

Handbook Highlight from the Montana Municipal Officials Handbook

Risk Management for a Safer Workplace

3.1001 Montana Safety Culture Act

The Safety Culture Act enacted by the 1993 Montana State Legislature encourages workers and employers to come together to create and implement a workplace safety culture. It is the intent of the act to raise workplace safety to a preeminent position in the minds of all Montana's workers and employers. See <http://erd.dli.mt.gov/safety-and-health/montana-safety-culture-act.html>.

Therefore, it is the responsibility of employers to participate in the development and implementation of safety programs that will meet the specific needs of their workplace; thereby establishing a safety culture that will help create a safe work environment.

Safety training is critical because routine work can dull alertness and a relaxed attitude can replace the caution that existed when the job was new and interesting. In many jobs the same route is traveled daily over the same roads or the same tasks are repeated with little conscious thought. Without some periodic reawakening to the ever-present hazards, the odds of an accident occurring can increase.

Workers may not always recognize the importance of safety training or may even think of it as unnecessary because they've been "doing it for years." But an important benefit of periodic safety training is the reminder that a danger can exist and that no one is immune to accidents. Therefore, it is important for workers to understand the purpose of the training session, why it will be useful to them, and what can result from not following safety rules and procedures.

The safety training material should be organized and presented in the same order as the steps that will be taken on the job. Employees should be able to immediately practice and apply new knowledge and skills. If workers don't

understand safety training information well enough to use it on the job, the training has not been effective. There should be immediate feedback if workers are doing their job safely or not. Supervisors should watch employees do their jobs and question them, to identify what they do, or don't, know. If there is a general lack of understanding of hazards or safety rules and practices, another safety meeting should be scheduled or a refresher course planned for a later date.