

# HICAPS Highlights

Providing a centralized approach to project management

Winter 2020

## Why Do We Think Workplace Safety Is Important?

By James Semler, Safety Superintendent

**T**he simple answer is: All workers have the right to work in a safe and protected environment. Safety and health initiatives promote the wellness of both employees and employers. We feel it is our duty and moral responsibility to look after our employees.

Our safety program begins with the unwavering support of upper management and trickles down to each person in the trenches. We believe every person that arrives on the jobsite should return home in the same condition they arrived. Human loss is immeasurable, intolerable, and has far reaching consequences, especially if the employee is the breadwinner in his/her household. Therefore, many companies like ours have developed safety programs to guide employees as they navigate the seas of workplace hazards.

Apart from the human aspect, our safety program helps us reduce costs, improve productivity, and solidify our good reputation. In fact, the cost of investing in our safety program is far less when compared to the costs associated

**“Carefulness costs you nothing. Carelessness may cost you your life.”**

*– Safety saying, from the early 1900’s*

with workplace injuries and workers compensation claims. Knowing that there are safety measures in place, workers are more productive, which is a key component to our company’s success.

Here are 10 reasons why HICAPS has made a commitment to our ongoing safety program:

1. Safety programs create productive work environments. Properly managed safety programs demonstrate a company’s commitment to safety, which creates a great safety culture where everyone “wants” to be safe.

2. Absenteeism drops when effective safety programs are introduced.

3. Work sites are kept to higher standards—free of obstacles and debris.

4. A safe work environment produces happier employees who experience less stress and anxiety.

5. Safe employees lead to fewer worker’s compensation insurance claims, which lowers our Worker’s Compensation Board rates.

6. Our most valuable asset—our employees—is protected.

7. Safety programs help us win and retain business. Safety compliance is crucial to winning our next contract.

8. Safety programs create an environment where improvements are considered, encouraged and implemented. Workers feel like they are part of the solution.

9. Safe work environments enhance the brand value and goodwill of our company. Clients want to work with companies that are safe.

10. A successful safety program reduces business costs and disruption. There are fewer delays when a project is free of job site incidents, which fosters a more productive work environment.

Safety is more than just one person—it involves every single one of us! The purpose

of our safety program has been built into our company’s culture. We include safety in every policy, procedure and training geared to protect workers, contractors, and subcontractors—as well as customers—from a work-related injury or illness.

We also have a well-documented version of our safety plan available to ensure employees and subcontractors are aware of acceptable and unacceptable behavior on the jobsite. The plan contains a clear framework for decision-making, and procedures in case of an emergency. Having consistent and clear responses across a company when dealing with situations can help avoid misunderstandings and claims of bias. Keeping records of policy statements, training sessions and safety and health meetings are all highly encouraged by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

HICAPS is proud to have a well-established safety and health plan in place—a plan that is in constant review as the industry continues to evolve. Some of the elements we assess when ensuring our program is current include: safety and health activities, equipment, employee capabilities, and accident and injury history. After gathering the facts, we determine where changes need to be made. Even if there are no major problems, OSHA advises creating a comprehensive program with a four-point safety and health plan that includes these components:

1. Have upper management commitment and involve employees. Because our entire company commits to our safety program and demonstrates that safety is a priority for employees, a ripple

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## Workplace Safety... *continued from page 1*

effect can be felt throughout our workforce which influences our subcontractors. Caring for the well-being of our employees makes them feel valued and appreciated. This enhances their goodwill toward the company and produces a better product—all of which results in happy and returning customers. Involving employees in the planning also underscores our company's sincerity.

2. Conduct periodic worksite analyses. Identifying hazards and potential hazards present in a workplace is an ongoing process, as no exact site or project is the same. We are constantly on the lookout for hazards. At a minimum, we concern ourselves with equipment maintenance, harmful chemicals, and the use proper personal protective equipment (PPE).

3. Create systems to prevent and control hazards. Once hazards have been identified, we follow this basic formula for controlling

workplace dangers: eliminate the hazard, abate the hazard, train employees to be aware of the hazard, and prescribe PPE to protect employees against the hazard.

4. Provide ongoing training for employees, supervisors and managers. Ongoing training helps employees become aware of hazards and how they should respond to them. Our supervisors take the time to reinforce training with quick reminders and refresher courses for employees.

At HICAPS, we make time for what matters most. We start each meeting with a safety touch and each week with a safety toolbox talk. These simple acts display the importance of safety as a culture within our company. As I have said in many safety meetings, "I can rebuild buildings, I can set new shelters, I can erect another tower, I cannot replace you, the person."

# HICAPS

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## Turning Type One Into Type None

We're excited to announce another successful Walk for a Cure with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation (JDRF)! From live music to contests and food, the energy at these events is amazing. The best thing is seeing a child with Type 1 Diabetes in an atmosphere where they are not only understood, but celebrated! Technology is catching up with this disease and we really are on the verge of major breakthroughs. It's a critical time when contributions count more than ever to fund the latest research—research that isn't sitting on the shelf, but is actively being pushed into clinical trials. HICAPS is committed to supporting these efforts to Turn Type One into Type None!



*The HICAPS team at the Walk for a Cure event to support the JDRF.*

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