



# IMPLEMENTING A SAFETY INCENTIVE PROGRAM

## Abstract

A package to assist employers in implementing a safety incentive program based on employee actions, recognition, and reward.

Construction Safety Nova Scotia  
Construction Safety Culture

## **What is a Safety Incentive Program?**

A Safety Incentive Program is a way of celebrating Occupational Health and Safety that encourages workers to work safe and help their coworkers work safe by reporting injuries, illnesses, near misses, or hazards; while also encouraging their involvement in the company's health and safety program, by offering incentives and recognition.

One of the key components to job satisfaction is by celebrating your employees' participation and achievements. It is important to show employees you are all part of the Safety Team and that you care about their safety and the efforts they take daily to be safe on the job.

## **What are the benefits of implementing a Safety Incentive Program?**

Safety incentive programs can be highly effective at changing or reinforcing employee daily safe behavior. Senior company leaders, department managers, and field supervisors must continuously and visibly endorse and support the overall importance of the company's safety program. Supervisors/Foremen/Crew Leads are also critical to employees incorporating safety into their daily activities. They are the ones that are the leaders in the on-the-job safety and are often the ones to first witness positive OH&S activities. To ensure success, participation must start from the top down in the organization, thus promoting a positive safety culture throughout the company.

A well designed and managed safety incentive program offers many benefits, such as:

- Encourages employee involvement in the safety program
- Gives employees a sense of ownership in the safety program
- Strengthens good work habits
- Financial savings
- Motivates behavior changes/encourages proactive behavior
- Improves morale and employees have a sense of recognition and value
- Improves employee attendance/turnover
- Aids in preventing incidents/accidents

## **Developing Your Program**

The first step in developing your incentive program, is to identify the reasons why you want to implement it. Are you wanting to recognize employees for their current safe work practices, or as a mean to help motivate positive behavioral changes? Your reasoning may help dictate your approach. Other aspects to consider include:

- Senior management involvement and required level of support/endorsement.
- Worker involvement in the development and deployment of the program (Includes JOHSC or Safety Representative).
- Ensuring the incentive program aligns with company's overall safety objectives/program.
- Costs associated with supporting the program.

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***The most important aspect of a safety incentive program is ensuring it raises employees' awareness of, and dedication to, workplace safety and best practices, without creating an environment that hinders incident reporting for fear of losing an incentive.***

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Incorporate a Safety Incentive Program that focuses on leading indicators of workplace safety, as opposed to rewarding employees based on zero incidents or accidents. This allows an opportunity for employees to receive positive reinforcement of day-to-day safety behaviors.

Examples of leading indicators include but are not limited to:

1. **Safe Work** (*Workers*) – This would include things like participation in safety meetings, specific safe acts or habits recognized by a supervisor, improved/perfect attendance, adhering to PPE policies/requirements, following safe work procedures, etc.
2. **Proactivity** (*Supervisors/Workers*) – this would include reporting a near miss, reporting unsafe conditions, good housekeeping, completing safety training (aside from compliance training), participating in daily stretching (MSI prevention), participating in inspections and hazard assessments, providing safety-related suggestions, etc.
3. **Safety Leadership** (*Supervisors/Workers*) – this would include leading a safety meeting or stretch exercises, shadowing or mentoring a new employee for safe behaviors, participation in an accident investigation/root cause analysis, and recognizing an employee for a safe act.
4. **Safety Engagement** (*Supervisors/Workers*) - this would include recognizing an employee for going above and beyond as it relates to safe behaviors, or being a true 'safety champion', achieving good results on a safety inspection, engaging with coworkers to promote safe behaviors on site, etc.

Raising and promoting the level of safety awareness in your organization, and recognizing your employees for conducting safe work, are key aspects of a successful safety incentive program. It is also important to ensure that the emphasis is placed on motivating people rather than constantly giving incentives. One of the most effective incentives, is management's acknowledgement and recognition of an employee's good performance – particularly when that recognition is witnessed by the employees' peers (i.e., toolbox meetings, monthly/quarterly/annual safety meetings). While the incentives are nice, most of the emphasis should be placed on building teamwork and creating a safe workplace. Involve both supervisors and workers as everyone likes to be recognized for a job well done. Inclusion of all parties helps keep everyone involved in safety and the company's program therefore creating a strong safety culture!

A good safety incentive system will recognize and promote a safer workplace, which will ultimately prevent accidents/incidents and helps save money on the bottom line.

If you have a Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee (JOHSC), they can help with promoting and administrating the system.

## PROGRAM SAMPLE

### <ABC Company> Safety Incentive Program

#### Objective

<ABC Company> is committed to providing a workplace that provides minimal hazards and risks to employees in the workplace. Company safety policies, procedures and rules exist to ensure the safety of employees and compliance with regulations. To support this objective, the following Safety Incentive Program has been developed and shall be implemented across all divisions of our company/at each company facility/for all employee involvement. It is important to note that the safety incentive program is guided by and related to the overall safety program for <ABC Company>. It is designed to provide employees, with recognition for safe work behaviors and compliance with the overall company safety program.

