examples, it is easy to see one thing that went wrong was a lack of foresight and not thinking of the others who may be affected by certain decisions. In the manual handling example, a lack of foresight by the supervisor put the laborers at great risk for injury by having to move the heavy boxes by hand. This exposure to unnecessary risk for a sprain or strain injury occurs often. Even a simple decision to place a heavy box on the floor for sake of ease can lead to an injury for the next person who has to bend over to pick it up.

Similar incidents to the property damage example occur daily on construction sites. Carelessness or lack of forethought about the right place to put objects or park vehicles leads to property damage. In the example, the laborers did not take the time to set items in a place where operators would see them or expect them to be. If the laborers would have given thought to the operators' movements in that area they probably would have chosen a safer place to put the objects.

RELEVANCE OF ¨THINK OF THE NEXT PERSON¨ FOR WORKERS

The safety of workers in the workplace should always take priority. Workers need to stay safe and able to perform their duties, to ensure that the environment, is one which is safe enough for them to function in. Ensuring worker safety means creating a safe, efficient, positive workplace where ¨think of the next person¨ is actualized.

THE ELEMENTS OF THE THESE KIND OF PROGRAMS INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Communication and involvement between the employer and the employee in relation to safety and health issues in the workplace.
- A copy of the company's employee safety and health policy.
- Encouragement of employee involvement in policy-making for health and safety issues.
- Participation in safety activities.
- Regular and timely analysis of workplace conditions in an effort to identify and eliminate potential or existing hazards.
- Ensuring the employees are aware of the hazard analysis for each job and process.
- Ensuring that workers are aware of how to operate and maintain their personal protective gear.
- Training workers to handle specific situations using the proper procedures.
- Only allowing people who are authorized and instructed to do certain jobs, to actually do them.
- Employees should be prepared with emergency drills.
- Ensuring that you focus on the employees that are learning new operations in the workplace, so that you know if they have all the necessary job skills and hazard awareness.
- Training managers and supervisor to spot hazards and understand what their responsibilities are in relation to them.

FINAL WORD

Great things happen when everyone begins to consider how their decisions will affect others. Realize that your own safety not only depends on your decisions, but choices made by every other person working around you. A choice as simple as placing a heavy box on a table instead of the floor can save a coworker from experiencing a severe back injury that places them out of work for months.