Developing a Loss Control Program

Establishing a loss control program must be done in a logical step-by-step procedure. The procedure can be compared to constructing a house. The foundation must be laid before the walls and a roof can be built. The foundation of the loss control program must be sound and support the elements that make up the program. If they do not, the program will eventually weaken and collapse.

The top management of a company holds the responsibility to plan the construction of a loss control program. Their planning will determine its success or failure. An effective loss control program is necessary to eliminate human suffering due to injuries and reduce the direct and indirect costs of accidents.

Once the decision has been made to develop a program, management has to initiate action with the following fundamentals.

1. State the reasons why the program is needed and what it will do for the company. These objectives will determine the depth and scope of the program's development.

2. A policy statement should be written and explained to all employees. It should clearly outline the objectives and show top management's intentions and determination in achieving an effective program.

3. Responsibilities have to be assigned by top management. An effective loss control program involves the work of all staff functions, levels of management, and the work force. Therefore, all employees will have some responsibilities and involvement with the program.

4. Provisions have to be made for communications to top management on the effectiveness of the program. A review of the program's results will enable them to modify the emphasis and direction of the program as needed.

Completing these four fundamentals will establish a firm foundation that will support other essential elements of the total loss control program. The sequential use of the elements will depend on the priority of the objectives established by top management. Each element will require the reassignment of responsibilities throughout the different phases of the program's implementation.

Remembering that all elements of the program cannot be carried out at once is important. Building a successful program takes planning and sufficient time for the elements to become effective. The success of one phase will often lead to the initiation of the next logical phase. Successful application of the phases will allow one element to interface and complement all the others.

Recommended elements of a loss control program are as follows:

Proper Selection and Placement of Personnel: This is to ensure that the most qualified person is hired based on job qualification standards.

Establishing Safety Rules and Procedures: These are the guidelines that employees are expected to follow. General plant and individual department rules should be developed. Specific job procedures should be established.

Accident Reporting, Investigating and Analyzing: Provisions should be made to make sure that all accidents and injuries are reported immediately. Prompt investigation to uncover the real causes will allow for analysis and corrective action.

Training: A program designed to provide initial and continuous training for all employees, including supervisory personnel, should be developed.

Inspections: Procedures should be established to check regularly for unsafe conditions and unsafe acts within the facility. These inspections will supplement those done by outside agencies.

Emergency Procedures: This should include the treatment of first-aid cases and provisions for handling serious injuries, fires, or other disasters.

Motivation: The thrust of this element is to keep all employees interested and continually involved in the loss control efforts. It can include a safety committee, posters, handouts, incentive programs, etc.

A loss control program, once designed and implemented, should be evaluated periodically to ensure its effectiveness. New aspects, techniques and variations must be adopted to keep the program alive, growing and effective.

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