Key Considerations for Planning and Implementing Routine Safety Self-Inspections

A proactive, ongoing safety self-inspection process is a critical element of any safety and occupational health management system (SOHMS). Routine safety self-inspections are an effective way to recognize, identify, assess, and eliminate hazardous conditions at your organization before they result in injury and illness. These inspections are typically performed by your workforce (e.g., supervisors, employees, safety and health [S&H] committee members) rather than your Safety Office. This one pager describes items you should consider when planning and implementing routine safety self-inspections at your organization. Be sure to follow and implement all DoD, Service or Agency, and SOHMS requirements in your safety self-inspection process.

AREAS TO INCLUDE

Your safety self-inspections should include all workplace areas and activities (e.g., storage facilities, warehouses, office spaces, industrial areas) within the organization. These inspections can also include tools and equipment (e.g., forklifts, powered industrial trucks, transportation vehicles, safety devices).

Create a list of the areas and items you want to include in your safety self-inspections.

FREQUENCY OF INSPECTIONS

First, follow any DoD, Service or Agency, or SOHMS safety self-inspection frequency requirements (e.g., monthly, on a quarterly basis).

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Then, use your knowledge of the hazards, risks, and work environments to determine if you need to increase the frequency of your safety self-inspections in certain work areas or for various equipment. Inspect work areas or equipment with more hazards or with greater risks more frequently. For example, you may decide your administrative areas need quarterly safety self-inspections, but your welding shops require monthly safety self-inspections.

CHECKLISTS

Checklists help your inspectors identify specific hazards in the workplace. You can also use them to document and verify the completion of each inspection. There are templates available for a variety of areas (e.g., areas, office spaces, warehouses, transportation vehicles). Consider customizing and tailoring these templates for your organization!

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EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Implementing an effective self-safety inspection program requires training employees on the safety self-inspection process and safety procedures applicable to your organization. OSHA recommends involving employees in your safety self-inspection program so they gain a better understanding of jobs, tasks, and hazards they may encounter. Use the information in OSHA Publication 3071, "*Job Hazard Analysis*," to train employees on hazard identification techniques, even if you do not use job hazard analyses at your organization.

SUPERVISOR INVOLVEMENT

Supervisors must understand your safety self-inspection process and explain to their employees why it's important to identify and reduce hazards in their work areas. Ask supervisors who conduct these inspections to bring employees with them—use the safety self-inspection process as a teaching-learning experience! This increases employee participation in your S&H program.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR DURING INSPECTIONS

Use checklists during safety self-inspections so inspectors know what to look for. Include space for "on-the-spot" corrections. Remember, your checklists should include the work environment,

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equipment, and processes within an inspection area. You can also ask inspectors to observe organizational employees, contractors, sub-contractors, and temporary employees, too. They may display unsafe behaviors or create unsafe conditions.

TRACKING COMPLETED INSPECTIONS AND IDENTIFIED FINDINGS

Think about how to track and validate your completed safety self-inspections. Consider the following questions. Are inspections conducted in a timely manner? Did inspectors document all their findings? How will you update the hazard tracking log to capture, track, and close out safety self-inspection findings? Will you need to work with other personnel (e.g., Facilities) to address findings?

USE RESULTS FOR IMPROVEMENTS

Trend safety self-inspection findings and share the results with employees so they can recognize and identify these hazards in their work areas. Review completed safety self-inspections, assess inspector knowledge, and update inspector training, as needed. Consider developing S&H goals and objectives to reduce repeat findings and/or emphasize the safety self-inspection process when it is not functioning as expected. Share the good things, too! Highlight any work your organization did to address safety self-inspection findings.

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