



PAPER

7 SAFETY TIPS

TO KEEP YOU IN COMPLIANCE



A Safer Day

Ensuring employee safety at your facility is one of the most important things you do. It can be really difficult to get your head and arms around such a complicated and complex challenge and it's hard to know where to even start. New Pig works with thousands of safety and plant managers every year, and we've learned what it takes to get organized to tackle the job of making your plant a safe place to work. In this Pig Paper, we will share some of the best practices that effective safety managers have learned through years of experience.

Effective safety managers know how to:

- Spot and identify potential risks
- Develop, review and maintain living safety plans
- Train employees on safety procedures
- Implement practical inspection schedules
- Create detailed checklists to help with inspections
- Discourage the use of shortcuts on safety
- Engage with ALL parts of the business

*A safety plan is not just a binder on a shelf—
it's a living system and culture that
reduces accidents and saves lives.*



Why bother with a safety program?

Safety issues touch nearly every part of your business. Incidents can happen on the factory floor, the parking lot outside your building, your warehouse and even the office spaces your company uses. Getting solid plans in place and **using them daily** is the only way to avoid workplace illnesses, injuries and deaths. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has established general industry standards that can be applied to most types of workplace hazards. It's the **employer's responsibility to be aware of and follow them**. Just as in the court system, "ignorance of the law is no excuse" and won't shield you from liability. Lastly, but still critically important, being a safety violator is one of the fastest ways to gain the worst kind of negative publicity and damage to your company's reputation and brand.

There are so many aspects involved that mastering safe practices in your operation can seem overwhelming. Breaking it down into the seven tips covered in this Pig Paper will make reaching workplace safety goals less daunting. Let's get started!



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TIP #1: Use Inspection Checklists



Safety programs and plans are meant to be comprehensive and should completely address ALL identified risks throughout the facility. Because of this, written safety plans often end up being very large documents that get stuffed into ugly-looking oversized binders. They are not very portable and are inconvenient to reference during inspections or other periodic checks. Listing the key inspection points in a **checklist** condenses large documents into workable, functional tools that can be used for most routine inspections, audits and even trainings.

Basic checklists are available from many sources and are great as a starting point. Any generic or general list you obtain should be reviewed and customized to ensure it meets your facility's specific needs. Checklists used for weekly, monthly or other routine inspections or audits can also serve as documentation for OSHA inspectors or external auditors that safety is being regularly monitored. They are your proof that attention is being paid to safety concerns.

A weekly eyewash inspection sheet is one example of a checklist that can be useful in facilities. Checklists can also help ensure that PPE distribution stations are well-stocked, that spill kits contain all of their necessary absorbents, that machine guards and other engineering controls are in place, or even that safety signage is still posted where it needs to be.

TIP #2: Create a Routine Inspection Schedule

Safety glasses, machine lockouts, safety data sheets, respirators — there is a ton of safety gear in nearly every plant that gets used every day. It's impossible for you to check every item daily. Thankfully, most things don't need to be inspected every day, but it is important to know what needs to be checked and how often.

Because inspection frequencies vary from once a day to once a year, **creating a schedule** — and sticking to it — will help you make sure that everything is checked as often as it needs to be to stay in compliance. It can also help to manage tasks more easily.

At least quarterly, have assistants, members of the safety committee or backup personnel help conduct routine inspections so that more than one person is familiar with the schedule, can perform routine inspection functions and provide coverage during vacations or unplanned work absences. Posting an inspection calendar can also help provide a reference for what needs to be done when and avoid duplicate or over-scheduling.

Reminder — allow enough time for each inspection. Scheduling one or two per day over several days will be much more manageable than 10 in one day — especially if noncompliances are found and need to be remedied immediately.

Filing reports, meeting with the safety committee, conducting safety trainings and scheduling time to review and update plans are also tasks that need to be scheduled and become part of the facility's regular safety routine.



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TIP #3: Revisit Plans Regularly

A Greek philosopher once said, “Change is the only constant in life.” That’s why OSHA typically requires you to take a look at your plan at least once a year OR whenever you make changes at your facility.

Your written safety plan is a living document that should be **updated to reflect changes** in:

- Processes
- Chemicals
- Engineering controls
- Duties outlined in your plan
- Anything else that has changed since the last time you updated

Although less common, there are some situations when safety plans only require a review once every three to five years, and in limited instances, OSHA only stipulates that a “regular” review be made. But a lot of things can change over a three- or five-year span, making plans a nightmare to update and maintain when it does come time for their review. Without regular reviews, plans can quickly fall out of compliance because they no longer reflect current work practices, chemical use or other procedures.

