



Best Practices in Wood Waste Recycling

Employee Training Techniques

Material: Wood Waste

Issue: *To create a productive and safe workplace, all employees must receive comprehensive training about their job and safety. However, employers often rush to fill job openings, starting employees to work before adequately training them. Hence, employees train on-the-job or learn from mistakes. This lack of training could be catastrophic for successful facility operation, or worse, endanger employees' lives. After initial training, employees require continuous, ongoing training, and in certain capacities, advanced training.*

Best Practice: All facilities that process or manufacture should designate safety directors who must properly train employees and implement safe work procedures. They should require that every employee attend job-site classes for initial training before beginning work at the facility. Employee manuals should have specific sections about employee training and facility safety. Then, employees should receive ongoing safety training and learn to improve site-operation practices. Manufacturers of the processing equipment should train each specific processing area's supervisor. These supervisors must know how to communicate safety and equipment operation to their employees.

Implementation: Initial Training. New production employees must learn the following safety procedures: safe operation of all equipment, basic or extensive hazard prevention or safety maintenance, prohibited and safe zones, and all facility safety precautions and procedures. During new facilities' start-up, employers must conduct basic training for their new employees. If possible, training for the facility manager and other key supervisory personnel should take place at established, alternately located operating facilities. If owners cannot provide alternate locations for training, they must hire only experienced and qualified facility managers.

During initial training, employees should receive their facility's operations manual, and trainers should teach them to use it. Training should take place both in classroom settings and on the processing line. All classes should emphasize efficiency, correct operational procedures, and safety. Employers should not allow new employees to start work at their facility until they have learned the proper fundamental procedures of its operation. Their training should include safety and health precautions and procedures relating to their jobs. The training methods should include one or more of the following teaching techniques:

- Instruction from senior on-site personnel,
- Trained professionals teaching classroom sessions,
- Off-site training seminars and or attendance at equipment supplier specialty schools.

Ongoing Training. If facility management completely understands their responsibilities and liabilities, they'll recognize the importance of ongoing training. When trained, safety directors can become responsible for overall employee training and safety. Safety directors need to establish training programs and explicit chains-of-responsibility that consider all equipment and employee activities conducted within the facility. Safety directors must develop and document very clear procedures, which they should

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publish and regularly update in the safety manual that each employee receives. The procedures should discuss all safety

precautions and procedures that employees must follow, such as action steps during emergencies, or the preferred preventive measures that could preclude unsafe conditions developing. The regular and on-site training that safety directors should provide should at least include the following:

- Health and safety.
- Communication protocols for hazardous operating conditions or hazardous materials control.
- Emergency and contingency plan procedures.
- Specific technical training on operating equipment and preventative maintenance procedures.

Supervisors should conduct a periodic review of operating procedures, perhaps even on a weekly basis, to reinforce training and discuss unsafe situations that could arise.

Advanced Training. As employees develop skills, their training should include other areas of facility operations with the goal of increasing skill diversity in confident employees. Facility managers should obtain employee evaluation guidelines, which include a chart of overall performance expectations and evaluation forms for individual employees. These guidelines provide the expected structure for each employee's individual growth. Facility managers should develop overall training programs for their employees. First, they could develop an optimum training strategy for the existing employees. Next, they could develop contingency plans, then prepare advanced training plans that coincide with projected future operation plans. This plan could involve local community colleges and technical training schools.

Certain state laws might require that the facility have certified operators. Highlighted information in the operations manual should explain to employees the appropriate state-certification programs. Further explanation could include the levels of education, operating time, or training needed for certification. Employers should require all certified operators to fulfill all renewal requirements for maintenance of their certification.

Benefits: A lack of sufficient training may create unsafe situations, unmotivated employees, and mechanical problems. Training helps reduce equipment downtime, employee absenteeism relating to injuries, and, potentially, insurance rates. Training increases productivity. Instituting an appropriate training program geared for both employee advancement and preventive equipment maintenance will greatly enhance and improve employee morale and increase operating reliability. Moreover, processing operations that pro-actively train their employees can better anticipate and prepare for both unexpected contingencies and long-term technical and market challenges.

Application Site: Processing and Manufacturing Facilities.

Contact: For more information about this Best Practice, contact CWC (206) 443-7746, e-mail info@cw.org.

References:

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2. Kenneth L. Woodruff & Associates. Morrisville, PA
3. Performance Technology Inc. Lewiston, ME.

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