Since safety is <ABC Company>'s number one priority, our safety management programs focus on ways to help motivate employees to perform all activities in a safe manner. We value the extraordinary efforts our employees make to maintain a safe work environment and we strive to recognize best practices wherever possible.

As part of our overall commitment to a positive safety culture we have implemented a Safety Incentive Program for all employees. This program will aid us in promoting OH&S in our workplace resulting in motivated and committed employees and allow to achieve the desired company wide safety goals.

#### Purpose

The safety incentive program has been developed to assist in managing safety related behaviors along with promoting consistency of recognition and enforcement of our safety program.

It is designed to motivate and recognize employees who perform their job in a safe and efficient manner and recognize those that go above and beyond in their daily OH&S actions. The program is driven by leading indicators, which, when performed diligently will eliminate or reduce incidents/accidents.

#### Incentive Program Guidelines

*Example:*

*Every supervisor/manager/foreman will have the opportunity to recognize their employees with two, 5-dollar gift cards monthly. If there have been no recognizable actions, then this should be noted. Recognition can be immediately following the action or during a toolbox meeting. Prior to the annual general safety meeting all past entries will be considered for the annual recognition award.*

Additional program guidelines depend on how your company wants to implement it and how you will involve your employees in supervisory roles. Be sure to create guidelines that reflect your company's needs and internal structure.

Recommended:

- Ensure supervisors/foremen are also rewarded and determine how you will reward them.
- Ensure supervisors/foremen are keeping notes as to who was rewarded, for what and why.
- Use a monitoring system (i.e., tracking document/spreadsheet). Use this for monthly/quarterly management reviews and long-term recognition (i.e., AGMs). Can also be incorporated into monthly/quarterly/annual statistics to assist with identifying trends such as:
  - Is this program working for the company and the employees?
  - Are there measurable improvements being made as an outcome of the program?
  - How many near misses and incidents are being reported since implementing the program?

### Incentive Examples

Gift cards are commonly used in safety incentive programs as they give the recipient an opportunity to splurge on themselves, making the recognition more meaningful.

- They allow employees to select their own reward which offers choice and flexibility.
- They allow for on-the-spot incentives/immediate recognition.
- They are cost-effective for employers. They come in many denominations, from as low as \$5, and can fit any safety incentive/recognition budget.
- They are easy to use at most retailer/online stores or at your closest coffee shop.
- They can be shared with family and friends if the recipient wishes to do so.

<b>Immediate Recognition (value \$25 or less)</b>	<b>Long Term (AGM, Quarterly, Monthly – value \$25 or more)</b>
Gift Cards (Coffee, gas, grocery, dining, etc.)	iPad/tablets
Company Swag (consider both site and office employees) baseball hats, toques, coffee/travel mugs, touch gloves, neck warmers/balaclavas, phone charger packs, water bottles, face masks, pens, notebooks, etc.)	Bluetooth speaker or earpiece/earbuds
	Smart Speaker (Google Home, Amazon Alexa)
	TV Streaming technology (Amazon FireStick, Roku TV, Chromecast, etc.)
Movie Theater Packages (Costco)	Higher value gift cards (ie: Pizza Voucher for family of 4, year subscription to Netflix, etc.)
Thermal insoles (for Dunlops/rain boots)	Cell phone car mounts (vehicles)
Odour control balls	Thermos/travel mugs (Yeti/higher quality)
Hi-Vis Mesh T-Shirts	CSA Safety Footwear/Boot dryers
Laptop sleeve/screen cleaner	Work gloves (leather/winter)
Small desk fans or wearable fans	Rain gear
	Safety glasses (higher end/quality)
	Pizza Party/Lunch/Company BBQ
	Thermal Wear/Wick Away Clothing
	Carhart Clothing/High-end Gear
	Laptop bag/travel bag/lunch bag

*Note: Consideration needs to be made around the “incentive”, does the employee have to pay tax or activation fees?*

## **Communications**

Management will be responsible for communicating this program to all employees.

The program will be communicated to all employees and results displayed on safety boards throughout company facilities and worksites. Additional communications may be given at roll out/kick-off meeting, annual safety/general meetings, toolbox talks, via email, etc.

## **Responsibility**

Corporate Safety/Safety Manager/Admin/JOHSC is responsible for the overall administration of this program. Supervisors are accountable for the implementation and execution of this program at his or her location/site/area of responsibility. All supervisors are responsible for both compliance with and enforcement of this program. Supervisor participation will be included in the annual performance evaluation. Every employee is responsible for adherence to this program.