

## Whose Responsibility Is It?

After an accident has occurred, it is not unusual for those who were around the injured worker to feel guilty. This guilt is part of each person's inner awareness that there was possibly something they could or should have done to prevent the accident. Sometimes the accident is the result of someone else's mistakes. But who causes the accident is not as important as who is responsible for the accident, and what steps will be taken to correct future similar accidents from happening. The following is a partial list of responsibilities for safety on the job.

### Guide for Discussion

#### *Who's Responsible? (Discussion Points)*

- Senior company management?
- Crew supervisor?
- Each person on the job?
- Trained safety professionals?
- Company safety committee?

#### *Some Responsibility Rules for Everyone*

If it's unsafe for you then it's unsafe for the next person and the hazard should be corrected.

Safety doesn't belong to any one construction craft; rather it is part of every construction craft to be responsible.

If safety doesn't begin with you, it won't begin at all.

#### *An Individual's Responsibility*

- To yourself
- To your family
- To your co-workers
- To your company

### **Additional Discussion Notes:** (See Pages 6A and 6B)

**Remember:** Workers' compensation checks won't pay all the bills nor will they replace the self-esteem one has from being a good provider to their families. Without complete cooperation from everyone on the worksite, it just will not be as safe as it should be.

### **Attendees:**

NOTE: Always promote a discussion on any of the topics covered in the Tool Box Talks. Should any question arise that you cannot answer, don't hesitate to contact your Employer.

**Supplemental Information For  
Whose Responsibility Is It  
A Tool Box Talk**

**Instructor Note:** This written test can be given to employees, supervisors, the employer and the company safety committee to reinforce training in "Whose Responsibility Is It." An answer sheet and a discussion topic is found on page 6B.

In our company, who is primarily responsible for the following safety activities?

- E = Employee
- SC = Safety Committee
- S = Supervisor
- EMP = Employer

- \_\_\_\_\_ Complying with Safety Rules
- \_\_\_\_\_ Conducting Safety Training
- \_\_\_\_\_ Recognizing Others for Safety Performances (Good or Bad)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting Injuries or Illnesses
- \_\_\_\_\_ Providing Feedback About Safe Work Procedures
- \_\_\_\_\_ Enforcing Safety Rules
- \_\_\_\_\_ Conducting Area Safety Inspections
- \_\_\_\_\_ Selecting Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- \_\_\_\_\_ Assessing Workplace Hazards
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting Hazards
- \_\_\_\_\_ Conducting Accident Investigations
- \_\_\_\_\_ Rewarding Incentives
- \_\_\_\_\_ Recommending Corrective Actions to Eliminate Hazards
- \_\_\_\_\_ Demonstrating Safe Work Practices
- \_\_\_\_\_ Training Safe Work Procedures to New Employees
- \_\_\_\_\_ Ensuring Safe and Healthful Work Areas
- \_\_\_\_\_ Monitoring Safety and Health Programs
- \_\_\_\_\_ Showing Others How to Use Personal Protective Equipment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Reporting Incidents or Near Misses
- \_\_\_\_\_ Eliminating or Reducing Hazards
- \_\_\_\_\_ Developing Safe Work Procedures
- \_\_\_\_\_ Conducting Job Hazard Analyses

**Supplemental Information For: Whose Responsibility Is It, Continued  
Answer Sheet**

*Choices*

- E = Employee
- SC = Safety Committee
- S = Supervisor
- EMP = Employer

*Because each company is different, there are no single correct answers. However, one perspective of primary responsibility recommends one of the following answers:*

- E, SC, S, EMP Complying with Safety Rules
- SC, S, EMP Conducting Safety Training
- SC, S, EMP Recognizing Others for Safety Performances (Good or Bad)
- E, S Reporting Injuries or Illnesses
- E, SC Providing Feedback About Safe Work Procedures
- SC, S, EMP Enforcing Safety Rules
- SC, S, EMP Conducting Area Safety Inspections
- SC, EMP Selecting Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- SC, EMP Assessing Workplace Hazards
- SC Reporting Hazards
- SC, S, EMP Conducting Accident Investigations
- SC, EMP Reward Incentives
- E, SC, S Recommending Corrective Actions to Eliminate Hazards
- SC, S, EMP Demonstrating Safe Work Practices
- SC, S, EMP Training Safe Work Procedures to New Employees
- SC, S, EMP Ensuring Safe and Healthful Work Areas
- SC, S, EMP Monitoring Safety and Health Programs
- SC, S, EMP Showing Others How to Use Personal Protective Equipment
- E, S Reporting Incidents or Near Misses
- E, SC, S, EMP Eliminating or Reducing Hazards
- SC, S, EMP Developing Safe Work Procedures
- S, EMP Conducting Job Hazard Analyses

**Why such emphasis on Supervisors?**

WAC 296-800-14020

*The employer shall instruct each employee in the recognition and avoidance of unsafe conditions and the regulations applicable to his/her work environment to control or eliminate any hazards or other exposure to illness or injury.*

Past WISHA rulings have indicated that:

“Any supervisor or persons in charge of work are held to be agents of the employer in the discharge of their authorized duties.”

Authorized duties include:

- (a) The execution in a safe manner of the work under their supervision;
- (b) The safe conduct of their crew while under their supervision; and
- (c) The safety of all workers under their supervision.”

It makes good sense to hold supervisors responsible for the employees placed under their charge. It builds a sense of teamwork and shared responsibility for safe productivity. Supervisors are generally closer to the employees under their charge and better able to positively influence positive behavioral change.