

# Developing an OSHA VPP Union Commitment Letter

Union commitment letters serve as a documented statement of support from each collective bargaining unit within an organization. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires these signed statements of support from each applicable union at a Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) applicant's worksite. Use the tips provided in this one pager to help your union(s) draft their own commitment letter(s). An example is provided at the end of this one pager.

## INCLUDE A GENERAL STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

A general statement of support conveys the collective bargaining unit's approval of your organization's pursuit for OSHA VPP Star recognition. Some collective bargaining units even explain how and why they protect the employees they represent—often comparing the purpose of OSHA VPP to the bargaining unit's purpose of protecting its members.

*Commitment letters are, and should be, unique to your climate and working relationships.*

*They are required if you are applying for OSHA VPP Star recognition.*

## WRITE AN EMPLOYEE ENCOURAGEMENT STATEMENT

Most union commitment letters include a short passage encouraging bargaining unit members to openly support and participate in the safety and health program and OSHA VPP initiative. This statement, communicated directly to the bargaining unit members, can help you increase employee involvement.

## CONSIDER ADDING ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS OF UNION RIGHTS (DEPENDENT ON THE UNION-MANAGEMENT RELATIONSHIP AT YOUR WORKSITE)

Many collective bargaining units include a statement specifying that they do not forfeit their rights whenever they sign a commitment letter. Rights under the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act cannot be forfeited by signing a commitment letter; nonetheless, they are often included.

Additionally, collective bargaining units have the right to withdraw their OSHA VPP commitment letters and support of the organization's VPP initiative at any time. Many unions include a statement specifying their right to withdrawal support to document and reiterate this right to organizational leadership and management. Your union(s) may consider foregoing this language depending on your labor-management relationship(s).

## ACCOMMODATE YOUR WORKSITE CLIMATE AND RELATIONSHIPS

In some cases, organization's combine their union commitment and leadership commitment letters into a single letter of commitment. However, some collective bargaining units feel their commitment letters have "more merit" when they stand alone. Both are acceptable! Choose the method that works best for your worksite.

Remember, a union commitment letter is not a collective bargaining agreement!

## SIGN THE UNION COMMITMENT LETTER

Each collective bargaining unit authorized representative, such as a Union President, must sign a letter acknowledging their commitment to the organization's goal of achieving OSHA VPP approval. This means multiple unions can sign a single commitment letter or create and sign their own individual letters. Again, choose the method that works best for your worksite.

If your organization is an OSHA VPP Star site, and your union(s) undergoes a leadership change, then you are required by OSHA to acquire another commitment letter with the new authorized representative's signature within 60 days of that leadership change.

If you submitted your application to OSHA and are waiting for an on-site evaluation, and your union(s) undergoes a leadership change, then you should have the new authorized representative review, revise, and sign another commitment letter as soon as reasonably possible.



The image represents a Commanding Officer and Union President committing to pursuing OSHA VPP approval.  
Image retrieved from [Bing Images](#).

You likely have many collective bargaining units representing your employees if your organization has a mobile workforce (e.g., construction organization, maintenance crew). OSHA understands it can be difficult to obtain commitment letter from mobile workforce unions and only expects signed commitment letters when collective bargaining units represent the majority of the workforce.

For additional information on the SMCX's services, please visit the SMCX-hosted website at: <https://www.smscx.org/>.

## Union Commitment Letter Template

**Bargaining Agency:** [Click here to enter text.](#)  
**Local #:** [Click here to enter text.](#)  
**Address:** [Click here to enter text.](#)  
**Primary Point of Contact:** [Click here to enter text.](#)

The primary purpose of the *Union Name and Local #* is to effectively promote and protect the interest of our Members. Without a doubt, the workplace safety and health (S&H) of our membership is paramount in our efforts to protect our Members. As the Authorized Collective Bargaining Unit for our Members, we, in an effort to assure a safe and healthful work environment, do hereby agree to participate in a joint commitment with the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and *Organization Name* in the OSHA Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP).

Furthermore, *Union Name and Local #* leadership pledges its full support to implementing OSHA's VPP and our encouragement to all our Members to participate. We feel OSHA's VPP encourages creative involvement in the workplace S&H program from all Members whom we represent, and believe OSHA VPP is an effective tool in reaching our common goal of a safe, healthful, and incident-free workplace. OSHA VPP also stimulates other organizations and tenants working onsite to go beyond regulatory compliance to achieve S&H excellence, which provides additional S&H protection to our Members.

We acknowledge by signing this agreement, we, the members of *Union Name and Local #*, do not forfeit our rights under the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act. *Union Name and Local #* also reserves the right to withdraw support from this agreement at any time.

We look forward to working as a team to ensure we provide world-class occupational S&H protection to everyone we represent.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature (Union President)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date