

Most restaurant owners understand that their future workers compensation insurance rates are directly tied to the number and size of the claims that are filed against their workers compensation insurance today. These policies are experience rated so your past will inevitably come back to either haunt you or reward you. This one truth about workers compensation insurance makes the idea of preventing or limiting the size and the scope of future losses very important to most savvy restaurant owners. The best workers compensation insurance companies will have safety plans and programs that they can provide to you for free, often along with onsite inspections to help you understand your most dangerous risks. But the best safety plan in the world is a complete waste of time if your employees are not dedicated to making it work. So how do you get them to buy in to your idea to keep them safer? Here are a couple of ideas to help you get the compliance that you need to run a successful safety program for your workers.

Open the lines of communication. This sounds simple but it requires a change to your routine so it is tougher to do than you might think. You need to tell your staff how they are doing safety-wise. They need to hear what they are doing correctly and they also need to hear what they need to change and where they need improvement. When you build your communication channels, make sure that information can flow both ways – you need to hear from them about what they would change and where they are having difficulty implementing some of the changes that you requested. Check with your workers compensation insurance company for help in delivering and sustaining your message over the long haul.

Show and explain the real life benefits of your safety program. Talk about exactly how this new program will impact your workers. One of the highest priorities that workers cite in surveys is coming home in one piece to their families after work each day. Help them understand that this is exactly what you are working towards. If you can identify benefits that will accrue to your restaurant, then perhaps you can also use some of these benefits to set up reward programs to compensate your employees if safety is achieved. While you can't force a change in attitude, you can get people to want to be safe and to be accountable for their actions so do what you can to get your employees actively involved in your safety program.

Repeat your message, using different media. Use posters, safety meetings, video content, email reminders and notes from you, the boss. Most people learn visually so using any photos that you can in your messages to them will greatly increase the learning and retention rate.

Use stories as examples. If you have any stories to tell in this area, you will find that your

employees will hear these more completely and are more likely to respond to and remember them. Your workers compensation insurance agent can probably also help you by providing real life claims stories that he or she has encountered.

Set goals that aim high and plan to reward success. Let your employees know exactly what you expect from them and how you plan to take the entire restaurant there. Let them know how you will measure success and keep them abreast of all progress toward you goals. If you can find a way to reward them for their participation and the success of the program, do this as well.

At Clinard Insurance Group, located in Winston Salem, NC, we insure hundreds of restaurants all across North Carolina, South Carolina, Tennessee and Georgia and we would love to help your restaurant keep your workers safer and keep your workers compensation costs down. If you would like our help, please call us, toll free, at 877-687-7557.