Introduction

Your crew needs you on your game the same way you need them to be on theirs. At the end of day, you own it if something bad happens. Never forget the best safety binder in the truck or the office doesn't make for a safe work site or business. People do.

In our modern day business practices written records are needed to show that you did the right things. Your crew needs to know what is expected of them and you can help this process by providing clear direction supported by written procedures.

But first you need to know how a good company operates in a reliable error-free way. The information provided here is not all inclusive. Be informed. Ask questions. BC Forest Safety is an industry-based group. Phone us if you need help 1-877-741-1060.

Company Activities and Safety Program Requirements

A company’s safety program requirements will vary depending on their activities. For example, a company that assigns Prime Contractor status has additional program requirements compared to a company that does no subcontracting at all. The list below provides some potential situations and the overall safety program needs:

- The **Company does their own work** with the assistance of employees.
  - Basic safety program which includes supervisory responsibilities.

- The **Company uses contractors** to conduct some activities.
  - Basic safety program plus contractor selection criteria.

- The **Company is a Prime Contractor**.
  - Basic safety program plus additional program requirements depending on business structure.

- The Company uses contractors to coordinate and conduct all of the workplace activities. The **Company has entered into a written agreement which assigned Prime Contractor** status to the contractor.
  - Basic safety program plus contractor selection criteria for selection of a Prime Contractor.

Note: The owner of a multiple-employer workplace is the Prime Contractor unless a written agreement assigning this responsibility is in place.
Components of the Company Safety Program

The Company’s safety program should be structured to fit its needs. It is likely you already have processes in place for inspections, assessments, contractor management and other activities, because production, quality, environment and safety are connected. You should not need a separate safety program – rather integrate safety into your existing business structure. Are there specific legislative safety requirements? Yes, but you are probably already doing many of the required activities, such as equipment maintenance. To deliberately build safety into your systems, you might just need to realize that you have most of it, start writing down what you’ve done, and set goals on what you still need to add or grow.

The program provided here is divided into manageable sections, including an Employee Handbook. Your employees usually don’t need the detail that a company supervisor requires, but they need to be informed. This is why the separate Employee Handbook is included. You can use this handbook to also provide other important information about your own company for an employee such as rules around payroll or absenteeism.

A few more things . . .

The sample program structure is as follows:

- How we do things (Safety is good business) – includes most of the policies a small company will need; references to forms and activities needed to support the policies. There are a few policies that should be posted, and these are found in Appendix 1 Policies.
- Appendix 1 – Policies
  - Includes policies which the company should post: Health and Safety Policy; Workplace Bullying and/or Harassment Policy; Personal Protective Equipment Policy; Discipline Policy; and Impairment Policy: Includes Drugs, Alcohol and Fatigue.
- Appendix 2 – Safe Work Procedures
- Appendix 3 – Forms
- Appendix 4 – Employee Handbook

The sample program is provided for guidance. You should read through it carefully, determine which policies and forms will work for your business, and know that all will need to be modified. Don’t commit to actions that are not realistic for your company!
There are prompts within the document that will help you tailor it to your business. You will find brackets [with text inside of them]. The text is provided as a sample of what the information could be. There are brackets with [italicized text] prompting the company for information. There are also “_______” blanks in the document which require company input.

For example, this program will ask for some policies to be posted, and perhaps as a small business you don't have a spot for posting that your workers will see. Instead of committing to posting a policy, you may prefer to provide a copy of the policy to each new employee along with payroll and other important information.

Please review the program documents carefully. In the event that an incident occurs, you will be expected to have followed your own safety program. WorkSafeBC will hold you accountable for your action or inaction should something bad happen. Sometimes bad things happen to good people. Be sure that you have done your best to protect your employees, your business and your industry reputation.
Why have a Company Safety Program?

Culture of Success
Your company needs to attract and retain qualified workers and supervisors. Running a tight ship that includes safety will make you an “employer of choice”. Committed employees plus knowledgeable and respectful supervision create a stable workforce that improves your bottom line.