Reviewing plans takes time. Your process will be faster and more robust if you encourage the safety committee members and line supervisors who will be using the plans on a regular basis to be present during the review cycles.

TIP #4: Look for Problems

Your desk might be okay to review written plans, but that’s not where the action is. It’s impossible to determine whether or not safety procedures are being followed or if plans are working without physically walking around your facility and looking. The best safety managers roll up their sleeves, put their steel-toed shoes on and head on out to kick the tires in the work areas.

When **walking through your facility**, you will discover any changes that have taken place — including changes in processes, equipment, materials and personnel. It’s also an opportunity to communicate with employees in the following ways:

- **ASK:** are safety procedures working for your employees? If not, ask for input and recommendations on changes that will help improve compliance and/or reduce hazards.
- **PROVIDE:** praise and reinforcement to your employees for following safety procedures.
- **REVIEW:** any checklists that are being used. Do they truly reflect what you see? If not, it may be time to update them so that potential problems are easier to identify.



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TIP #5: No Shortcuts

PPE gear can be hot, heavy, bulky and just plain uncomfortable. Wearing a Level A chemical hazard suit in a hot factory in July is a memorable experience! But using everyday safety equipment can seem like a hassle too. Machine guards and engineering controls are sometimes cumbersome, take time to install and may even slow down production rates. Safety managers have shared many stories with us about how certain employees find it easier to make excuses, which often start with the phrase “Just this once.” That’s why it’s up to you to make sure your employees know — **taking safety shortcuts is a major reason incidents happen and can cause workplace injuries and fatalities.**

Incidents can happen in a split second — an employee slipping in a puddle that hasn’t been cleaned up yet, a chemical splashing out of its container into someone’s eyes and face or a serious injury due to someone not wearing a fall harness. The few seconds saved by skipping established safety procedures can end up tragically changing someone’s life forever.

Failing to follow guidelines is a common problem for new employees, so they should warrant some extra attention. But even seasoned workers with decades of experience sometimes take shortcuts with safety — especially if they’ve been lucky. Incidents are also more likely to happen any time new equipment, controls or other systems are introduced.



Posting signs will help remind everyone of the need to follow specified procedures and wear the correct PPE for every job. If noncompliance is a recurring problem, work with supervisors and employees to come up with a better solution. Follow up by consistently enforcing safe work practices: everyone must comply, every time — not just when it’s convenient. If necessary, noncomplying employees might need to be “benched” until they get on board with safe practices.

If a pattern emerges that suggests safety is routinely sacrificed in order to meet production quotas, management should be consulted to help realign the business goals with safe work practices.



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TIP #6: Get Proper Training

All of the plans in the world won't mean a thing if your employees aren't **properly trained**. The types of training you need in your facility will be based on specifics within your plant, including equipment used, liquids handled and many other factors.

An effective training program can reduce:

- Number of incidents injuries (and deaths)
- Property damage
- Legal liability
- Illnesses
- Workers' compensation claims
- Missed time from work

Safety training classes help teach employees about hazards they face, which helps them make better, safer choices on the job. It's also important to refresh training with your seasoned workers, in case they've developed bad habits. A 1998 NIOSH study concluded that the role of training in developing and maintaining effective hazard control activities is a proven and successful method of intervention.

OSHA issued voluntary training guidelines in 1992 to serve as a model for trainers to use in developing, organizing, evaluating and editing their safety training programs. It is important for trainers to tailor the OSHA guidelines to their specific worksite so that the training is relevant to the specific working conditions and not just a long, generalized and probably boring info-dump.

OSHA's training guidelines follow a model that consists of:

- Determining if training is needed
- Identifying training needs
- Identifying goals and objectives
- Developing learning activities
- Conducting the training
- Evaluating program effectiveness
- Improving the program
- Aligning training with job tasks

Below are **10 types of training** that are common for many plants (there are many more):

1. Spill Response
2. Fire Safety/Extinguishers/Exit Routes
3. Process Safety Management
4. Forklift Safety
5. Slips, Trips and Falls
6. Chemical Safety (GHS and Hazardous Communication)
7. Machine Guarding
8. Eye Protection/Safety
9. PPE
10. First Aid

Reviewing the 10 basic training topics shown above, as well as other topics on OSHA's website, will help you figure out which apply to your facility's operations. In addition to OSHA's website, many online sources are available to provide everything from regulatory interpretations to training presentations.

