

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. The tips provided could serve as a useful first step 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 in drafting your own letter.

INCLUDE A GENERAL STATEMENT OF SUPPORT

A general statement of support simply communicates the collective bargaining unit's support of your organization's OSHA VPP recognition pursuit. Some collective bargaining units even explain their purpose in protecting the employees they represent, comparing the purpose of OSHA VPP recognition 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 recognition.

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 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 that 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 an added piece.

Additionally, OSHA affords collective bargaining units the right to withdrawal their OSHA VPP support statements at any time. Many unions will draft a statement of their right to withdrawal in the commitment letter so management is fully aware of this right.

ACCOMMODATE YOUR WORKSITE CLIMATE AND RELATIONSHIPS

In some cases, sites have combined 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, this 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 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 recognition.

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.



Dugway Proving Grounds Logistics Readiness Center (LRC) Director and the Union President coming to agreement for pursuing OSHA VPP recognition. Image courtesy of Dugway Proving Grounds LRC.

If your organization has a mobile workforce (e.g., construction organization, maintenance crew), you may have a large number of collective bargaining units that represent 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.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 that 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 addition S&H protection to our Members.

We acknowledge that in 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