

*Creating workplaces that work... for everyone*

## Keep Safe Day to Day, Month to Month, and Year to Year

### FROM OUR CUSTOMERS

“Paula gave me the audit showing everything I needed to work on. She said, ‘I can do it for you or you can do it yourself.’ She acts as a consultant. She looks at the things I’ve done to see if I need to add anything to it, and how far I’ve progressed.”

WAYNE LAWRENCE, Office  
Manager, James Lawrence  
Electric, Keene, NH

Some companies figure they can ignore safety until their employees start falling from the rooftops. But safety is an issue for *every* business from the electrical outlets in the snack room to the Department of Labor’s (DOL) Safety Summary Form in the file cabinet. Here is a review of daily, monthly, quarterly, and yearly activities that will help keep your employees (and your company) safe.

#### **Safety by the Day**

Every day, make sure all personal protective equipment (PPE) is inspected before use to confirm that it’s in good condition. If a forklift is being used that day, have it checked against the forklift inspection checklist. No checklist? HR Compliance can help.

Once a month, on a set day (say the first of every month) inspect your fire extinguishers and document on the back of the tag that they’re in the “green zone.”

#### **Safety by the Quarter**

Every quarter, conduct a Joint Loss Management Committee (JLMC) meeting and post the minutes for the rest of your team. Although the New Hampshire Department of Labor requires an audit of workplace hazards only once a year, HR Compliance strongly recommends a quarterly inspection at the same time as the JLMC meeting.

The JLMC team should check workplace hazards, including extension cords and exit signs, to make sure they’re working properly. The team should also check for tripping hazards and blockages in walkways, and inspect all secondary containers to see that they’re properly labeled. If secondary containers are

unlabeled or wrongly labeled, OSHA can fine you.

Every year, inventory your hazardous chemicals. You might want to hold that inventory at the same time as your fiscal year-end inventory of equipment and supplies that you conduct for tax purposes.

Also, schedule yearly training for all employees to refresh their memories about safety policies and procedures. You must document this training. Each year you must also summarize accidents on the OSHA 300A form and post the summary where all employees can see it. Every other year, the DOL expects to receive a Safety Summary Form. HR Compliance can help you with the submission.

#### **Long-Term Benefits**

Studies have shown that employees in companies where safety is emphasized have fewer accidents and higher morale. Those employees know their employers care about safety. Their concern translates into fewer injuries, fewer wasted man-hours, and a better attitude among employees. A strong safety program is great news for your bottom line.

This newsletter refers to some of the regulations that may currently apply to small businesses.

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## Compliance Alert

Do you have more than five employees? If so, have you held your quarterly meeting with your Joint Loss Management Committee (JLMC)?

If you don't have an active committee, HR Compliance 101 can help set one up and guide the members in their duties.

The New Hampshire Department of Labor requires all New Hampshire employers to establish a safety committee composed of both management and elected employee representatives. This is the Joint Loss Management Committee. Lack of an active JLMC is number 2 on a list of New Hampshire Department of Labor common citations. Among other tasks, the JLMC identifies workplace hazards, develops and implements corrective actions, reviews safety programs, and produces minutes of their meetings for all employees.



## Workplace and Training Solutions

**Q.** What is the main difference between paying salary versus by the hour? I have a salaried employee who wants to take extra vacation time because of all the extra hours he works during our busy season. Can he do that?

**A.** No—for two reasons. First, salaried employees receive a fixed amount of money to handle their jobs, regardless of the number of hours each job takes. So you don't "owe" your salaried employees anything for working overtime. Hourly employees are paid for every hour they work, including overtime hours, if applicable. Check out state regulations RSA 275:45 and RSA 275:43-b for exact language. Second, no employee (salaried or hourly) can take time instead of pay. You must pay your employees the wages they are due.

### FOR OUR CUSTOMERS

Do you owe someone a favor? Tell them to contact HR Compliance for free posters: the new Federal and NH State Minimum wage posters and the Independent Contractor poster. Don't buy posters!