



# OSHA's Voluntary Protection Programs

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# What is VPP?

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- Recognizes exemplary occupational safety and health management systems
- Authorized by Section 2(b)(1) of the OSH Act
- Eligibility is based on meeting performance-based criteria
- Verification involves review of the written application and an on-site evaluation
- Participants are exempt from “programmed” inspections



# VPP Principles

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- Voluntary
- Trust and cooperation
- A systems approach
- Model worksites for safety and health
- Continuous improvement
- Employee and employer rights



# Categories of VPP

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- Star
  - Excellent safety and health management systems
  - Injury/illness rates at or below average
  - Self-sufficient in controlling workplace hazards
- Merit
  - Good systems that need improvement to be judged excellent
  - Considered a stepping stone to Star
  - Able to achieve Star status within three years
- Demonstration
  - Designed to test alternatives to existing Star criteria



## Categories of VPP (cont'd)

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- Mobile workforce
  - Open to construction and other industries with mobile workers
  - More frequent re-evaluations than Star
- Corporate
  - Open to large employers committed to bringing multiple sites into VPP
  - Streamlined application and on-site review process



# The Elements of VPP

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- Management leadership and employee involvement
- Worksite analysis
- Hazard prevention and control
- Safety and health training



# Management Leadership and Employee Involvement

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- Leadership is demonstrated by:
  - Providing high quality S/H protection
  - Establishing lines of communication
  - Setting an example of safe behavior
  - Defining responsibilities
  - Assigning authority
  - Affording resources
  - Accountability
- Employee involvement:
  - Problem-solving
  - Audits, inspections and accident investigations
  - Suggestion programs
  - Training others
  - Job hazard analyses



# Worksite analysis

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- Elements of worksite analysis include:
  - Baseline hazard surveys
  - Regular job hazard analyses
  - Regular self-inspections
    - Monthly in general industry
    - Weekly for mobile worksites
  - System for reporting hazards
  - Accident/incident investigations
  - Analysis of injury/illness trends



# Hazard Prevention and Control

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- Hierarchy of controls
  - Engineering
  - Administrative
  - Work practice
  - Personal protective equipment



# Safety and Health Training

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- Objectives of S/H training:
  - Understand S/H responsibilities
  - Hazard recognition
  - Safe procedures
  - Emergency actions
  - Use of PPE



# The Numbers

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- 2,269 VPP participants (as of 8/31/09)
  - 1,616 Federal OSHA
  - 653 State plan
- Growth of the program:
  - 1,039 participants in the first 22 years
  - 1,230 added in the last 6 years
- GAO study and recommendations



# Benefits of VPP

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- Days Away, Restricted or Transferred (DART) rates 52% lower than average
- Lower workers' compensation costs
- Participants serve as model employers
- VPP Participants' Association
- Mentoring program



# Success Stories

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- **MYR Group**

- TCIR

- Before = 7.3    After = 2.7    (-63%)

- DART

- Before = 3.9    After = 1.2    (-69%)

- Best Practices

- Comprehensive new hire orientation
- Safety goals for managers & superintendents
- Performance-based training at foremen levels
- Enforcing management accountability
- Comprehensive jobsite visits



# Success Stories

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- Omaha Steaks
  - TCIR reduced 62%
  - DART reduced 70%
  - Best Practices
    - Ergonomics committee meets monthly
    - Symptoms survey and reporting
    - Safety concern notices and suggestions
    - Training delivered in English and Spanish



# Success Stories

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- **Puget Sound Naval Shipyard (PSNS)**
  - TCIR
    - Before = 22.8 After = 5.6 (-75%)
  - Best Practices
    - VPP Passport – An educational tool to increase knowledge and involvement in VPP
    - Safety committees at shop, code and project levels
    - Quarterly worksite inspections by safety committees
    - Employee-to-employee recognition program for safe work practices



# The Future of VPP

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- Rumors of the demise of VPP untrue
- Slower growth
- Greater consistency
- Better documentation



# Contact Information

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