

Health, Safety, and Environmental Policy Statements



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Health, Safety, and Environmental Policy Statements

Edited By

James A. Kaufman, Ph.D.

Having a health, safety and environmental policy statement is the cornerstone of a good safety program. It's a statement endorsed and supported by the administration that speaks to the fundamental responsibilities for health and safety in the academic institution or company.

For example: "It is the responsibility of our company/institution and its employees to ensure that our business activities/educational programs and other activities protect and promote the health and safety of our customers/students, our employees, and the environment."

Your department may want to draft a sample policy statement for recommendation to your management or administration. It is virtually impossible to have an excellent safety program without their support. Your written safety policy will provide the foundation of your safety program.

What is your company's or institution's safety policy statement? Please send us a copy to share with our readers.

What follows is a collection of health, safety and environmental policy statements drawn from a variety of industrial, academic, government, and health care sources.

Example #1

1. Accidents that cause personal injury, property damage, and business interruption can be prevented.
2. It is both a moral obligation and a sound business practice to operate safely. Accidents cause both human suffering and financial losses, neither of which is acceptable in a well-managed company.
3. Safety and loss prevention are important measures of managerial performance. There is no conflict between operating safely and operating efficiently.
4. It is the responsibility of management to prevent accidents by:
 - Providing a safe work environment and proper equipment to perform each job.
 - Giving adequate training to assure that each employee works in a safe manner.
 - Creating an employee attitude in which safe operation is viewed as both a cooperative effort and a condition of employment
5. It is essential to prepare for and to consider the possible results of disastrous accidents, even though every effort is made to prevent them. The extent of personal injuries can be minimized through advance emergency planning. It is considered economically feasible to limit the probable loss of property to less than one million dollars installed capital value through design provisions.

Example #2

The safety program at _____ hospital has the ultimate goal of prevention of accidents or illness to employees, volunteers, patients or visitors. Our goal recognizes the basic tenet of risk management that accidents are preventable. It recognizes that the costs associated with accidents, be they in terms of human suffering, disruption of the work of the hospital, or in strictly financial terms, can be controlled resulting in more efficient delivery of health care services to the community.

Example #3

We are committed to an injury free environment. We believe we can achieve the conditions, procedures and attitudes to provide this environment. Working safely will always be the first objective of any task and is every person's responsibility.

Example #4

It is the responsibility of the collage and its employees to ensure that our educational program and other activities protect and promote the health and safety of our students, our staff, and the environment.

Example #5

_____ Chemical Company recognizes that safe working conditions and healthy employees are fundamentally important to its success.

We believe that:

- All Injuries can be prevented.
- Management is responsible for establishing safe working conditions and effective health and safety programs;
- Each employee is responsible for following proper procedures and for caring enough to prevent injury to others;

The well being of our Company and our fellow employees depends on all employees working together to keep safety, health, and environmental awareness an important part of all of our daily activities.

Example #6

There are many approaches to advocating safe work practices and through the years few of these have impressed me. I would like to share these pertinent points with you not only as a function of my official position but also as a friend who is truly interested in your overall welfare.

- (a) We must be aware of what we are doing at all times. This requires you to concentrate upon the task at hand only!
- (b) Help each other as a daily effort. This “helping” will not happen automatically and requires individual/group effort. During this “helping” effort you will discover that the dividends are amazing and rewarding.
- (c) No job or project warrants unsafe practices. Equipment and procedures are or will be provided so that you can perform your work in a safe manner.
- (d) Use these thoughts at the Laboratory and you will find that they go with you away from work as well. Also, your family and friends will benefit.

Example #7

The maintenance of a safe and healthful working environment is of the most utmost importance for the successful operation of our business. To this end, safety requirements must be considered fundamental to the design of processes and

the construction of facilities. As technological advances are made, we will continue to implement sound safety, health, and environmental practices.

To achieve our objectives, it is essential that the workforce be trained to follow procedures consistent with applicable safety standards. However, each employee must be constantly alert to his or her personal obligation to observe safe operating procedures.

This continued cooperation of all personnel is required to support and sustain an effective safety program.

Example #8

(Company Name) and the (Division Name) Division are committed to providing a safe, healthy work environment for each employee. We will constantly strive to promote safety and safety awareness both on and off the job.

To be effective, our safety program requires constant, consistent effort from each of us. The following are the basic beliefs that form the basis of our safety policy.

- Everyone must be involved in the safety effort (via Department safety audits, safety meetings, and representation on the safety committee).
- Safety responsibility follows the line management organization (safe work practices, response to employee concerns, training, accident reporting and investigation, and discipline for unsafe acts). The Safety Coordinator position exists to advise line management in the discharge of this duty.
- Attention to safety of self, fellow workers, and subordinates is a fundamental condition of employment.
- Research, by definition, involves doing things that have not been done before. Nevertheless, all injuries are preventable through sound planning and consideration of possible consequences of experiments. A goal of zero injuries is achievable.

