RISK INSIGHTS: Combating Workplace Safety Complacency

As an employer, you want your staff to feel comfortable in their job roles and capable of performing workplace tasks effectively. However, this comfort shouldn't come at the cost of safety.

Employees acting complacent and ignoring hazards on the job can increase the likelihood of serious safety incidents happening in your workplace—including near-misses, injuries and even fatalities. After all, even if you have taken steps to ensure healthy and safe working conditions within your organization, safety incidents can still occur if your employees engage in careless acts or unsafe behaviors.

That's why it's crucial for you to implement measures to combat complacency at your organization and foster a successful safety culture. Review this guidance to learn more about workplace safety complacency and what you can do to prevent it.

Defining Workplace Safety Complacency

Put simply, workplace safety complacency occurs when an employee demonstrates an overly relaxed attitude or approach toward their work tasks. This attitude shift can cause the employee to ignore or become complacent with their job hazards and stop taking proper safety precautions—increasing the risk of near-misses, injuries or fatalities taking place.

Workplace safety complacency often happens when an employee becomes increasingly experienced or familiar with their job responsibilities. Employees can display workplace safety complacency in a variety of ways—including rushing through tasks, skipping important safety steps during a task, multitasking or engaging in distracting activities while performing a task.

Regardless of how confident or comfortable your employees are with performing their workplace tasks, complacency should never be condoned. Even the most experienced workers can hurt themselves or others if they fail to uphold adequate safety precautions.

How to Prevent Complacency

Here's what you can do to combat safety complacency within your organization:

•Keep safety top of mind. The key to creating a successful safety culture and avoiding complacency concerns in your workplace is to establish safety as a top priority among employees. Be sure to keep safety top of mind within your organization by utilizing eye-catching workplace safety signage, requiring routine safety training, and holding regular staff meetings to discuss the importance of recognizing job hazards and taking proper precautions.

• Enforce safety policies and procedures. Make sure you clearly communicate all workplace safety policies and procedures to staff. Further, ensure you follow through with proper consequences in the event that an employee fails to uphold such policies or procedures (e.g., having the employee complete additional training or work with a mentor).

• Refrain from repetitive routines. Employees who perform repetitive tasks are more likely to become complacent on the job. If possible, try to regularly rotate repetitive tasks between staff to help your employees maintain a sense of variety in their routines and reduce their risk of complacency.

•Implement an observation program. Behavior-based safety observations (BBSOs) allow employees to audit one another while they perform workplace tasks, looking out for potential safety concerns. Having your employees routinely participate in BBSOs will help them remedy poor workplace habits or behaviors, identify additional areas for improvement and become more comfortable voicing safety concerns with each other.

• Listen to your staff. Lastly, make sure you value your employees' input on workplace safety. Always ask staff to share their ideas for potential safety improvements and take any feedback seriously. Also, ensure all employees know how to properly report and respond to workplace safety incidents—including near-misses.

For additional workplace health and safety resources, contact a member of the AmeriTrust team today at 800.825.9489.