

Incentives and rewards for health and safety



From Seven steps > Step 5 > Further tools

Why are incentives and rewards important?

Incentives and rewards for employees and workers are just one of the ways in which you can encourage good health and safety on site.

Incentives and rewards can be useful to:

- encourage people to follow health and safety procedures;
- reward those who achieve outstanding health and safety performance;
- reward those who actively support a good culture on site;
- encourage participation in safety initiatives such as surveys;
- encourage, reward and reinforce specific safe behaviours.

Types of incentives:

- One-off prizes – for individuals, or for a group.
- Monthly gift vouchers – a monthly scheme whereby those receiving reward vouchers for observed safe behaviours have their names entered into a prize draw to receive a cash prize or gift voucher for a shop.
- Moral incentive scheme – the organisation gives £1 to charity for each safe behaviour observed, or for every person who attends a health and safety event. There is a pool and the organisation asks for letters from the local community to ask for funding. They then give them funding for those specific things. Or those that attend the events can choose the charity to donate to.
- Safety raffle – a monthly draw for all workers who received a ticket for behaving safely and someone receives £100. Other prizes could include shop gift vouchers or even a car!
- ‘Knock off early on Friday’ (ie an hour) scheme for individuals or groups.
- ‘There and then’ rewards that involve a single observed safe act resulting in a small reward, eg voucher schemes such as breakfast vouchers. These show immediate recognition of a safe behaviour and good practice that is observed by the individual receiving the reward and their peers. Breakfast vouchers might offer a free canteen meal and drink.
- Monthly rewards that involve an accumulation of recognition by others, eg a ‘safe person of the month’ award.

Important points to consider

- It is vital that your reward scheme is communicated fully to workers – everyone should know what it takes to achieve a reward and what observers will be looking for.
- By making your reward scheme part of your site daily routine, you will encourage participation.
- You should avoid rewarding the absence of unsafe behaviour, focusing instead on the reward of observable safe behaviours.
- You should include subcontractors, as well as employees.
- You may want to consider giving different, group awards.

Always give feedback on the outcomes

You could use posters, site briefings, team meetings or newsletters to name winners. Communicating the number of rewards given to workers shows that they are effective. However, it is important to remember that some people, while wanting to receive a reward may not want any publicity.



The detail is important

- Consider the impact the rewards chosen will have on workers. Rewards such as the safety raffle mean that, while several people may have been seen to act safely, only one is rewarded.
- This may impact on workers' motivation to comply with the scheme. However, a scheme such as the breakfast vouchers and 'knock off early on a Friday' means that those who have demonstrated commitment to safety are directly rewarded.
- Consider the workers' values when choosing the type of reward. It should be noted that any scheme that looks to reward with food should be aware of the workers' cultural and religious beliefs. For example, those who follow the Islamic religion should not be rewarded with a bacon sandwich!
- It is important that when individual or group targets are set all workers know how they can achieve them. All goals must be fair and attainable.
- Consider the use of individual and group rewards. Often group rewards work less well than individual ones – with group rewards relying heavily on all workers meeting the goal.
- It may be useful to allow workers to give rewards to each other as a form of recognition. This means that the reward scheme is not completely dependent on the supervisor noticing safe behaviours.

For further information see www.hse.gov.uk/construction

The Leadership and Worker Involvement toolkit is aimed particularly at small and medium sized businesses and is designed to help improve your health and safety and bring additional benefits to your business performance and productivity.