

# OHS Program:

## 4. What is OHS communication?

Communication is the two-way exchange of information between people. It is critical that workers get information to let them know how to be healthy and safe. Communication and awareness of workplace hazards and controls is an important part of an OHS program.



### Requirements

OHS programs need practices in place to provide communication and awareness on identified hazards and safety roles and responsibilities. To develop good communication and awareness an OHS program should include procedures to:

- Identify roles and responsibilities for hazard communication
- Inform all levels on the OHS policy, program and the status of OHS goals, objectives and implementation plans
- Report workplace injuries, illness, and incidents immediately to the employer
- Identify hazards, prioritize risk and promptly respond to those hazards
- Ask workers for their input; and consider and respond to them in a timely fashion
- Inform workers of their representative(s) on OHS matters and the role they serve
- Communicate with contractors and visitors on their role in keeping workers safe
- Receive, document and respond to communications from external parties

## Tips for effective management:

Effective OHS programs have practices in place to make sure critical OHS information gets to workers to stay safe in the workplace. Workers must know what a hazard is, the harm it causes and how to eliminate the hazard or reduce risk of injury.

### Manage the communication plan by considering:

- The target audience and their information needs
- Organizational complexity, structure and size
- Barriers to effective communication such as language or illiteracy
- How to evaluate the effectiveness of communications
- The effectiveness of communication flows across the organization
- Internal communications that include:
  - o Management's commitment to OHS
  - o Hazards and risks, OHS objectives
  - o Results of incident investigations
  - o Progress in elimination of OHS hazards and risks
  - o Changes that impact the OHS system
- Contractors communications that include:
  - o The requirements for contractor OHS management systems
  - o The existence of multiple contractors on site
  - o Emergency response requirements
  - o The need for policies to be aligned with those of the organization and other contractors
  - o The need for consultation and contractual provisions for high risk work
  - o Requirements for evaluating compliance with agreed OHS performance
  - o Process for reporting and investigating incidents and nonconformities
- Visitor communications that include:
  - o OHS hazards and requirements relevant to their visit
  - o Evacuation procedures and responses to alarms
  - o Traffic controls
  - o Access controls and escort requirements, and
  - o Any PPE that needs to be worn (e.g. safety glasses)



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