

# Michigan Municipal Workers' Compensation Fund

## Safety and Health Resource Manual

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### Safety Incentive Programs

#### Overview

A safety incentive program can enhance and maintain interest in an established safety program and help build cooperation among employees when management wants to launch a safety campaign that focuses on a specific area of concern. Safety incentives, however, cannot substitute for a safety program itself.

Before implementing a safety incentive program, management should be certain that it has all the components of an effective safety program in place. These may include:

- A safety policy that clearly states the municipality's commitment to providing a safe environment for employees as well as customers and visitors.
- Ongoing management support for activities that promote safety. These may range from safety meetings and training sessions in which management participates to written "at-boys" and other less formal means of recognizing employees who are working safely.
- Policies that communicate management's expectations about all employees' responsibilities and accountabilities for safety in the work place.
- Work rules that make clear management's expectations about job performance and other areas of conduct that may affect workplace safety.
- Effective procedures for applying appropriate corrective action -- ranging from training to disciplinary actions -- when employees fail to comply with expectations.
- A performance appraisal system that evaluates each employee's safety performance.
- A safety committee that evaluates incidents and accidents and seeks ways to prevent them in the future.
- The designation of individuals who have responsibility for monitoring workplace safety through form inspections and/or audit activities at regular intervals.

It is essential to have a firm foundation upon which to build the incentive program. Otherwise, the objective of the incentive program -- increasing worker safety while reducing the direct and indirect costs of accidents and injuries -- will be lost. The goal of the incentive program is to increase worker awareness of safety issues and procedures, not to win prizes.

#### Creating the Program

There are many approaches to building an effective safety incentive program. Your approach will depend on:

- the nature of your operations
- the size of your operations
- the number of employees you have
- the number of work locations
- whether or not you wish to include all employees (line and clerical)
- your budget

There are, however, some general guidelines you may find useful.

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### **Decide Your Objective**

Management needs to determine why it wants to establish a safety incentive program. For example, your objective may be to decrease workers' compensation premiums by reducing the number of worker injuries. Or you may want to increase productivity by decreasing the number of lost workdays. If your municipality is just beginning to implement a formal safety program, the objective may simply be to reinforce general safety principles.

### **Target Your Participants**

Management should ask itself: "Which employees need to participate in the program -- or a particular phase of a long-term program -- to achieve the objective?" If there has been an increase in the number of claims resulting from respiratory disorders, a program that includes clerical workers is not necessary. You would probably want to target workers whose job responsibilities require them to use respirators.

### **Find a Focus**

Having a central theme helps to remind participants of the goal that management wants its employees to achieve.

### **Select Appropriate Prizes with Increasing Value**

Prizes need not be expensive, but they do need to be meaningful. Many companies decide to use various items imprinted with the municipality's logo (and sometimes with the slogan of the specific contest). If a municipality runs an ongoing program, as distinct, for example, from a monthly contest, these types of promotional items come in a wide range of prices. This allows management to set up a point system in which winners in one phase can bank points to earn prizes of higher value. Prizes that reinforce the contest theme can be very effective; for example, safety glasses, work shoes, hard hats, etc.

### **Establish Duration**

The incentive program should be intermittent and should last for a specified period. If carrying out a contest idea will require a prolonged period of time, it is best to have several shorter duration contests under the main contest heading. This will maintain employee interest and allow managers to stress various safety issues.

### **Communicate the Goal**

The program should convey the enthusiasm of its designers (management, safety director, and safety committee) to the people (supervisors, employees) for whom they have designed it. The program should be fun, relevant to the work experience of all employees, and make recognition for being "safety smart" more significant than the value of the prize.

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### Common Elements

While each safety incentive contest or program is different, all successful programs share the following basic elements.

1. A specific objective.
2. A method for recording performance toward reaching the objective.
3. A budget.
4. Determination of participants and judges.
5. Specific rules and time limits.
6. A specific theme.
7. The acceptance of top management.
8. Promotion among all employees.
9. A special kickoff.
10. Design to keep continued interest.
11. Method of keeping employees informed on performance and/ or standings.
12. The announcement of winners.
13. The posting of final standings.
14. Management gives recognition for the effort employees have expended.

If the municipality gives prizes or awards, the awards or prizes should never be so large that the goal becomes winning them rather than improving safety.

