

Create a plan for your business that prevents workplace injuries

by George Kochman, program manager, WorkSafeMT

Across Montana, businesses and individuals are beginning to recognize the state's poor workplace injury record, one of the worst in the country—and that's across *all* industries.

WorkSafeMT is helping businesses use simple tools to develop safety programs that prevent workplace injuries. The programs outlined below improve productivity, worker by worker. They reinforce the importance of teamwork and shared responsibility among employees and show employees that their employers care about their well-being. I encourage you to implement any of the programs below and start spreading workplace safety, statewide.

The Montana Safety Culture Act

In 1993, the Montana Legislature created the Montana Safety Culture Act. The programs and advice outlined in the act are still relevant today. You can download the tool at www.worksafemt.com to start building a culture of safety in your workplace.

Build a safety program

At www.worksafemt.com you'll find a step-by-step guide to help you get a custom program going in your workplace, whether you have two employees or 2,000. It only takes about 20 minutes, and you'll have a plan you can implement today and update easily.

Create a safety committee

Forming a safety committee, a group of employees and managers, is a great way to instill a sense of ownership and a culture of safety among workers. Download guidelines at www.worksafemt.com.

Design a Stay at Work / Return to Work (SAW/RTW) Program

In Montana, injured workers stay out of work an average of 23 days longer than workers in other states. The associated costs are significant. Workers who stay out of work longer are less likely to ever return and more likely to develop serious complications. Those additional days are expensive for companies too in terms of workers' comp payments and lost productivity. SAW/RTW programs make a big difference. They help injured workers return to meaningful work as fits their medical condition as soon as possible. They have been shown to improve recovery times, reduce complications and keep careers on track. For tools on creating a SAW/RTW program, visit www.worksafemt.com.
