

# Injury and Illness Prevention Programs

Training from the New Jersey  
Work Environment Council



## Factsheets:

- 1. Why Management Should Support Prevention Programs**
- 2. Model Letter to Management Requesting a Copy of their Prevention Program (Unionized Workforce Version)**
- 3. Model Letter to Management Requesting a Copy of their Prevention Program (Non-unionized Workforce Version)**

## Injury and Illness Prevention Program Checklist

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## Why Management Should Support Prevention Programs

Here are three key reasons why management should support Injury and Illness Prevention Programs.

### **1. Prevention is cheaper than injuries and illnesses.**

- Lack of prevention can drain money in lost time, lost productivity, workers' compensation, and the cost of replacing employees and equipment.
- We apply this principle in our own lives every day. That's why we change oil in our cars or keep gutters clean.

### **2. Prevention programs have been proven to work for both large and small employers.**

- The Department of Defense, the nation's largest employer, adopted a prevention program to protect workers employed or stationed at the nation's military installations and reduced its lost workday rate by 41 percent.
- Small businesses in Ohio that established prevention programs cut workers' comp cases by an average of 52% and the cost per claim by 80%.
- A recent RAND Corporation study found that average injury rates declined more than 20 percent over a two-year period at workplaces where California's prevention standard was fully enforced.

### **3. An OSHA Prevention Standard could require every employer under OSHA's jurisdiction to have a Prevention Program suitable for its workplaces, not just employers that are committed to worker safety.**

*Based on Injury and Illness Prevention Programs, OSHA White Paper, January 2012*

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## Model Letter to Management Requesting a Copy of their Prevention Program for a Unionized Workforce

### (Union Letterhead)

Date

Dear...

In June, 2012, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) updated the national standard for Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems.

The ANSI standard is designed to protect all workers in America and to maintain a level playing field so irresponsible companies don't gain a competitive advantage.

**The ANSI standard calls on all employers in the U.S. to maintain and implement a written Injury and Illness Prevention Program.**

Here are some of the elements each prevention program is supposed to include:

- Identifying all hazards in the workplace and taking action to correct them.
- Involving employees in hazard identification and correction.
- Using the most effective solutions such as replacing toxic materials, local exhaust ventilation, or enclosing hazardous operations, and only using personal protective equipment like respirators as a last resort.
- Providing health and safety education and training to all employees.
- Investigating all accidents, work-related illnesses, and near misses to see how to prevent hazards in the future.
- Monitoring employee exposure to hazardous substances.

*(continued)*

- Ensuring that employees of contractors are protected as well.
- Maintaining complete health and safety records including, but not limited to, OSHA 300 Injury and Illness Logs.
- Regularly evaluating how well the prevention program is working.

In addition, OSHA has made it a priority to develop an Injury and Illness Prevention Program standard with many of these same requirements.

By [date?], we request a copy of your Injury and Illness Prevention Program, as well as all documents, written and audiovisual materials, and records that show how the program is actually being carried out. We have a legal right to this information under the National Labor Relations Act 29 U.S.C. Section 185(a) as well as our collective bargaining agreement.

Sincerely,

Authorized Union Representative

*Based on ANSI/AIHA Z10*

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## Model Letter to Management Requesting a Copy of their Prevention Program for a Non-unionized Workforce

### (Heading)

Date

Dear...

In June, 2012, the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) updated the national standard for Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems.

The ANSI standard is designed to protect all workers in America and to maintain a level playing field so irresponsible companies don't gain a competitive advantage.

**The ANSI standard calls on all employers in the U.S. to maintain and implement a written Injury and Illness Prevention Program. Here are some of the elements each prevention program is supposed to include:**

- Identifying all hazards in the workplace and taking action to correct them.
- Involving employees in hazard identification and correction.
- Using the most effective solutions such as replacing toxic materials, local exhaust ventilation, or enclosing hazardous operations, and only using personal protective equipment like respirators as a last resort.
- Providing health and safety education and training to all employees.
- Investigating all accidents, work-related illnesses, and near misses to see how to prevent hazards in the future.
- Monitoring employee exposure to hazardous substances.
- Ensuring that employees of contractors are protected as well.

*(continued)*

- Maintaining complete health and safety records including, but not limited to, OSHA 300 Injury and Illness Logs.
- Regularly evaluating how well the prevention program is working.

In addition, OSHA has made it a priority to develop an Injury and Illness Prevention Program standard with many of these same requirements.

