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SERIOUS ABOUT SAFETY

Winter Services' Mike Frazier goes the extra mile to educate employees

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Moose River Media

SPECIAL

SAFETY ISSUE

PPE & OSHA // DRIVING
MANUALS // MSDS // SUBS
EQUIPMENT // TRAINING



By the book

CREATE A MANUAL THAT OUTLINES YOUR COMPANY'S COMMITMENT TO SAFETY

BY KAREN KIER // Contributor

The first time someone got injured, we knew the medical costs and the lost work time were going to cut into profits. To minimize this risk, we created a small brochure with some general information about wearing safety glasses, exposure to chemicals, pointers on safe lifting techniques and other basics. It was very brief and "just the facts." As time went on and we continued to grow, we added to the information provided.

Client, insurance benefits

Today we are a much larger company, with about 80 team members in the summer and more than 130 in the winter. Maintaining safety as our first priority is critical to our value in the market. Many companies will not hire us unless they have reviewed our safety manual and know we have a good program in place. They want to know that we are as committed to safety and maintain as high a standard for our



team members as they do for their employees.

In addition to bringing us work, having an effective safety manual has helped reduce injuries, which results in less lost work time and lower insurance costs.

Building a manual

As safety manager, my full-time responsibility is to maintain our safety program. When I became safety manager, developing a comprehensive safety manual was my first order of business.

I made a list of topics that I thought should be included and asked the company's managers to provide input. By involving them early in the process, the managers began to buy into the idea that we were creating a culture shift. Next I involved our safety committee members, who were excited that we were putting a new manual together.

MANUAL BASICS

- Create your manual so that your team members can relate to and understand the information, rather than have it read like regulations and policy.
- Use your safety manual as a selling point to customers and your insurance company. A thoughtful and thorough manual will show them you are serious about safety.
- Teach the manual with a variety of methods, especially visual aids that may show pictures from real jobs that highlight key points.
- Reward your employees for safety on the job.

» EDITOR'S NOTE: Since opening its doors more than 35 years ago, Pro Scapes, Inc. in Jamesville, NY, has known the importance of safety on the job. As the company grew, so did its safety program. Safety Manager Karen Kier shares some advice the company has learned along the way.

SAFETY MANUAL MUST HAVES

SAFETY
EXTRA



Every company's safety manual will fit the culture of the organization and may vary in complexity. But each manual should have some basic topics:

SAFETY MANUAL CHECKLIST

- Opening letter from the president** or safety manager that details management's commitment to safety.
- Overview of company safety program**, including each person's role in its success—from the president down to individual team members.
- Overview of the company safety training program.** We also include information on how team members can be involved in safety planning.
- General safety**
 - Emergencies/Evacuation/First Aid
 - Safe Operating Procedures
 - Housekeeping
 - General Rules
 - Material Handling & Back Safety
 - Fall Protection & Ladder Safety
 - Blood-borne Pathogens
 - Hearing Conservation
 - Hazard Identification & Assessment
 - Personal Protective Equipment
 - Weather-related Illnesses
 - Chemical Handling/Hazard Communications Program
 - Lock Out/Tag Out
 - Job Site Safety & Security
 - Fleet/Driver Safety
 - Fire Safety
 - Ergonomics & Stretching
- Accident management**
- Safe use of equipment.** Proper use of equipment is one of the keys to safety. Our manual provides key tips for the safe operation of several pieces of equipment, including snowblowers, plows and heavy equipment.
- Forms**
 - Incident Report
 - Hazard Assessment Form
 - PPE Matrix
 - Alcohol and Drug Policy
 - Team Member Sign Off/Commitment to Safety. Every team member must sign our company commitment to safety, signaling that they will make safety their No. 1 priority.

Teach what you preach

Ensuring that our team members know and understand what's in the manual starts when we conduct orientation training with new team members. We know people learn through a variety of ways (and in some ways better than others), so we give them the manual to read, we talk about it, and we try to make it visual. After orientation, as team members continue their equipment training, points from the manual are reviewed by the equipment trainer. The company's expectations for safe behavior are repeatedly driven home.

We have witnessed a total culture change with how our team members think about safety.

Using the manual doesn't stop after new hire training. While our safety manual includes our policies, it also contains helpful hints, things to watch for, and copies of some frequently used checklists and forms. Topics from the manual are reviewed at weekly crew leader meetings, and the information is used for weekly tailgate talks.

Reinforce safe behavior

We also try to reinforce safe behavior whenever we can. Through our "Green Band Program" we give team members a green "Pro Scapes Safe Team Member" wristband when we see someone following manual safety tips. When a team member gets five bands, he/she can turn them in for a gift certificate for lunch.

As comprehensive as our safety manual is, we also review it prior to the start of each new season and make any necessary adjustments or changes to ensure it continues to meet our needs and keeps our team as safe as possible.

We know our safety manual has had an impact on our employees. We have nearly 100% compliance with the use of personal protective equipment—we didn't see that four years ago. We have witnessed a total culture change with how our team members think about safety. ❄

Karen Kier is safety manager for Pro Scapes in Jamesville, NY.