

## GOT DISCIPLINE?

It's fine to have nice safety policies and procedures in place. There's a need for rules about wearing personal protective equipment and lockout/tagout and all that stuff. But without enforcing these rules, they don't mean much.

Here are some questions we might ask ourselves about a progressive discipline policy:

1. What is our discipline policy?
2. Do we even have one?
3. Is it written down?
4. Does everybody know what it is?
5. Has every employee signed off that they have received and understand the policy?
6. When is the last time we talked about it?

Sometimes a business will have a discipline policy when it comes to drugs or alcohol, absenteeism, theft, or workplace violence, but leave out consequences for unsafe acts. And yet, working in an unsafe way is as bad as or worse than any of these other behaviors. Breaking a safety rule should have the same sort of consequence as breaking a production rule. The more serious the infraction, the more serious the punishment.

A typical discipline program might look something like this:

- First Offense—Verbal Warning (documented)
- Second Offense—Written Warning
- Third Offense—Suspension
- Fourth Offense—Termination

If a safe workplace is a real priority, managers need to back up their words with action.

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