

Protecting your Investment...

Making Health and Safety Everyone's Top Priority

The first step to success...

As a business owner you invest a great deal of time, effort and money into your employees through hiring and training. This training helps the business succeed. By making health and safety everyone's top priority you protect that investment.

Although your business may not appear to be particularly hazardous, every business has some potential hazards – lifting, cleaning fluids, trailing wires, or electrical equipment for example. Developing a health and safety policy and program is a very important aspect of committing to a healthy and safe environment.

An effective health and safety program shows your employees that they are valued. This raises the level of trust, cooperation and commitment in the workplace and that improves customer service and satisfaction. This quick reference tool is designed to help you develop a health and safety policy. This is the first step in developing a successful health and safety system. A health and safety policy is also a legal requirement under the OH&S Act.

Where do I start?

Before you begin to write your policy, you may want ask yourself the following questions. Use the back of this sheet to record your answers.

- > What are the business's values and why? Values are things that you or your organization believe in, or principles that you live by. They are powerful motivators. Depending on what is happening in your organizations these values may be driven by important business issues. Some examples of values or business issues include: costs, teamwork and collaboration, quality, profit, ethics of health and safety.
- > What are the workplace goals or objectives in regards to health and safety? An example of this might be to have fewer injuries and illness.
- > What resources are available? How does the company deal with conflicting priorities or resources?
- > What experience and ideas can my employees offer? Remember that as the person who completes the required tasks every day, they have a unique perspective on their roles in the company.

The answers to these questions will make writing the policy easier. Once you have a list of the answers you can start to write the policy.

What should I include in my policy?

Your policy should be simple and easy to read and only a few paragraphs long. You should include:

- > Your vision and commitment to workplace health and safety,
- > Your health and safety goals,
- > Your commitment to complying with the law (The Occupational Health and Safety Act),
- > Workplace roles and responsibilities for health and safety, both employee and employer,
- > Your commitment to making health and safety as high a priority as production,
- > Your dedication to identifying and resolving potential workplace problems or issues as soon as possible.

How can I make the policy effective?

To be effective, the policy should reflect your unique workplace. It should not simply be copied from another company. Your policy will also be more effective if the employees, or an employee representative, can help write it.

Once the policy is complete it should be posted in a place where all employees can see it. You should also give each employee a copy. The policy should be reviewed and updated annually, and signed and dated by the owner, or management.

