

# 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. OSHA requires these signed statements of support from each applicable union at a VPP applicant's worksite. Use the tips provided as useful first steps in helping your union(s) draft their own commitment letter(s). In addition, see the commitment letter template at the end of this document for help drafting your own letter.

## INCLUDE A GENERAL STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

A general statement of support simply communicates the collective bargaining unit's backing of your organization's pursuit for OSHA VPP Star approval. Some collective bargaining units even explain their purpose in protecting the employees they represent, comparing the purpose of OSHA VPP approval to their own purpose in serving their members.

*Commitment letters are, and should be, unique to your climate and working relationships if you are applying for OSHA VPP Star approval.*

## WRITE AN EMPLOYEE ENCOURAGEMENT STATEMENT

In addition to a statement supporting your OSHA VPP initiative, most union commitment letters include a short passage encouraging their members to openly support and participate in the initiative. This statement helps communicate directly to bargaining unit members through the letter.

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

Many collective bargaining units feel the need to include a statement indicating they do not forfeit their rights when they sign a commitment letter. Rights under the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act cannot be forfeited through signing a commitment letter; nonetheless, they are often included.

Additionally, OSHA affords collective bargaining units the right to withdraw their OSHA VPP support statements at any time. Many unions draft a statement of their right to withdrawal in the commitment letter to further document and communicate this right to management. Depending on your labor-management relationship, your unions may consider foregoing this language.

## ACCOMMODATE YOUR WORKSITE CLIMATE AND RELATIONSHIPS

In some cases, sites combine their union commitment and leadership commitment letters into a single letter of commitment. Sometimes, collective bargaining units feel their commitment letters have "more merit" when they stand alone. Choose the method which best serves your worksite! Remember, a union commitment letter is not a collective bargaining agreement!

## SIGN THE UNION COMMITMENT LETTER

Each collective bargaining unit must sign the letter to acknowledge their commitment to implementing and sustaining OSHA VPP. Sometimes this step includes individual unit signatures, and other times, it is a separate support statement from each collective bargaining unit. The authorized representative of the collective bargaining unit, such as a Union President, must sign the statement to show their commitment to pursuing OSHA VPP approval.

For OSHA VPP Star sites, OSHA requires a newly signed commitment letter within 60 days of a leadership change. If you have already submitted your application to OSHA and a leadership change occurs within a collective bargaining unit, have your new union leadership review, revise, and sign the new 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](#).

If your organization has a mobile workforce (e.g., construction organization, maintenance crew), you may have a large number of collective bargaining units representing your employees. OSHA understands the difficulty in obtaining support statements from the numerous unions covering mobile workforces and only expects statements of support 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.smcx.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