

Safety Management System (SMS) - Introduction

Safety management is a core business function just as financial management, human resources management, etc. A safe and healthy workplace doesn't just happen. It takes commitment and planning to ensure that all equipment is functioning properly, that needed materials are available to do the job and that workers know how to do their job safely.

If health and safety is not well managed, there is an increased risk for error and harm to occur. For example: if equipment is not maintained on schedule, if workers do not receive the training they need and safety meetings are not planned...there is a potential for an increase in incidents such as:

- injury, illness or death to workers, clients and the public
- damaged equipment, tools or facilities
- loss of reputation and loss of confidence by the public
- high costs to the organization with human and financial resources

It is much better to prevent incidents through good management than to deal with the consequences later. A robust safety management system supports safe work practices.

What is a Safety Management System?

A safety management system is a process to minimize the incidence of injury **and** illness at the workplace. It is a systematic approach to managing safety, including the necessary organizational structures, accountabilities, policies and procedures.

A safety management system applies a business-like approach to safety, involving explicit and comprehensive processes for eliminating and/or managing safety risks. It provides for goal setting, planning and measuring performance.

Elements of a Safety Management System

A health and safety management system in Saskatchewan's healthcare system includes the following six elements:

1. Management commitment and leadership
2. Hazard identification and control
3. Training and communications
4. Inspections
5. Reporting and investigations
6. Emergency response

A safety management system becomes part of the culture - the way people safely do their jobs.

(source: Safety Management System Basics, SASWH, 09/15)
additional Safety Talks specific to Safety Management System (e.g., elements, Leading & Lagging Indicators, Risk Matrix) are available on www.saswh.ca

Safety Talk Discussion

Be Accountable: Choose safety - work safe - and go home injury free!