Loss Control
To be successful, a company needs to control losses. In the past, safety was considered an add-on, “Just one more thing that I don’t have time for.” In reality, preventing loss from injury or equipment damage; limiting time spent finding and training replacement workers and keeping WorkSafeBC premiums low are all good for business.

Due Diligence
Written records of activities must be maintained to prove a company’s due diligence. Safety records are not just safety ‘forms’. Records can include: supervisor journal notes; photographs; emails; forms, etc.

Training
A well trained workforce will know how to do the job the right way – the way you want it done. This will lead to less equipment damage, more efficient work, and workers with a better ability to recognize hazards of a job.

Everyone’s Responsibility
Safety is not the sole responsibility of company management. The rules of the work place must be clear, understood, and enforced. The more a company involves its employees in “safety”, the more likely it is that the best solutions will be discovered. 10 heads are always better than just one. The more the crew feels their opinion is of value to the company, and the more likely they will accept their responsibility and speak up.

Continual Improvement
As with all aspects of business, continual improvement is critical to success. Implementing (or integrating) a safety program gives you an opportunity to look closely at existing systems to improve or add where needed. A few years ago, a company shared an example. They had to submit maintenance records for their vehicles in order to meet a safety audit requirement. Upon closer inspection they found that one manufacturer's trucks required less maintenance than the other. They now only drive _________ trucks. If you look, you will find and that is always good for the bottom line.
Plan Do Check Act

One system of continual improvement is known as Plan Do Check Adjust/Act or PDCA. This can be applied to all aspects of business.

1. Plan “What to do and how to do it”
2. Do “Do what was planned”
3. Check “Did things happen according to the plan?”
4. Adjust/Act “What to improve?”

Plan – “What to do and how to do it”

During the planning stage you need to identify and prioritize needs, focusing on the activities that are higher risk. You are planning for reliable, injury free work—what you need to do for each job/project/block such as emergency response plan, pre-work, start-up meeting, first aid assessment, contractor selection.

The policies, safe work procedures and safety forms in this document and its appendices are examples. There are many others examples in the forest industry or other industries. Choose what works for your business.

Do – “Do what was planned”

The “Do” stage is the stage which includes ongoing things such as monthly meetings, worker orientations to the company and to the site. Company management must be committed to merging changes into their operations. Communication is key. Changes to the current program can be frustrating. It is important to get feedback from crew and supervisors and to take their concerns seriously.

You must document the “doing” activities. Record using a form, a supervisor’s journal, or an email. Use the format that makes sense.
Check – “Did things happen according to the plan?”

You will need to periodically check and measure the success of the program. Checking for safe work activities can include inspections, worker assessments, pre-use inspections, contractor and prime contractor inspection and monitoring, as well as investigations. It is useful to maintain a Corrective Action Log (CAL) to record improvements.

It is also important for you to complete an annual audit of the Safety Program. During the initial stages of a safety program, it may be beneficial to do more frequent checking.

Some of the advantages of using the annual BC Forest Safety audit for your ‘check’ are:

- SAFE certification is recognized throughout the forest industry in British Columbia and is required when working for most major contractors and licensees.
- The audit provides a review of the company’s safety program and operations.
- The company receives objective feedback on their safety program when they send their annual package to the BC Forest Safety Council.

Adjust/Act – “What to improve?”

An adjustment to your company program may be identified through a formal audit, crew feedback, or activities such as workplace inspections and incident investigations. Corrective Action Log (CAL) or outcomes of an Emergency Response Drill should be reviewed.

After acting or making an adjustment, then you will need to ensure the change resulted in a safer and more productive workplace. Here again, communication is key to success.

The Plan Do Check Adjust/Act cycle for better work is then repeated.

Safety is Good Business

BC Forest Safety Council staff is available with support for building or improving your program (1-877-741-1060).