

Coaching Workshop for On-the-Job Trainers

Objective

On-the-job training (OJT) is a common means of training workers. By definition, it seems relatively simple. However, to be effective, training must go beyond the simple process of following an experienced worker around the workplace—sometimes called the "follow Joe" method. NIOSH researchers spoke with human resources personnel, safety and health specialists, supervisors, experienced miners, and new miners and found that OJT was of high interest, but was rarely part of a formal or standardized program. Various training methods have evolved to ensure that a trainee will absorb the information presented rather than simply emulate what the instructor is teaching. These methods have been brought together into a published guide for developing an effective formalized OJT program. The guide (Information Circular (IC) 9479) is called "Coaching Skills for On-the-Job Trainers." It contains materials and suggestions for your company or mine to conduct a 1-day workshop for teaching OJT trainers how to be better coaches to less experienced workers. The guide was created by the NIOSH Pittsburgh Research Laboratory and a safety professional from a private mining company.

- Setting training prerequisites
- Evaluating performance
- Granting company certification to trainers/coaches and trainees
- Evaluating the program

A Team Effort

Of course, OJT is not just the coach's responsibility. A successful OJT program is created in a team environment. The champion administers and evaluates the overall program along with actively promoting it. The supervisor manages the action part of the program. This includes selecting coaches, making a training plan, and evaluating the coach and the trainee. The coach does the training. The trainee masters what is being taught.

Coaching Workshop

The 1-day workshop is meant to better hone the knowledge and skills of coaches selected to conduct OJT. The workshop materials cover the following: determining the individual's

Informal Versus Formal Training

The informal means of training is the "follow Joe" method mentioned above. This way may be effective at times, but there will be less of a chance that standardized methods will be learned when new employees are informally taught their jobs. Also, certain methods or habits that should not be learned may be adopted by the new employees. The result is reduced efficiency and effectiveness. Giving coaching skills instruction to experienced workers will allow them to properly convey the information needed to do their tasks to workers new to the job.

A formalized program reduces variability in what is taught across instructors and over time. Some parameters of a structured program that are included in the NIOSH guide are—

- Selecting and preparing OJT trainers/coaches
- Working with supervisors for successful implementation
- Developing and/or selecting training materials



OJT trainers can effectively coach new, less experienced miners.

coaching characteristics, learning communication skills, discovering how adults learn, preparing training materials, and practicing coaching skills. Although the workshop is designed to fit into 1 day, it could also be presented in a series of short sessions.

Workshop materials were field tested with experienced miners who were selected to be OJT coaches and with human resource and mine safety professionals who are responsible for OJT programs. Almost all of the participants stated that the workshop was relevant to their jobs, and everyone who responded to the evaluation said they would recommend the workshop to others. Eighty-seven percent of the participants rated the quality of the materials as above average, with over half of them giving a rating of "excellent."

Guide Contents

The guide is divided into five sections:

1. *Developing a coaching program* discusses considerations for setting up a formal OJT program.
2. *Conducting a workshop* explains how to set up and conduct a workshop to train experienced workers to be successful OJT coaches.
3. *Instructor's notes for workshop* provide support for individuals who would like to conduct a workshop.
4. *Slides for workshop* contains hard copies of slides that can be used during the workshop.
5. *Student workbook* consists of trainee materials that coaches follow during the workshop and keep with them for use as reference material as they practice their coaching skills.

A CD-ROM is included containing the above material in Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Adobe Acrobat formats. The guide can also be downloaded from the NIOSH Website at: www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/products/trainingpackages.htm#OJT

For More Information

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To receive other information about occupational safety and health topics, call 1-800-35-NIOSH (1-800-356-4674), or visit the NIOSH Website at www.cdc.gov/niosh

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