As our safety program evolves, we hope to promote a heightened awareness of safety issues. Through participation of all employees we will all benefit by having a safer place to work. The purpose of the (Division Name) safety Manual is to supply you with accurate information of policies and procedures and accepted practices applicable to these facilities. It is intended to be a working, living document to be added to and revised as needed. Please read and use it.

Example #9

Safety, a keystone of Total Quality, is to be practiced in each and every activity throughout the (company name) Corporation.

We will not manufacture or transport products, use raw materials or dispose of wastes unless we can do so in a safe and environmentally acceptable manner.

We believe:

- Nothing is more important than safety ... not production, nor sales, nor profits.
- All accidents and injuries are preventable ... and prevention is among our highest priorities.
- Prevention depends upon sound design and operation ... all (company name) facilities and equipment must be designed and operated to prevent accidents, injuries, property loss, and business interruption.
- Safety is a management responsibility ... and safety can be managed. Doing this well is an important measure of managerial performance.
- Safety is to be practiced by each of us on the job, on the highway and at home ... continuous improvement is the expected norm.
- Every task must be performed with a shared concern for safety, for ourselves, our fellow employees, contractors, visitors, customers and communities in which we operate.
- Each employee must be provided with a safe work environment and supported by training, as appropriate, on the expectations, skills, and techniques needed for safe performance.

Our commitment to Safety and Total Quality is a commitment to doing things right. Ultimately, this results in the elimination of accidents and injuries and procedures error free work to the benefit of all.

Example #10

The company is committed to providing the best possible working conditions for all of its employees. To accomplish this, the company shall comply with all current occupational health, safety, and environmental laws and develop the best feasible operations, procedures, technologies, and policies to provide such conditions.

Company policy is aimed at preventing any employee, visitor, customer or person residing or working near company facilities from being subject to any unusual health, safety, and environmental risk.

The company shall base its practices on the principle of least acceptable risk as defined and accepted by the public.

The company shall establish comprehensive and realistic policies based on past experience and current scientific research to prevent unreasonable health, safety, and environmental risks.

To fulfill these goals the company shall:

- Maintain ongoing programs at all levels to identify employee health, safety and environmental risks. The company shall see to it that all employees clearly understand all facets

of company health, safety and environmental programs that directly affect them and their duties.

- Make control and elimination of such risks a top priority in all company financial and business plans and budgets. The company shall provide the necessary funds to implement health, safety, and environmental programs.
- Control and reduce employee exposure to all known or clearly suspected occupational health and safety risks, and attempt to lower the exposure levels as quickly as government regulation, technology, and economic feasibility allow.
- Provide incentive programs to encourage employees to identify, control, and eliminate occupational health, safety and environmental risk.
- Establish and maintain programs to discuss company occupational health, safety and environmental information with customers, stockholders, appropriate government bodies, and the general public.
- Voice company positions on occupational health, safety and environmental concerns as they affect the company and its employees.
- Plan, design, and construct all new company facilities to provide the safest and the most healthful working environment possible.
- Recognize that despite every effort the company makes, the basic responsibility for employee health and safety rests with the individual. It is a condition of employment for all employees to conduct work in a safe, healthful, and environmentally conscience manner.

Example #11

The company shall comply with state and federal laws and regulations concerning occupational health and safety. The company strongly maintains, however, that the best source of protection for the health and safety of the work force is the individual employee. The company therefore required employees to follow strictly all health, safety, and environmental policies and procedures.

The company shall designate a safety director and an occupational health director to develop and administer, in cooperation with the Executive Committee, policies and procedures in their respective areas.

The company shall strive to protect the health and safety, and security of all employees, using accepted and fresh procedures. It also recognizes its responsibility to protect the health, safety and environment of the general public near its facilities.

The company maintains, however, that occupational health, safety and environmental policies must be balanced by an appreciation of economic and technological constraints. The company believes that it is not practical, nor even possible to eliminate every health, safety, or environmental risk in the workplace.

Example #12

The health and well being of every employee, customer, and resident near company facilities is of vital importance. The active participation of the company, all

of its employees, and the communities around it is necessary to make the occupational health, safety and environmental program a success.

The company's primary goal is to decrease the number of safety and health-related accidents, injuries, and losses at each company facility.

The company's health and safety directors shall work closely with all employees through appropriate channels to develop more effective and more efficient programs.

The company shall encourage research to discover and design better ways to protect the safety and promote the health of its employees and concerned communities.

