

Enhanced Safety Awareness Program

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Abstract

The Enhanced Safety Program was implemented in the Custodial Services department in 2003. The program was initiated due to the number of preventable accidents that were occurring in the department. The program was easily implemented in the area with no additional resources required and has grown from a reactive program to a proactive accident prevention program.

The program process is simple. When an accident occurs, the accident report is completed by the staff member and submitted to the Building and Grounds Superintendent. The Building and Grounds Superintendent then meets with the staff member as soon as possible to review a safety training video related to the incident and to discuss the situation, corrective actions and future preventable actions.

Since the implementation of the program, the staff members have become safety advocates and report any concerns that might result in accidents and these are addressed immediately. The program is credited in a decrease in accidents in the Custodial Services department with seventeen accidents reported in 2003 to five reports in 2007, a 71% decrease.

Introduction of the Organization

The University of Wisconsin-Stout (*UW-Stout*) is one of the 13 publicly supported universities in the University of Wisconsin System. The UW System designates UW-Stout as a special mission institution, forged from the heritage of its founder, Senator James Huff Stout, a Wisconsin industrialist. Stout believed that people needed advanced education to prepare them for America's developing industrial society. To implement this vision, Mr. Stout founded a private institution called the Stout Manual Training School in 1891. In 1911, the training school became a public institution named Stout Institute and received teacher-training accreditation in 1928 with programs centered on industrial arts and home economics. In 1932, Stout was accredited as a college and received Master's degree accreditation in 1948. In 1971, UW-Stout became part of the UW System when a State of Wisconsin law combined its two public university systems under one Board of Regents. In March 2007, The University of Wisconsin Board of Regents unanimously approved a resolution designating UW-Stout as "Wisconsin's Polytechnic University".

University of Wisconsin-Stout, as a special mission institution, serves a unique role in the University of Wisconsin System. UW-Stout is characterized by a distinctive array of programs leading to professional careers focused on the needs of society. These programs are presented through an approach to learning which involves combining theory, practice and experimentation. Extending this special mission into the future requires that instruction, research and public service programs be adapted and modified as the needs of society change.

Statement (Restatement) of the Problem/Initiative

The Custodial Services department was experiencing a high number of accident reports related to slips and falls, back injuries and many other types of reports. Many of these accidents resulted in lost time which creates additional work load for the department during the staff member's absence. The goal of implementing the Enhanced Safety Awareness Program was to reduce the number of accidents and also the severity of the accidents by providing an immediate refresher course on proper safety after an incident occurs.

Design

The Enhanced Safety Awareness Program required little effort to design or implement. The program was initiated as pilot program in 2003 and went from a pilot program to a normal occurrence almost instantly. The program design did not require any budget planning or additional costs. The program is a simple and easy to implement process as outlined here:

- An accident report is completed after an accident occurs and is turned into the Building and Grounds Superintendent.
- The Building and Grounds Superintendent contacts the Safety and Risk Management office to request a safety video related to the type of accident that occurred.
- The staff member and the Building and Grounds Superintendent meet to view the video together and discuss the details of the accident and preventable measures.

If any corrective action is identified from the meeting, the corrective action is taken immediately.

- If it was found that the staff member's behaviors need to be corrected, the staff member and Building and Grounds Superintendent discuss alternate behaviors.
- Following the meeting, the training is logged in the staff member's training file.

Implementation

The implementation of the program went smoothly and did not require any lengthy timeline. The employees were already familiar with the accident report procedure prior to the implementation of this program so that did not require any additional training or notification. Due to the training that the Safety and Risk Management office conducts, there was no additional cost for videos or equipment to implement the program. The program only required the time to watch the video and for discussion, averaging a half hour per meeting.

Benefits

Since the implementation of the Enhanced Safety Awareness Program, the number of accident reports has decreased in the Custodial Services department from seventeen reports in 2003 to five reports in 2007, a 71% decrease. Of these five reports in 2007, only one of these resulted in lost time. The decrease in accident reports is credited to the implementation of this program. The program has created an awareness of proper safety measures and also has created an atmosphere where employees are reporting concerns that are remedied prior to any accident occurring.

The data below represents all of UW-Stout's workers' compensation claims and the University's Experience Modifier, with the claims from Academic Custodial representing a portion of these. Since 2003, UW-Stout has experienced a decrease in many of the workers' compensation indicators.

UW-Stout				
Frequency and severity of workers' compensation claims				
Year	Total Claims	OSHA Recordable Claims	Claims with lost time	Days lost
2002	91	62	12	118
2003	90	41	6	61
2004*	77	46	8	355
2005	84	39	14	108
2006	49	24	5	127

** The 355 lost days were related to long term absences of primarily 3 people. We were not able to provide alternative work to these individuals due to the nature of the injury and the total restrictions that applied.*

Experience Modifier	
Target: EMF remains lower than 100	
2003	92.2
2004	87.6
2005	111
2006	106
2007	81

The experience modifier is the adjustment of manual rating based on previous loss experience. An indicator of 100 indicates the anticipated losses closely match the actual losses.

The Enhanced Safety Awareness Program is not the only reason credited for the decrease, but is considered a major contributor to the decrease. Looking at the 2006 data of days lost there were five accidents with 127 days lost for an average of 25.4 days lost per incident. In this scenario, a custodian with an hourly salary of \$12.50 at

25.4 days lost results in a \$2,540 reduction in lost productivity. For the Custodial Services department, a decrease in accidents has had an enormous impact on their productivity.

Retrospective

After reflection of the design and implementation of the Enhanced Safety Awareness Program, no revisions would be made.