

MIOSHA Fact Sheet

Safety & Health Management System

What is a “Safety & Health Management System?”

A **Safety and Health Management System (SHMS)** is a systematic approach to managing safety and health activities by integrating occupational safety and health programs, policies, and objectives into organizational policies and procedures. Simply stated, a SHMS is a set of safety and health program components that interact in an organized way. An effective SHMS must be uniquely designed for each organization. It is not a “one size fits all.”

An effective SHMS consists of five critical elements that apply safety and health management practices of employers who have been successful in protecting the safety and health of their employees. An effective SHMS depends on:

- **Management Commitment and Planning**- Top management must provide visible ongoing commitment and leadership for implementing the SHMS covering all workers, including contract workers.
- **Employee Involvement** – The best SHMSs involve employees at every level of the organization. Employees are often those closest to the hazard and have first-hand knowledge of workplace hazards.
- **Safety and Health Training** – Training is the means to help assure employees and management understand safety and health hazards and know how to protect themselves and others from the hazards while doing their job.
- **Worksite Analysis** – Worksite analysis is a comprehensive evaluation of the hazards and potential hazards in the workplace.
- **Hazard Prevention and Control** – Effective management actively establishes procedures for

timely identification, correction and control of hazards. Once hazards and **potential** hazards are recognized, a hazard prevention and control program can be designed.

Integrating these elements into the way you conduct business will help develop or strengthen the safety and health culture and identify safety and health as a core organizational value.

A management system allows us to decide what needs to be done, how best to do it, and monitor our progress toward the goals we have established. Evaluation of results over time permits the process and results it creates to continue to improve.

What does “system approach” mean?

The management system approach is characterized by its emphasis on continual improvement and systematically eliminating the underlying or root causes of deficiencies. For example, in a system approach, if an inspection finds an unguarded machine, not only would the unguarded machine be fixed, but there would also be a systematic process in place to discover and eliminate the underlying reason for unguarded machines. This process might then lead to the goal of replacing the guards with a more effective design or to the replacement of the machines themselves so that the hazard is eliminated. The systematic approach seeks a long-term solution rather than a one-time fix.

Why implement a SHMS?

A SHMS adds value to the workplace! Every day, workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities cause immeasurable pain and suffering to employees and their families. Recent estimates indicate that workplace injuries and illnesses cost our nation’s



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businesses \$170 billion per year in wasteful and often preventable expenses.

If your company wants to reduce accidents, injuries, illnesses, and their related costs, everyone must place as much emphasis on safety and health issues as they place on other core management issues. These include production, sales, and quality control. To be most effective, safety and health must be balanced with, and incorporated into, the other core business processes.

Federal OSHA estimates that for every \$1 invested in workplace safety, employers see a \$4 to \$6 return. Besides protecting workers, the benefits of implementing a safety and health management system include:

- Lowered workers' compensation costs due to fewer injuries.
- Increased productivity, efficiency, and product quality.
- Increased employee morale and well-being.
- Lower absenteeism and employee turnover.
- Reduced lost workdays.
- Compliance with standards and regulations.
- Reduction or elimination of property damage due to incidents.
- Reduced business interruption costs.
- Reduced impact on the environment due to incidents.

Successfully managing hazards and exposures can lead to an injury-free culture. This requires that everyone proactively seek potential for injuries before they occur. This is accomplished when employees understand the value placed on safety and health by top leadership, their own performance responsibilities and continuous learning about safety and health.

Can culture impact safety performance?

Organizational culture refers to the driving values of an organization, or in simple terms, the “unwritten rules” of the company.

Effective leaders look realistically at culture and identify issues that could undermine safety objectives. Leadership drives the culture of an

organization. Safety leadership refers to seeing the right things to do to reach objectives and motivating

the teams to accomplish them effectively. Safety leadership is exercised by decision making which is related to the beliefs of the leader and demonstrated by his or her behavior.

Companies that effectively manage their SHMS will most likely have a positive safety culture and a high level of safety performance.

How can I get more information?

The **MIOSHA Consultation Education and Training (CET) Division** has consultants available to provide employers with assistance in creating safety and health systems and implementing long-term safety and health solutions. For free statewide assistance, companies can call the CET Division at **517-284-7720**, or **toll-free at 800-866-4674**, or visit our website at www.michigan.gov/miosha.

Several courses available from the MIOSHA Training Institute (MTI) can provide valuable information on this subject. To view the calendar of courses go to www.michigan.gov/mioshatraining

CET publications such as “Safety and Health Management System Guidelines are available at www.michigan.gov/mioshapublications

Additional information is available at www.osha.gov, search Safety and Health Topics for e-tool on Safety and Health Management System.