While recognizing the economic impact of health, safety and environmental policies, the company believes an excellent health, safety and environmental record promotes improved earnings.

The company's separate divisions, departments, and units are encouraged to cooperate and share ideas and information through the company's safety officials. As often as possible, the company shall use its employee communication program to exchange such ideas.

Example #13

Research and education in science and engineering may involve a variety of hazards in laboratories and shops. The protection of the health and safety of everyone involved is first and foremost a moral obligation. It is the policy of (name of academic institution) that people who maybe exposed to hazards should be informed about the nature of these hazards and how to protect themselves and others that also may be exposed. In addition to the moral reasons, there are, of course, many legal requirements concerning safety and environmental health embodied in federal, state, and local regulations.

Faculty, administration, and research supervisory personnel are responsible for promoting safe practices and for providing safe equipment and facilities for members of the staff, students, and visitors. Each person using the equipment and facilities of the (name of academic institution) is expected to follow proper and safe procedures, to report accidents promptly, and to bring to the attention of supervisors and faculty members any unsafe conditions or practices. Individuals working in laboratories or shops should be informed about safety in connection with that particular laboratory or shop and the particular work conducted. Safety in the laboratory can be achieved only by the exercise of judgment and the proper use of facilities by informed, responsible individuals.

In sum, it is the policy of the (name of academic institution) to provide a safe working, teaching, and recreational environment for the (name of academic institution) community. (Name of academic institution) has long been concerned with this subject and has been a leader in identifying hazards in laboratories and shops and protecting people from them. We want to maintain these standards and keep (name of academic institution) at the forefront of this issue.

Example #14

The (company name) Health, Safety and Environmental Manual is a guide for developing sound, safe working habits in your work environment. The objective of this manual is to provide each employee with a framework of basic information to develop safety-conscious attitudes and behavior.

Occupational safety and health, whether in the laboratory or office, is of paramount importance to (company name). How we perform our jobs and our personal perspectives regarding safety, health and the environment are critical to the success of an outstanding safety effort. Safety is everybody's responsibility, therefore, we ask for your commitment to this organizational goal.

The (company name) Health, Safety and Environmental Program is directed by a Health and Safety Administrator who works closely with an appointed Safety Committee, comprised of persons representing each organizational element.

Each employee is encouraged to work with this committee, and to assist in formulating and complying with this manual and other applicable procedures.

Various other safety resources within (company name) are provided as supplements to this manual. These resources will differ depending on the type of job you do, the equipment and personal protection required for job performance, and your work environment. Your supervisor will provide you with the additional information necessary for safety in your workplace

Example #15

It is our desire to protect each person against hazards, but no successful safety program is ever accomplished by management alone. We not only encourage and expect everyone to read this manual, but also to promptly report potential safety hazards to their respective supervisors.

Our research and development activities constantly involve us in new materials and technology, and we may encounter new health, safety and environmental problems at any time. If potentially hazardous conditions are to be recognized and corrected before they can do harm, we need the help and constructive criticisms of every employee - especially those directly engaged in laboratory and shop work.

This is not a subject for thought for one week or one month only. It should be uppermost in our minds at all times.

Example #16

The safety and health of our employees and the protection of the environment is our company's greatest responsibility.

I consider this responsibility a part of every employee's performance.

Therefore, I expect every employee to be accountable for the safety and health of themselves, the people and equipment they manage or supervise, and the impact they have on the environment.

Employees in a leadership role, supervisors, managers, lead employees, and team leaders, must take a pro-active stance in initiating and maintaining a safe and healthful environment.

Employees must:

- Refuse to perform unsafe tasks
- Report all hazards and close-call accidents
- Assume personal responsibility for their own safety by wearing proper protective equipment
- Follow established safety procedures at all times
- Take time to safely perform a job (no rushing)

Finally, since safety is our number one priority, and so important to our organization, we will shut down any operation that is determined to be unsafe to our employees, the community, or the environment.

Example #17

The Company takes pride in providing high quality equipment, products, and services to our customers and markets on a worldwide basis. Our firm's policy is to serve these markets in an efficient and safe manner. Safe and healthful conditions in our plants and work sites are primary objectives.

It is our sincere belief that injuries and property damage resulting from accidents are preventable through the proper management of our human and physical resources. "Within the Company," safety is a copartner with productivity and quality.

Every employee of "The Company," regardless of his or her position or length of service has the responsibility to acquire and follow safe work practices and to have a genuine concern for the safety and health of fellow workers.

Example #18

People are our most important asset - their safety is our greatest responsibility.

It is the policy of our company that every employee is entitled to a safe and healthful place of work.

When a person enters the employ of our company, he or she has a right to expect to be provided with a proper place to which to work, as well as proper machines and tools with which to do the job, and that the employee will be able to devote his or her energies without undue danger.