The following are samples safety incentive programs that employers have successfully used.

### Safety Slogans

Programs that focus on creating safety slogans are extremely popular. They usually do not require employees to have special knowledge about safety. Before implementing the program, management should establish selection criteria to guide the judging process. Will the criteria be originality, applicability to operations at the work location, most dramatic, most appealing? Management should also decide who would serve as judges.

#### Most Original

This contest runs for a period of two months. Management encourages all employees to submit original safety slogans. A panel of judges selects four winners each month. First prize is the choice of item from an incentive catalog (moderate prices). Prizes for runners-up are items from an incentive catalog (lower prices).

Management posts the slogan throughout the plant and prints them in the municipality's newsletter.

#### Quarterly Slogan

A slogan contest is held during the months of August, September, and October of each year, and all plant employees are invited to submit slogans. The plant management committee selects a winning slogan. The employee who submits the winning slogan any of the three months receives a check for \$25. The best safety slogan for the entire three-month period earns an additional reward of \$50.

Each month, the winner's name and his/her slogan appear on the municipality's paychecks.

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### **“Do You Know?”**

Management establishes a budget of \$6 for each month during which this campaign will take place. At the beginning of each month, management posts a safety slogan pertaining to workplace conditions or practices on bulletin boards throughout the work location. At the end of the month, management puts the names of all employees in a box and draws six out.

The safety supervisor (or other individual) approaches each of these six in turn and asks him or her what the safety slogan is. If the employee is able to repeat the slogan, he or she receives a silver dollar. If an individual does not know the slogan, management draws another name. The process repeats until the entire \$6 is used.

### **Variation of “Do You Know?”**

Management posts the slogan of the week on bulletin boards throughout the plant. The Safety Director then picks 15 names at random from the employee list and numbers them in order. Armed with five silver dollars, he looks for the first person on the list. No prior publicity is given, and the employee is simply asked what the slogan of the week is. If he/she can repeat it, he/she is given the dollar. If he/she cannot, the Safety Director goes on to the second person on the list. The Safety Director continues until the \$5 is given away or all employees have been asked.

Usually, a period of a few weeks is sufficient to get the employees to read the safety bulletin boards, after which time this contest is discontinued and another established.

### **Best Slogan**

Management encourages all employees to submit safety slogans. A group of judges selects the best one each week.

The prize for the best slogan each week varies. It might be a baseball cap with the municipality's logo, certificates for dinner and a movie, a coffee mug, etc.

After the period of time designated for the contest ends, the judges decide which should receive the grand prize. The winner receives an award of greater monetary value.

Each weekly winning slogan and the person submitting receive wide publicity throughout the plant. In addition to his or her monetary award, the grand prizewinner wins pizza and pop or donuts and coffee for his or her department.

### **Children's Safety Slogans**

For a period of six weeks, management encourages employees' children up to age 13 to submit safety slogans. The safety committee (or other panel of judges) picks the winners each week with a prize of \$20 for first place, \$10 for second place, and \$5 for third place. At the end of the contest, there is a grand prizewinner for the best overall slogan with a \$25 award.

Photographs of the winning children and their slogans appear in a municipal calendar or in the municipality's newsletter.

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### Safety Record

#### 1,000 Safe Days

In this contest, the winner is any department that is able to operate 1,000 days free of any lost-time injury. Every employee in the department receives a quality gift suitably inscribed with the achievement of the department. The gift can be a ball point pen, a coffee mug, a baseball cap, or a tee shirt. The presentation is made with appropriate ceremony, pictures, and publicity.

#### Stock Issue

Each employee in the plant receives a "share of stock" with a maximum value of \$7. If the plant operates six months without a lost-time accident or doctor case, the share is redeemable for \$7.

Each doctor case causes the share to drop \$1, and each lost-time case causes the value of the share to drop \$2.50.

The injured employee himself loses \$2.50 of his share for a minor accident and the entire share for a lost-time case.

#### Hours Worked

For every 50,000 hours that the entire municipality operates without a lost-time accident, management purchases and displays a prize with a value of approximately \$10. After six such prizes have been set aside, management calls a general meeting of all employees, at which time they have a chance to participate in a general drawing for the prize.

