

# Safety Zone: Safety Motivation and Promotion

A new loss control program often produces a flurry of activities because many departments and employees are involved in its successful operation. A question frequently asked by these groups is: What should be done to maintain interest in the program? Without continued motivation, employees begin to lose their positive response to safety. The danger is that their motivation, with time, could drop below pre-program levels.

To maintain interest, management has to direct and handle the loss control activities so that the employees will benefit directly. Interest will be peaked by activities that appeal to them personally. However, everyone is not motivated by the same incentive; therefore, activities that encompass several motivating factors will increase overall participation.

## The key motivating factors are:

- **Self-Preservation:** Fear of personal injury
- **Personal or Material Gains:** Want for reward
- **Loyalty:** Desire to cooperate
- **Responsibility:** Recognition of obligations
- **Pride:** Self-satisfaction and desire for praise
- **Conformity:** Fear of being different
- **Rivalry:** Desire to compete
- **Leadership:** Desire to be outstanding
- **Logic:** Special ability to reason
- **Humanity:** Desire to help others



Programs should be planned using a systematic approach aimed at the most influential factors to the affected employees. A systematic approach will be more effective than an unplanned technique.

Safety programs can have many types of promotions to create and maintain interest:

1. **Posters** – Locate them in high-traffic areas. The posters' topics should promote a theme or focus on a problem. Change them on a regular schedule, based upon local needs.
2. **Handouts** – They can be used in conjunction with poster themes to provide reinforcement. Usually, they are included in payroll envelopes, mailed to the employee's house, provided at safety meetings, or distributed to workstations.
3. **In-house Newsletters** – A separate section can be devoted to inform employees of current and future loss control activities. They can include messages by top management, achievement toward goals and ideas that worked.
4. **Digital Channels:** Make sure safety themes are reflected in your intranet, if you have one, and consider carefully chosen safety messaging on your social media channels and website. Messages of human safety seen by the public and customers are an excellent way to highlight your compassion and business competence.
5. **Suggestions** – Employees should be encouraged to submit written ideas and suggestions. Providing a location where they can deposit these ideas gives them the feeling of having a direct line to management. Consider awards for implemented safety suggestions and, at a minimum, acknowledgment or something positive for all who participate.
6. **Group Safety Meetings** – Generally, these meetings are most effective when they involve top management and are planned to promote safety or training. For the greatest impact, the meetings should only last short durations (up to half an hour).
7. **Individual Safety Conversations** – They are performed by the employee's supervisor on a weekly to monthly basis, with one topic as the foundation for discussion. These contacts should follow a planned safety-oriented schedule.
8. **Safety Contests & Campaigns** – These can be designed to reward individuals or groups. The best results are achieved when everyone is involved, and many activities overlap to promote the campaign or contest. Reward programs must be carefully planned to produce desired results. For instance, a contest that awards prizes for simply reporting fewer on-the-job accidents may produce exactly that: fewer reported accidents, not necessarily fewer accidents. In other words, the contest encouraged the suppression of serious information from the workers in hopes of winning a prize. A better approach would be to reward performance to standards, such as percentage compliance with eye protection in a designated area. Management would

make notes of discrepancies and deduct the number from the percentage compliance to arrive at a score. Instead of conspiring not to report accidents, incidents and unsafe acts, employees would be encouraged to monitor each other for proper behaviors, so their department would win. Other acts to increase awards or scores could include reporting “near-miss” incidents, serving on a safety committee, submitting safety suggestions, completing additional safety training, leading a safety meeting, and so on. And, of course, compliance with standards and rules does result in fewer accidents to report!

Programs that show a top-down interest from management and are disseminated through supervisors to front-line employees help create the spirit of cooperation. Effective communication is a motivational tool. When top management knows and participates in these programs, it displays to all the employees that safety is a company effort.

Employees must be motivated to reach the loss control goals established by top management. Programs designed to achieve those goals must be systematic and effective. The more employees are motivated to participate in the loss control program, the more successful it will become.

For additional resources and other safety and risk management subjects, visit the AmTrust Loss Control website: <https://amtrustfinancial.com/loss-control>

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