



Innovation Alert

Sector: ALL	Developer: Industry	Task: New worker orientations; Return to work orientations
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The safety issue we had impacted the following users:

Young or inexperienced workers; Workers new to the site; Returning workers

The safety issue we had was:

Young, new and inexperienced workers are often swamped with information after arriving at a new job. They can be overwhelmed with trying to remember company policies and procedures, learning to operate equipment, trying to impress their supervisor or just being able to function in a new work environment. Because of this, they may not be aware of potential hazards or lack the competency to manage the risks associated with their duties or the work environment - all of which can increase the potential for and severity of incidents and injuries.

So how can a company help ensure their rookies stay safe while learning the ropes?

Our innovative approach was:

Effective orientations are the first step to keeping workers safe. Workers need to be made aware of company policies and procedures, work site management and hazards and the hazards directly related to the tasks they will be performing. This enables them to make conscious decisions to prevent incidents.

Further education and on the job training prepare the worker to hone their understanding of the hazards associated with their tasks and their working environment. With orientation and training programs, a worker can move from an unconscious incompetent state to a worker that is consciously competent.

During the worker's development progression, there is an opportunity for supervisors and co-workers to mentor and coach the "green hands" in their daily tasks. A company can make it easier to identify new workers by having them wear a green hard hat or by placing a green hand sticker on their hard hat.

Definition of a Green Hand: Young, new or inexperienced worker; Worker returning to the job after an injury; Worker who is new to a site, task or job.



Visible identification of a green hand worker means that individual **can have the benefit of increased guidance from experienced supervisors and co-workers**. Identifying green hands should prevent co-workers from making potentially dangerous assumptions about the new/young/returning workers' experience or skills.

For workers returning to the job after time away the Green Hands program can be used to signal to co-workers that they may not be familiar with new policies, changes to safe work procedures or updated technology used in their work.

Stickers should be highly visible and cannot be used to hide or mask a crack or imperfection that would degrade the hard hat.



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The sticker concept should be a part of an overall strategy for supervisors, co-workers and management to ensure the green worker is aware of legislated occupational health and safety rights and obligations, reporting procedures, and the full extent of the hazards associated with their tasks and work space.



A Green Hands Program can help supervisors gauge workers' understanding of their duties, assess their competency and provide additional coaching or training as required. Positive management involvement and frontline supervisor support can encourage a green worker to ask questions without fear of seeming stupid or incapable. To be effective across an organization, everyone involved needs to understand the methods used and their mentoring opportunities.

After demonstrating competency, conscious decision making and commitment, a green hand can remove the green hand sticker or change to a different color hard hat. The demonstration of skills, understanding and abilities is managed by the safety management systems element on training and competency assessment. Some organizations place a time duration for wearing a green identifier where as others use testing and skill sign off as the trigger.

Creating a Green Hands Program can bridge the elements of a safety management system together to integrate the tools used to decrease the risk of incidents and injuries with young, new and inexperienced workers.



Other Applications:

This concept can also be used for identifying First Aid Attendants, Joint Health & Safety Committee Members or for training programs that a worker may have completed.

Supporting resources:

[ENFORM Green hands for Green Hands](#)

[WorkSafeBC Young Worker Orientation checklist](#)

The BCFSC has a limited quantity of green hands stickers available by request.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: training@bcforestsafe.org

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