If a lost-time accident interrupts the contest before the six prizes have been set aside, the department in which the accident occurs is ineligible, and all other departments are eligible to draw for the prize.

#### Safe Employee

This contest that starts at the beginning of each month is for employees who had no accidents during the preceding month. The name of each employee who had no accident during the month is placed in a hat. A different safety slogan is posted in the plant each month. At the end of the month, a member of management draws a name from the hat. A phone call is made to the employee's residence. If the person answering the phone is able to quote the plant slogan, he/she is awarded a prize.

#### No Accident - No Absenteeism

Once a month, management places stubs with the time card numbers or names of all employees in a box. The contest winner from the previous month draws one stub from the box prior to the monthly safety meeting.

The employee's name drawn is checked for:

- No accidents during past month.
- No absenteeism during past month.

Names are drawn until one meets the two above requirements, at which time he/she receives a special prize.

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The name of the winner is announced at the Safety Committee Meeting and is posted in the plant.

This contest can be municipality-wide or limited to a specific department.

## Safety Quizzes

### Safety Know How

This plant publishes a bulletin dealing entirely with the subject of safety. The schedule can be monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly. To make sure that employees read the bulletin, management sets up a quiz contest.

The names of all employees go into a box and each month (every other month, quarter) the safety director draws a name. He or she approaches this person and asks him or her several questions concerning the most recent issue of the bulletin. If he or she is able to answer the questions, he or she receives a prize.

There are two important considerations: (1) the material should not be too technical since it must appeal to a wide range of employees. Suitable topics might be good housekeeping or fire prevention. (2) The contest should take place within one week of distribution of the newsletter.

### Lottery Winner

Management posts a safety slogan on all bulletin boards each day. Sometime during the day, the Safety Supervisor approaches an employee in the plant whose name has been drawn. The employee is asked to quote the safety slogan of the day. If the employee can do this, he or she receives a lottery ticket. If the employee cannot, the ticket is added to the award the following day, increasing its value. When someone is able to quote the safety slogan accurately, that person receives the entire award. The next day the contest starts again with a new lottery ticket.

### Telephone Tag, You're It

Interested employees submit their names and home telephone numbers for a special drawing.

A member of the Safety Committee draws one name out of the box each month and calls the employee's home. If the person who answers the telephone is able to quote the safety slogan for the month, he/she receives a gift certificate. If the person is unable to recite the slogan, the gift certificate is increased for the next month.

## Miscellaneous and Combination Contests

### Cash and Grocery

Only employees in any department that operated during the preceding month without a lost-time accident are eligible for this contest.

In this contest a combination of cash and groceries is awarded to one employee each month based on a safety slogan displayed throughout the plant.

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The names of employees from eligible departments are put in a box. Management draws the winning name at the designated time each month. The winner gets \$10.

Management then makes a telephone call to the winner's home. If anyone there is able to repeat the current safety slogan, he or she receives a \$25 certificate towards a grocery order from a local store.

### **Safety Suggestion**

Management places suggestion boxes throughout the work location. Employees write out safety suggestions. The suggestions can be about unsafe acts, unsafe conditions, and health hazards. The Safety Committee reviews the suggestions at each monthly meeting. The committee selects the best suggestion each month by vote. Recognition takes the form of posting the winner's name and his or her suggestion on bulletin boards along with the action management or the Safety Committee will take as a result of the suggestion.

### **What's Wrong with This Picture**

The municipality publishes a cartoon showing many types of hazards in its newsletter and invites employees to submit a list of all the hazards that they can find. The employee who submits the longest correct list wins gift certificates for free lunches for one week.

### **Good Housekeeping**

Once each month a manager and one individual from the Safety Committee make an inspection of various work locations. A different committee person is chosen each month.

The inspections and scoring are made individually, not as a group. Each inspector turns his or her scoring into a designated individual such as an Administrative Assistant. This person averages the scoring for each work location and, by comparing it with the previous month's score, decides which work location has made the most improvement and thereby becomes the winner of the good housekeeping award for the month.

On each bulletin board throughout the plant, the monthly total scores are posted in the order of rating.

The scoring is done on a sheet listing the ten items to be checked with the department numbers across the top of the sheet. Each department can rate up to ten points on each of the ten items, making it possible.