



## IMPLEMENTATION OF SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND ITS BENEFIT

**Dr.Sushma Tiwari**

*Faculty, Deptt.MBA(HRD), A.P.S. University.*

### **Abstract**

*Incorporating safety management systems into normal business operations does appear to reduce accidents and improve safety in high-risk industries. Recent studies point out that most accidents occurring at the workplace stem from human errors. Nevertheless, these accidents cannot be eliminated by changing people. As a result, a safety management system is implemented as the most effective approach to guaranteeing safety, wherein there is an identification of causal factors followed by an implementation of remedial actions. A safety management system does not necessarily imply zero risks; rather, it prepares the organization proactively to identify and control risks prior to progressing into a catastrophe. In addition, there is an inherent responsibility on the management of an organization to ensure the safety of all stakeholders, right from the employees to the customers. Other nations around the globe have such regulatory bodies and guidelines in almost every sector to ensure safety. This research paper reviews the concept of Safety Management Systems (SMS) providing the key definition that comprise SMSs. The research paper will further analyze the value of implementing a safety management system.*

**Keywords-Safety Management System, Benefits.**

### **Defining a Safety Management System**

Before delving into the definition of a safety management system, it is vital importance to first define the component parts of the SMS concept. The first important definition is that of the term system. A system can be defined as the orderly arrangement of interdependent and related units and procedures that work towards a bigger goal or achievement (Waring 2002; Gustin 2007). A system can be viewed as several sub units working in coordination towards a particular goal. A small system can work towards a smaller goal and when small subsystems are joined they can form a bigger system.

The basic components that define a system include a structure, procedures, inputs and outputs (El Hamzoui 2008). Therefore, a system accepts inputs and processes the inputs based on the outlined procedures to produce outputs. Changes in the procedures or structures of the system result in a totally different output.

Thus, based on the above discussion, a Safety Management System can be defined as an organized and well coordinated procedures, guidelines, personnel and sections in managing safety within the organization (Redinger & Levine 1999; Stolzer, Halford & Goglia 2010). It is a collection of ordered processes, organizational structures, procedures, policies and accountabilities towards the safety of the organization. An organization needs to take proactive measures in implementing a safety management system. In doing so, an organization should develop an implementation plan.

A plan to implement a safety management system can be composed of several facets. One of tenets that comprise a safety management system is safety policies, which expressly defines the acceptable safety standards of the organization. The second crucial component required in implementing a safety management system is defining the objectives and goals of the system. Other key components include system description, reporting policy, roles and responsibilities of different personnel in the safety department, safety communication strategy, safety promotion strategy, and safety performance measurement. These subunits of the organizational safety management system function as points of reference for the management. Such an implementation also implies that the organization has to undertake a recruitment drive in order to get qualified personnel to the different tenets of the safety management system.

### **Values of Implementing a Good Safety Management System**

Regardless of the fact that, safety management system is a considerable progress with regard to safety management, its value and effectiveness can be achieved only through implementation. Safety management systems allow enterprises to make sure that all threats are covered as a single system instead of having several safety management entities.

### **Coordinated Emergency Response**

Implementing a good safety management system has several advantages to it. First and perhaps, the most important is that a well implemented SMS provides a response or plan to emergency situations. An emergency response plan (ERP) describes a well coordinated response for efficient transition from emergency cases to normalcy (Gustin 2007). Different fields



experience different cases or instances of emergencies. Such instances usually present grave danger to both the employees and customers, if any are onsite. A well implemented SMS expressly defines what is to be done in such emergency cases. Coordinated responses during emergencies reduce chances of stampede and may end up saving several lives.

A good real life example of a good a well implemented SMS was depicted by the BP oil rig disaster at the Gulf of Mexico. The well, referred to as the Macondo Oil Well Project, faced an emergency where a massive explosion was experienced at the oil well and soon fire engulfed the entire rig (Corn 2010). With hundreds of employees on the rig, poor evacuation strategy would have led to deaths of hundreds of employees. However, due to properly defined emergency procedures, only eleven of the employees died in the huge explosion. According to Corn (2010), the employees who lost their lives were within the range of the explosion. Therefore, it is plausible that none of the employees on the rig died because of poor emergency handling measures. Other organizations could benefit from developing and implementing a good SMS.

### **Risk Management**

The second advantage of a well implemented SMS is that the management is in position to identify, mitigate and eliminate risks, in a general concept referred to as risk management. The concept of safety management is based on eliminating chances of harm to an individual or damage to property. Implementing a good SMS assists the management in risks management in three ways.

First, a safety management system will identify hazardous conditions within the organization (Stolzer, Halford & Goglia 2010). It identifies what sections or procedures that put the employees at grave danger or risk to the employees. Without such risk identification, an organization would be exposed to serious instances of risk that would lead to harming employees or damage to facilities. The result of such occurrence is a heavy financial burden to the organization towards reimbursing such employees or customers and replacing damaged facilities.

