

# Employee Involvement vs. Employee Participation in Safety Programs

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# Objectives

At the conclusion of the presentation, attendees will be able to:

- Identify the difference between employee involvement and employee participation;
- Provide examples of employee involvement and employee participation; and
- Describe benefits of employee participation in safety programs.



# Terminology

- Are you, the audience, involved in this presentation today, participating in the presentation, or neither?
- Employee involvement and employee participation are NOT the same.



# Employee Involvement

- Employee involvement includes:
  - Employees making decisions regarding how their work is going to get done;
  - Employees providing suggestions;
  - Employees having a voice in goals that are set;
  - Monitoring performance



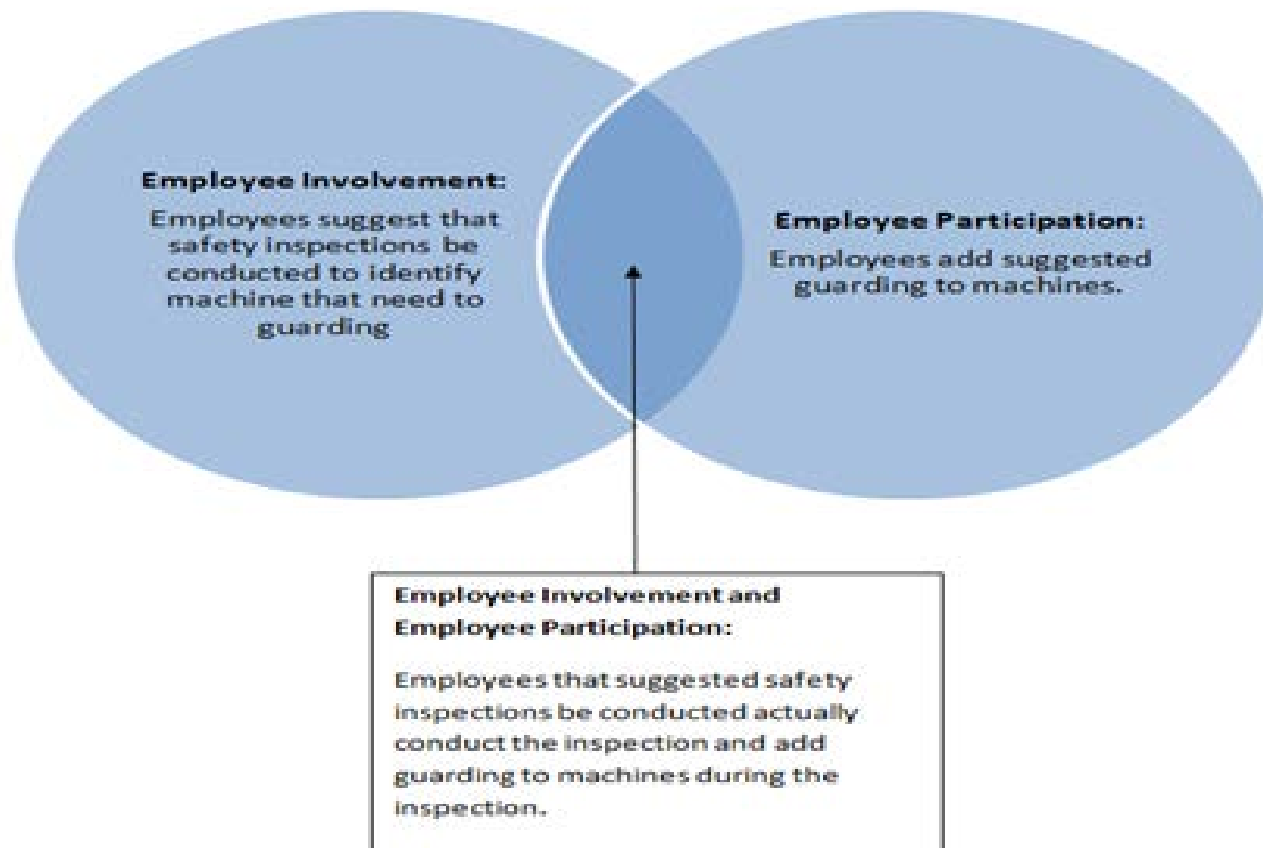
# Employee Participation

- Participation (per Merriam-Webster)
  - “to actively participate”
- “Participate” means to take part (Merriam-Webster)
- Employee participation = Employees actively taking part

# Examples

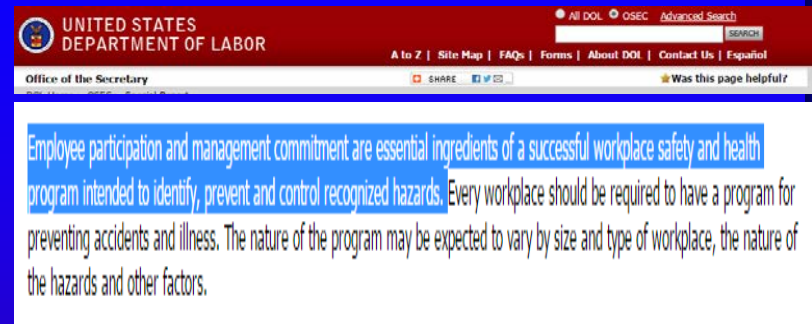
Activity	Employee Involvement	Employee Participation
Employees purchase safety posters	X	
Employees design safety posters and post them in the workplace		X
Employees conduct safety audits and fix deficiencies during the audit	X	X
Employees provide safety suggestions, but take no action	X	
Employees provide safety suggestions and take action to implement the items suggested	X	X

