

# Reinforcing Safety on the Job



Jack Donahue  
President and CEO

Regardless of size, safety at work is crucial for maintaining a healthy and productive workforce. For example, the indirect costs of injuries (e.g., accident investigation, low morale, production delays, repairs) may be 20 times the direct costs.<sup>45</sup> In a study of large employers, workers' compensation costs accounted for three percent of total health- and productivity-related costs.<sup>44</sup> To a small or mid-sized company, employee disability due to an injury can be devastating to the fulfillment of business obligations and schedules, in addition to increasing insurance costs. Injury prevention and proactive return-to-work initiatives are key elements of an integrated approach to health and productivity management.

## Five essential components of a workplace safety program:

- 1. Management commitment.** An organization cannot create a culture of safety without true commitment from senior management. Management must actively investigate and address safety problems and provide support and follow-up.
- 2. Active participation by workers.** Employees not only are responsible for adhering to safety rules, but also should get involved in developing the safety program so they gain ownership. Seek input and suggestions about existing work hazards. Be sensitive to "safety literacy" issues that may arise from reading and language barriers.
- 3. Effective incentives.** Recognize individuals and teams who demonstrate safe behaviors (instead of rewarding a lack of lost-time injuries). This helps to improve safety performance and reinforces the organization's emphasis on safety.
- 4. Equipped employees.** Ensure that all workers have appropriate personal protective equipment; the right tools; necessary training and education for the job; clearly documented safety procedures and work rules; methods for assessing safety performance or knowledge; and opportunities for offering input.
- 5. Safety analysis.** Assess the root causes of any incidents. In addition, apply job hazard analysis to identify potential accidents, institute necessary controls, and evaluate program effectiveness.

## DonahueFavret Contractors, Inc.

*Built to Last*

### Company Overview

- Type of industry: General contracting
- Number of employees: 55

### Program Components

- Health Savings Account (HSA) 100% of premium for high-deductible plan compared to 75% for Point Of Service (POS) plan
- Healthy lunch on Mondays, usually cooked by the CEO
- Smoking cessation paid by company with time off to attend
- Annual Health Risk Assessments (HRAs) and lifestyle screenings
- Additional time off earned for participation in wellness programs
- *Walk for Fitness* program
- Quarterly presentations and health fairs in partnership with pharmaceutical companies
- Monetary rewards for employees with safe work record
- Annual CPR and first aid training for all employees
- Ergonomic "realignment" of all workspaces

### Program Highlights

- A 75% decrease in utilization during 2005-06 resulting in no premium increases in 2006-07
- No reportable accidents

### CEO Statement

"Our first priority is the health and well-being of our employees. That in turn leads to a happier and more productive staff."

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