Only under such circumstances can the association between employee and employer be mutually profitable and harmonious. It is our desire and intention to provide a safe workplace, safe equipment, proper materials, and to establish and insist on our employees following safe methods and practices at all times.

Employees are expected to use the safety equipment provided. Rules of conduct and rules of safety shall be observed. Safety equipment must not be destroyed or abused.

The joint cooperation of employees and management in the observance of this policy will provide safe working conditions and accident-free performances to our mutual advantage.

We consider the safety of our personnel to be of first importance, and we ask your full cooperation in making this policy effective.

Example #19

As we are known and recognized for our products and services; so should we be known for our safety performance. No job must ever become so routine or so urgent that every safety precaution is not observed. Prevention of personal injury and damage to property and equipment of both the Company and its customers must always remain uppermost in the mind of every employee.

It is the policy of (company name) to develop and maintain safe and efficient operations. Our safety program has been designed in accordance with the Williams - Steiger Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 and it requires the full support of each and every employee.

About the Laboratory Safety Institute

The Laboratory Safety Institute is a non-profit organization whose mission is to make health and safety an integral and important part of science education, work, and life. LSI provides training, consultations, publications, audio-visual materials, and responds to requests for information.

James A. Kaufman, Ph.D., founded LSI in 1978 as The Laboratory Safety Workshop. His experience working for the Dow Chemical Company convinced him that schools and colleges were not doing enough to encourage health and safety. Studies by LSI and others have shown the accident rate at schools and colleges to be 100 to 1000 times that of Dow and DuPont.

Safety Audio Course (5.5 hours) and *The Two-Day Lab Safety Video Short Course* (eight, 90-minute VHS Cassettes)

LSI publishes a newsletter: *Speaking of Safety*.

LSI offers lectures, seminars, short courses, audit and inspections, and regulatory compliance and safety program development consultations throughout the world for academic, industrial, medical, and government laboratories.

LSI operates an Internet discussion list, LABSAFETY-L, and maintains an informative website (<http://www.labsafety.org>)

LSI is supported by corporate sponsors, agencies, associations, generous individuals, and its members. Members receive a newsletter subscription, use of the audio-visual lending library without rental fee, a 10% discount on most LSI publications, a 5% discount on training and consultation services, and use of the Toll Free, 24-hour Lab Safety Information Hotline.

The Journal of Chemical Education called The Laboratory Safety Institute "A national resource for safety conscious science teachers". If you would like to help support the efforts of The Laboratory Safety Institute: (1) Subscribe to "Speaking of Safety", (2) Become a member of LSI (partially tax deductible), and (3) Make a contribution (tax deductible).

Free copies of our "Laboratory Safety Guidelines", Publications List, Audio-Visual Lending Library List, and Introduction to The Laboratory Safety Institute (containing seminar schedule and membership information) are available on request. For more information about LSI, contact: The Laboratory Safety Institute, 192 Worcester Road, Natick, MA 01760 508-647-1900; Fax: 508-647-0062, Email: info@labsafety.org.

About the Editor

Dr. James Kaufman is President of the Laboratory Safety Institute, President of Kaufman & Associates and former Professor of Chemistry at Curry College. He received his bachelor degree in chemistry from Tufts University and his doctorate in organic chemistry from Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

After two years as a post-doctoral fellow in the WPI Chemical Engineering Department converting garbage into fuel oil, Dr. Kaufman joined the Dow Chemical Company's New England Research Laboratory as a Process Research Chemist. During his four years with Dow, he became increasingly involved in laboratory safety related activities. He authored "Laboratory Safety Guidelines". Originally distributed by Dow, now over two million copies of the widely requested and re-printed brochure are in circulation.

Dr. Kaufman is the founder and president of The Laboratory Safety Institute - a national, non-profit center for safety in science and science education. LSI's lectures and training programs, AV lending library, and publications help academic institutions throughout the world. LSI is supported by grants from individuals, foundations, companies and professional societies.

As a safety consultant, his company, Kaufman & Associates, conducts seminars, short courses, audits and inspections for schools, colleges, and companies. They also provide advice on regulatory compliance, safety program development, facilities design and editorial commentary on laboratory texts.

Dr. Kaufman is a former, ten-year member of the American Chemical Society's (ACS) Council Committee on Chemical Safety and is past-chairman of the 2,500 member ACS Division of Chemical Health and Safety. He is the author-narrator of the ACS Audio Course on Laboratory Safety and editor of "Waste Disposal at Academic Institutions" from Lewis Publishers. Most recently he recorded and edited the "One-Day Laboratory Safety Audio Seminar" and "Two-Day Lab Safety Video Course."

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