Secondly, risk identification provides room for mitigation of such risks. For instance, the Toyota Company identified a safety risk in its cars sold in the United States (Zack 2010). The company managed to recall its entire product in the US market, and in a sense, the company evaded a serious safety concern and possible law suits from its clients.

In mitigating the safety risk posed, an organization considers the probability of the risk occurrence and the severity should the potential hazard be experienced. Once the severity or adversity of the risk has been established, the organization can take measures to mitigate the said risk,

Finally, once the risk has been identified and mitigated, a well implemented safety management system directs that internal investigation performed. Internal investigation explores the failures of the system so that the newly identified has emerged. Internal investigation will reveal what ails the organization and therefore the management can explore measures to reverse the situation eliminating future risks.

Overall, the safety benefits associated with the implementation of a safety management system as regards risk management include: providing a proactive method for safety improvement rather than the conventional reactive model; reducing loss of lives and injuries; enhancing employee satisfaction by ensuring they are involved in the safety management process; and providing a more effective interface with the relevant regulatory authorities.

### **Business Advantages of Safety Management Systems**

Besides ensuring that organizations meet compliance requirements and legal responsibilities, a safety management system has numerous business benefits. Organizations benefit financially through SMS through elimination of monetary reimbursements; customer support since they believe in the safety of the firm's operations; and improved employee morale because of working in a safer environment.

### **Quality of Products**

The concept of safety management goes beyond the safety conditions of the workplace. It also includes developing measures and mechanisms that ensure the product getting to the consumer is safe for consumption. Hence, safety management systems ensure that products getting to the consumer are of quality standard. This, according to Gustin (2007), is a sure way of extending the marketing endeavors of the firm. Customer need to believe that every time they purchase your products, all the safety concerns have been met.



### **Ergonomics Benefits**

Several industries, particularly the air transport industry, are characterized with probable threats and unsafe conditions that cannot be eliminated completely despite the fact that business operations have to go on. The fact is that the aviation operators and associated service industries have to accrue some profit in order for their business model to be deemed sustainable. In the light of this view, safety stands out as a key prerequisite for success and profitability in the aviation industry. On the contrary, ergonomics focuses on redesigning the workplace in order to result in worker comfort and his/her well being. A good ergonomic design ensures optimal and efficient use of employees capabilities. Whereas the main objective of ergonomics is to reduce the employee exposure to potential hazards, adopting a safety management system has a number of positive ergonomic impacts including improving health and safety within the workplace; enhancing employee satisfaction and morale; improving productivity; improving the quality of work; lessening the possibility of errors and accidents; and lessened medical and compensation costs linked with hazards at the workplace.

### **Conclusion**

A safety management system is a collection of coordinated units and procedures that ensures that the organization abides by the safety regulations and standards set out by the management. The SMS also ensures that the organization is within the legal requirement of the state of regulatory body. A SMS therefore provides the organization with a coordinated effort towards meeting the safety needs of all stakeholders in the organization.

### **References**

1. Ayres, M 2007, *Safety Management Systems for Airports: Guidebook*, illustrated edn, National Research Council (U.S.), Washington DC.
2. Corn, L 2010, *Deepwater Horizon Oil Spill: Coastal Wetland and Wildlife Impacts and Response*, DIANE Publishing, New York.
3. El Hamzoui, E 2008, 'Occupational Health and Safety Management System', [http://www.eos.org.eg/NR/rdonlyres/E52EBEE0-0C89-4B86-8DDA-EF7284F09047/722/Ezz\\_DineOccupationalHealthandsafety Management syste.pdf](http://www.eos.org.eg/NR/rdonlyres/E52EBEE0-0C89-4B86-8DDA-EF7284F09047/722/Ezz_DineOccupationalHealthandsafety%20Management%20systeme.pdf).
4. Gustin, JF 2007, *Safety Management: A Guide for Facility Managers*, 2nd edn, The Fairmont Press, Inc., Boston.
5. Redinger, CF & Levine, SP 1999, *Occupational Health and Safety Management System Performance Measurement: A Universal Assessment Instrument*, AIHA , New York.
6. Safety Regulation Group 2008, 'Safety Management Systems – Guidance To Organisations', Civil Aviation Authority, <http://www.caa.co.uk/docs/1196/20081010SafetyManagementSystems.pdf>.
7. Schneid, TD & Collins, L 2001, *Disaster management and preparedness; Occupational safety and health guide series*, Lewis Publishers, Darby.
8. Stolzer, AJ, Halford, CD & Goglia, J 2010, *Safety Management Systems in Aviation*, reprint, illustrated edn, Ashgate Publishing, Ltd, New York.
9. Waring, A 2002, *Safety Management Systems*, illustrated edn, Chapman & Hall, Chicago.
10. Zack, N 2010, *Ethics for Disaster; Studies in Social, Political, and Legal Philosophy*, Rowman & Littlefield, Boston.