**Keep your
OSHA training
records
organized and
up-to-date.**



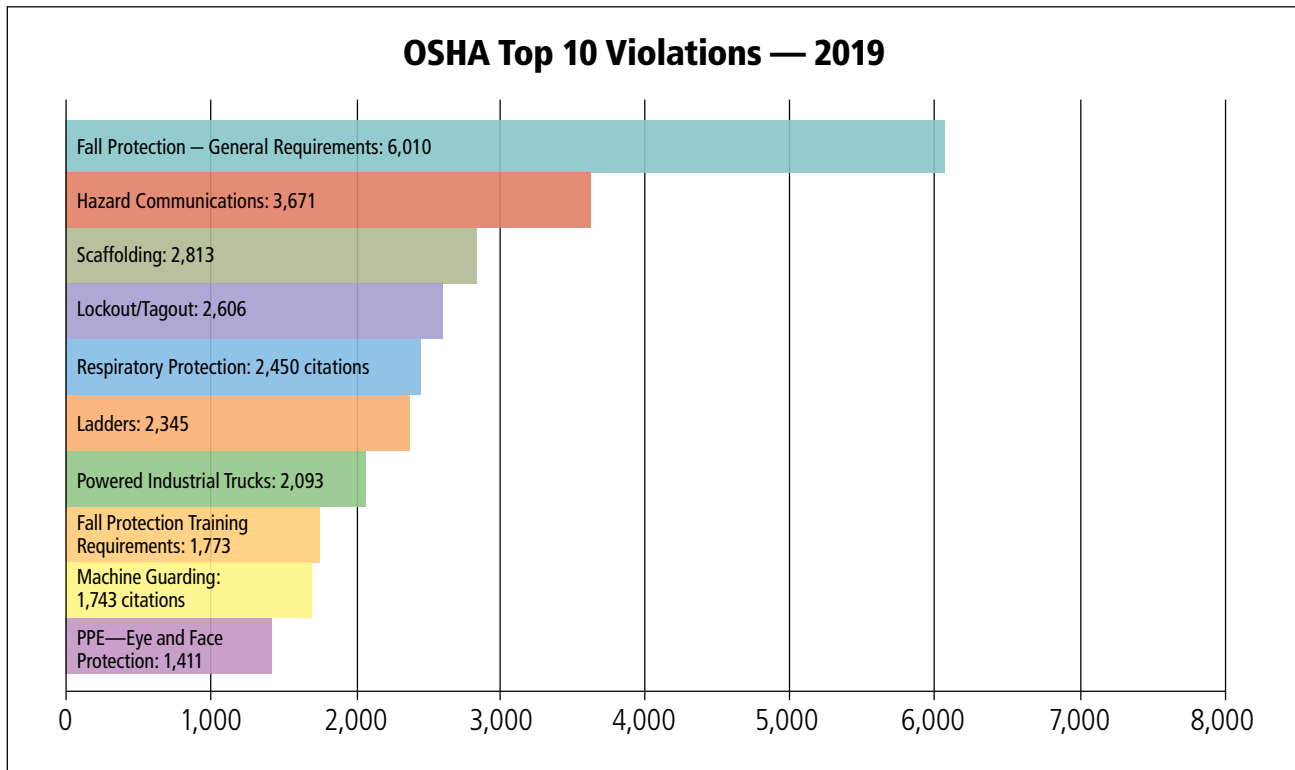
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TIP #7: Review OSHA's Top 10 Violations

Each year, OSHA publishes a list of the most frequently violated safety regulations, based on the results of the previous year's inspections. Although the list does not encompass every single regulation on the books, for someone just getting started, it provides insight into what an inspector will probably be looking for during a facility visit.



OSHA makes this list available so that employers **know where to look to identify and correct the most common hazards** before an inspector shows up and before someone gets hurt. Planning ahead and putting solid procedures in place will help you avoid violations, subsequent injuries, applicable fines and the associated workers' comp claims.

Need more help? Call the experts.

If you need help to keep your plant safe, call 1-800-HOT-HOGS to reach the Tech Department at New Pig. Our specialists have nearly 30 years of experience with regulatory questions, and they stay up-to-date with the latest regulation amendments. They talk to safety and plant managers every day and have been doing it for years. So whether you need to decipher a reg, select appropriate safety gear, decide what training you need or figure out which equipment is the best choice to minimize hazards, they can point you in the right direction. Safety is a good call!



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