

SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

By Brian Durkin

Safety is no accident” is a cliché that often rings true. While focus is often centered on production, efficiency and quality, some opportunities on the periphery should not be brushed aside. Most of us have seen some version of the pyramid below. The parameter missing from the pyramid is time. Whether the pyramid is completed in a month, year, decade or a lifetime, it is influenced by everyone involved.



Whether your safety program is a bit more than an afterthought, well organized and regimented, or anywhere in between, it sends a message to the production floor. It does not take a lot of resources to make that message say, “safety first.”

Do You Have a Safety Committee?

Various state departments of labor offer free resources and incentives. Pennsylvania offers a pathway to obtaining state certification of your safety committee, which leads to discounts on workers’ compensation insurance premiums.

Have old personal computers (PCs) that haven’t gone to the recycling center yet? Put one standalone in an accessible area. Instead of managing numerous safety data sheets (SDSs) on paper, load them on to the PC.

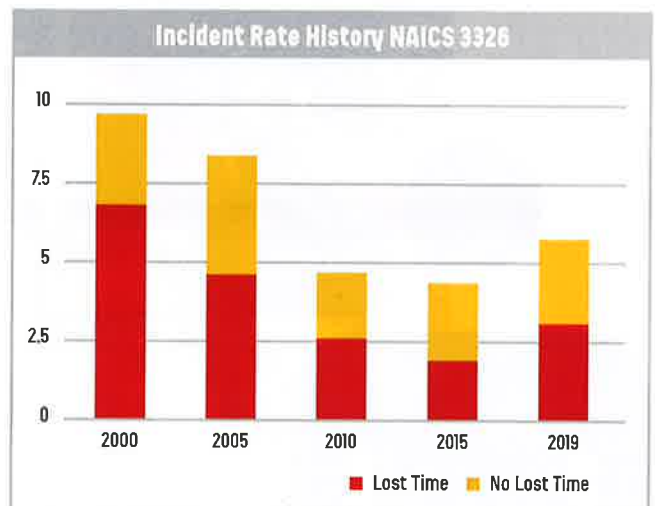
Toolbox talks? Put them on the same PC with a sign-in sheet. You can download them from your safety supply provider free of charge.

Now, meet once a month and keep notes, and you are well on your way to establishing a culture of safety.

For reasons that experts more qualified than I could explain, both more experienced and new workers have increased odds of sustaining an injury on the job. Why not put them together

and create a sort of mentor program? It doesn’t need to be formal to be effective and can lead to benefits well beyond a safer workplace.

By the numbers, the data sampled from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) shows that after 15 years of improvement, the incident rate for spring manufacturers (NAICS group 3326) is on the rise. This is not good news.



The manufacturing industry faces the challenges of recruiting new workers. Whether new workers are needed to replace our experienced but retiring craftsmen or to support growth, the perception of a grimy, dirty, and dangerous workplace must be overcome. There is no time to start like the present. ■



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