

Safety



Why This is Important

Worksites should take measures to comply with Vermont Occupational Safety and Health Administration (VOSHA) regulations and go above and beyond what these standards require. This will ensure the safety and health of their employees and help prevent injury in order to improve morale, production, and decrease workers compensation premiums.

How to Support This Outcome

Education and Awareness:

- Request a free, confidential, no-penalty Project WorkSAFE consultation at your facility to help identify hazards and receive assistance in improving safety. Services include safety audits, chemical exposure assessments, noise monitoring, written program development and evaluation.
- Educate employees on state laws and best practices related to safe driving and develop worksite policies on seatbelt and cell phone use when using a vehicle for work purposes.
- Provide information on risk factors for injuries, such as proper body mechanics to prevent musculoskeletal disorders.
- Provide information on community resources for arthritis and chronic pain self-management.
- Create a system for employees to report near-miss or good catch incidents. These events include incidents in which no property was damaged, and no personal injury was sustained, but where, given a slight shift in time or position, damage or injury easily could have occurred.
- Engage in educational opportunities offered by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Training Institute.

Behavior Change:

- Offer opportunities for physical activity and employer lead stretch breaks.
- Offer health promotion programs such as nutrition, physical activity and tobacco cessation.
- Engage employees in improving safety culture including participating in safety committees and job hazard analysis.
- Offer ergonomic assessments to employees to ensure workspaces reduce the risk of injuries and chronic pain.
- Maintain proper housekeeping practices throughout your facility. This is especially important for walking and storage areas.

Policy and Environmental Change:

- Review OSHA required programs, policies, and procedures annually to identify areas for improvement.
- Model programs and templates for most programs can be found by contacting Project WorkSAFE.
- Evaluate your organization's disability management and return-to-work policies to support employees returning to work after injuries.
- Prohibit individuals from manually lifting and handling objects heavier than 50 pounds on their own. Avoid manually lifting, lowering, and handling loads which require non-neutral postures. Use team lifting techniques or powered equipment when manually handling materials greater than 50 pounds or when manual lifting requires non-neutral postures.

Supporting Remote and Hybrid Employees:

- Provide a virtual option for education and training opportunities to include all remote and hybrid employees in worksite wellness programming.
- Offer work-from-home ergonomic self-assessment materials to remote and hybrid employees.

Considerations for Employers of All Sizes

Although OSHA does not require small employers (under 10 employees) to maintain most written programs, training and education requirements apply to all sizes of employer. The concepts and practices of promoting safety and health culture can be promoted by employers of any size.

Where to Go for Resources

- Vermont Department of Labor's Project WorkSAFE: Call **1-888-SAFE-YES** or visit [Labor.vermont.gov/workplace-safety/project-worksafe](https://labor.vermont.gov/workplace-safety/project-worksafe)
- Vermont Department of Labor's RETAIN (return-to-work support and resources): [Labor.vermont.gov/vt-retain](https://labor.vermont.gov/vt-retain)
- National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) resources on ergonomics, diseases, injuries, occupation and industry-specific resources, hazards and exposures, emergency preparedness, chemicals and other safety and prevention topics: [CDC.gov/niosh/](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/)
- Total Worker Health webinar series and resources: [CDC.gov/niosh/twh/default.html](https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/twh/default.html)
- Vermont Safety and Health Council: [VSHC.net](https://www.vshc.net)
- OSHA Training Institute New England safety and health training and education [OSHAEdNE.com](https://www.oshaedne.com)
- Prevent Falls: [HealthVermont.gov/emergency/injury-prevention/prevent-falls](https://www.healthvermont.gov/emergency/injury-prevention/prevent-falls)

For more info: The Vermont Department of Health is here to help. Contact the district office near you: [HealthVermont.gov/local](https://www.healthvermont.gov/local)