

Safety Management System (SMS) - Element 3

A health and safety management system in Saskatchewan's healthcare system includes the following six elements:

1. Management commitment and leadership
2. Hazard identification and control
3. Training and communications
4. Inspections
5. Reporting and investigations
6. Emergency response

Each element consists of sub elements.

Element 3 - Training and communications focuses on:

Training

Workers need to know how to do their job safely. The specific training they require depends on the nature of their job and the hazards associated with it. Everyone at all levels of the organization should receive training for their health and safety responsibilities.

The *Saskatchewan Employment Act*, Part III, 3-1(1)(ff) gives the following definition: **“train”** means to give information and explanation to a worker with respect to a particular subject-matter and to require a practical demonstration that the worker has acquired knowledge or skill related to the subject-matter.

Orientation

Health and safety education should start with orientation of new workers or when workers are transferred to a new job or work unit. Orientation normally covers items such as an explanation of the function of the work unit, administrative arrangements, miscellaneous policies and rules.

A department or unit orientation would include specifics on:

- location of emergency exits and equipment
- location of the OH&S bulletin board
- location of applicable legislation workers follow
- location of the policy and procedures manual
- location of the communications book
- location of the safety data sheets
- job specific hazards
- relevant safe work practices and procedures

Occupational Health Committee

Occupational health committees (called *committees* or *OHCs*) are required in workplaces with ten or more workers. Worker health and safety representatives are required in high hazard industries (health care is high hazard!) with from five to nine workers. Committees and representatives are the primary mechanisms for employers and workers to work together in identifying and resolving health and safety concerns.

Committee members responsibilities are set out in the Act, 3-27. Legislation steps out all requirements.

Employers must ensure committees are set up and maintained as required by law. Employees have a duty to help make committees effective.

Inspecting the workplace is one of the key duties of the committee. The employer must arrange for the committee to regularly inspect the workplace (regulation 28).

Communication

Required by legislation, OH&S bulletin boards keeps workers informed about committee activities.

One of the most important elements of an effective safety management system is conducting regular discussions (Safety Talks) on safety topics that are relevant to the work being done. Element 3 requires these discussions be held on a weekly basis.

Document Development, Review and Communication

All employees should have quick and easy access to all the safety management system documentation they may require during the course of their work activities. New and revised documents should go through a formal approval process before being included. When any changes are made there should be a plan in place to ensure all employees are aware of changes.

All documentation should be written in language that can be understood by all employees.

Employee Involvement

Successful safety management systems have high levels of worker involvement. Worker participation in the risk assessment process and the development of safe work practices and procedures is particularly important.

A safety management system becomes part of the culture - the way people safely do their jobs.

(source: Safety Management System Basics, SASWH, 09/15)
additional Safety Talks specific to Safety Management System (e.g., elements, Leading & Lagging Indicators, Risk Matrix) are available on www.saswh.ca

Safety Talk Discussion

Be Accountable: Choose safety - work safe - and go home injury free!