# Involvement & Participation Combined



# US Department of Labor

- Costs associated with worker injuries & illnesses have not improved
- The DOL believes that safety performance can be improved with employee involvement.
- The DOL states that employee participation is a key part of successful safety programs



Source:

[https://www.dol.gov/\\_sec/media/reports/dunlop/section7.htm](https://www.dol.gov/_sec/media/reports/dunlop/section7.htm)





# Experience Shows....

- Experience shows that employee participation can have many benefits for companies:
  - Safety improvements
  - Productivity & Quality improvements
  - Employee morale improvements

# Ford Motor Company

- In 1979/1980, Ford initiated a program they called, “Employee Involvement”
- In this program, they expected employees to actively participate in business projects. They participated in all stages of the projects:
  - Design
  - Implementation
  - Evaluation





# Ford Motor Company

- Results of the Program:
  - Able to compete more with other companies
  - Improved relationship between front-line employees and management
  - Job satisfaction increased from 58% to 82%

# Molson-Coors

- Molson-Coors has been cited as an example of a company that has excellent “employee engagement” (which includes participation)
- Employees participate in safety meetings where their voices are heard and they can be a part of any changes made



# Molson-Coors



- The Society for Human Resources Management (SHRM) conducted a study at Molson Coors.
- The study found that engaged employees:
  - Are 7 times less likely to experience a lost time incident;
  - Are 5 times less likely to have a safety incident

# Molson-Coors

- Since instituting the employee engagement program, Molson-Coors has reduced their safety-related costs by \$1.7 million (in a one year time frame).



# PK Steelworks

- PK Steelworks – Australia
- Union Shop
- Safety Program relies heavily on their Safety Committee





# PK Steelworks

- Started with “safety committees” that covered more than just safety and were not representative of employees.
- Safety committees turned into safety meetings that included mandatory employee attendance.
- This did not have a positive impact on safety.



# PK Steelworks

- Safety Committee with 25% workforce
  - Membership changed every hear.





# PK Steelworks

- 1983 – Government required employee-represented safety committees
- A little improvement, but not a lot



# PK Steelworks

- Early 1990's – Employee participation
  - The “DuPont approach”



# PK Steelworks - Results

- Employee Participation = Significant improvement in safety performance
- Lost time injuries down from 29 per million hours to 0.8 per million hours in a 12 year timeframe



# What Can You Do?

- Get management support
  - Present a business case for employee participation in the safety program
- Get employees involved
  - Ask for suggestions/feedback
  - Follow-up
- Then add employee participation to the mix until you have the right combination of involvement + participation



# Safety Example

- Let's use the Plan, Do, Check, Act model in our example.
- Suppose your company is thinking about purchasing new equipment and implementing a new production process.

Front line employees  
come together with  
Management to review  
new  
equipment/processes  
and provide input

Employees  
actively  
participate in  
equipment  
installation and  
implementation  
of new process

Employees  
actively work on  
improvement  
opportunities

PLAN

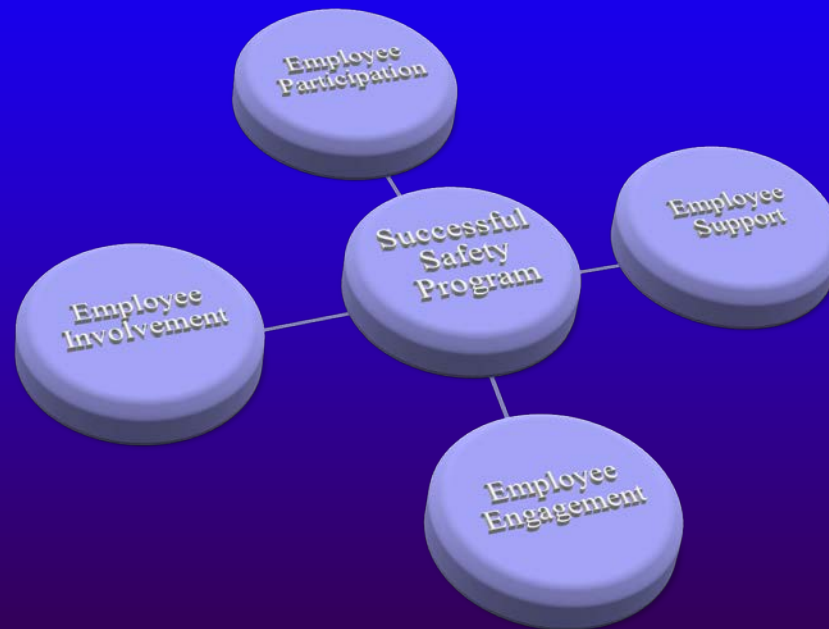
DO

CHECK

ACT

Employees who work with  
the equipment/ process  
conduct periodic reviews  
to determine if it is  
working or needs  
improvement

# Conclusion





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