By [date?], I request a copy of your Injury and Illness Prevention Program, as well as all documents, written and audiovisual materials, and records that show how the program is actually being carried out. My right to request this information is protected under section 11c of the Occupational Safety and Health Act and OSHA's Injury and Illness Recordkeeping Rule.

Sincerely,

*Based on ANSI/AIHA Z10*

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## Prevention Program Checklist From the New Jersey Work Environment Council

Use this checklist to help evaluate the overall Injury and Illness Prevention Program in your workplace

### Management Leadership

Does management...

- Have a serious commitment to having an effective prevention program?
- Provide appropriate financial, human, and organizational resources to protect workers' safety and health?
- Institute policies that places safety and health on the level of importance as production?
- Institute a communications system that encourages all workers to inform their supervisor and management about workplace hazards without fear of reprisal?

### Worker participation

Are employees and their representatives...

- Provided with timely information about hazards, including accident, illness, incident, and near-miss records and investigation results, as well as reports on employee exposure and hazard monitoring?
- Included in planning, evaluation and implementation of hazard controls, including inspections and audits, worker surveys, recommendations for improvements, shutting down unsafe operations if necessary, developing an ongoing list of health and safety hazards, and tracking management follow-up?
- Included in identifying and removing obstacles to participation, such as fear of reprisals for reporting hazards, injuries, or illnesses?
- Included in a joint health and safety committee that operates with management and employee representatives as genuinely equal partners, sets deadlines for correcting hazards, investigates accidents and near misses, asks workers for their input about hazards, ensures access to all relevant information, and keeps records, track progress, and evaluates success?

*(continued)*

## **Hazard identification and assessment**

- \_\_\_ Is the workplace designed so an error will not result in an injury or illness?
- \_\_\_ For each work process or material used, do employees (and their representatives) and management discuss whether there is a way to make it safer or reduce or eliminate exposure?
- \_\_\_ Are hazards identified by referring to state and federal laws, to records of injuries, illnesses and near misses, and to hazards typically faced in this industry?
- \_\_\_ Are hazards identified and controlled before new processes or materials are brought into the workplace?
- \_\_\_ Are employees who do the work consulted in purchasing decisions to ensure that the safest materials and processes are chosen?
- \_\_\_ Does identification of hazards cover the work of contractors?

## **Hazard prevention and control**

- \_\_\_ Are hazards controlled first by eliminating them altogether, then by engineering controls, then by administrative controls, and only then by personal protective equipment?
- \_\_\_ Is equipment regularly and thoroughly maintained?
- \_\_\_ Is training provided on how to use and maintain personal protective equipment when it is the only alternative?
- \_\_\_ Do all employees understand and follow safe work procedures?
- \_\_\_ Is there a medical program tailored to your facility to help monitor and prevent workplace hazards and exposures?
- \_\_\_ Are there warning systems in place such as alarms, signs, and labels and do workers understand them?
- \_\_\_ Is there a plan in place and are employees trained to respond to an emergency such as a chemical leak, spill, fire, flood, or hurricane?

*(continued)*



## Education and training

\_\_\_ Are employees and their representatives involved in developing education and training about workplace hazards and how injuries and illnesses can be prevented, eliminated, or controlled?

\_\_\_ Is the training...

- In language employees understand?
- On paid time?
- For all new employees?
- For all employees given new assignments?
- For contractors as well as employees?
- Whenever new substances, processes, or equipment are brought into the workplace?
- Whenever new hazards are recognized?
- Provided by competent trainers?
- Designed to include participation (discussions, questions, hands-on experiences, role playing), not just lectures or watching videos?
- Accessible to people with disabilities?

\_\_\_ Does the training cover employees' right to information and right to report hazards, accidents, illnesses, and near-misses without facing reprisals?

## Program evaluation and improvement

Is management's program for preventing illnesses and injuries evaluated in ways such as...

\_\_\_ Workplace inspections?

\_\_\_ Investigations of accidents, near-misses, injuries, and illnesses?

\_\_\_ Records of hazards, showing when they are prevented, removed or controlled?

\_\_\_ Employee participation in evaluating whether hazards are being prevented and controlled and in identifying improvements that are needed?

\_\_\_ Compliance with federal and state laws?

## About WEC



The New Jersey Work Environment Council (WEC) is a non-profit collaboration of organizations working for safe, secure jobs, and a healthy, sustainable environment. In 2012, OSHA selected WEC as one of just 13 organizations in the nation to receive a Susan Harwood Targeted Topic Grant. You will find our training of great quality and value.

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