

Benefits of Participation in the STS (Safety Trained Supervisor) Program

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What is the STS (Safety Trained Supervisor) Certification Program and who should be participating?

STS is a certification program of the Council on Certification of Health, Environmental and Safety Technologists (CCEHST). The STS certification program has national accreditation from the National Commission for Certifying Agencies (NCCA). It has international accreditation through ANSI/ISO/IEC 17024 and national standards through ASTM E1929-98 Environmental. CCEHST is a joint venture of the Board of Certified Safety Professionals and the American Board of Industrial Hygiene. The STS in Construction was first offered in 1995. Its creation came from a joint request by the ASSE Construction Practices Division and NSC Construction Division for BCSP to provide a technical level certification in construction. OSHA recognizes the STS-Construction credential through a voluntary agreement between OSHA and CCEHST that was signed May 21, 2002 at the 12th Annual Construction Safety and Health Conference in Chicago.

STS is intended for non safety individuals who:

- Are managers at all levels.
- Are first line supervisors of work groups or organization units.
- Have a safety responsibility for a work group that is part of other duties.

Safety Trained Supervisors are not safety specialists or safety practitioners. Typical candidates have a safety responsibility that is adjunct, collateral or ancillary to their job duties. Their main job duties are in a craft or trade, in leadership, supervision or management, or in a technical specialty. Qualifications require 30 hours of safety and health training and two years experience in their industry, a minimum one of those years in a supervisory capacity.

The typical certified STS helps an employer implement safety programs at the worker level through supervisory, safety committee or similar safety and health leadership roles. Safety tasks often include monitoring for job hazards, helping ensure regulatory compliance, training employees in safety practices, performing safety recordkeeping tasks, coordinating corrections for safety problems within or among work groups, and communicating with safety specialists or management.

The STS safety responsibility is a part-time responsibility, usually less than 1/3 of the total job duties. If safety responsibilities involve a greater portion of job duties, the role is more likely to be that of a safety technician/technologist or safety professional.

The STS establishes a minimum competency in general safety practices. To achieve the certification, candidates must meet minimum safety training and work experience and demonstrate knowledge of safety fundamentals and standards through a 100-question, computer-based examination. The test questions emphasize 10 tasks expected of supervisors with safety responsibilities and 14 knowledge areas that are demonstrated by the certification test. The approximate distribution of test question topics is shown in the following tabulation.

EXAMINATION CONTENTS [approximate percentage of questions]

- 10 Tasks
 - New Employee Orientation [9.5%]
 - Basic S&H Hazard Recognition [10.7%]
 - S&H Meeting [9.3%]
 - Inspect Tools & Equipment [9.7%]
 - Job S&H Inspections [9.7%]
 - Pre-task S&H Hazard Analysis [10.6%]
 - Issue & Monitor PPE [9.6%]
 - Plan for S&H Hazard Prevention [10.7%]
 - Apply S&H Standards on Job Site [11.1%]
 - Investigate Accidents/Incidents [9.3%]

- 14 Knowledges
 - OSHA regulations [14.6%]
 - Company safety rules & procedures [14.6%]
 - Industry safety requirements [14.6%]
 - Potential hazards [14.6%]
 - Job, craft, and phases of construction [11.5%]
 - Communication at all organizational levels [11.6%]
 - Observation techniques [8.3%]
 - Training methods [1.3%]
 - Job hazard analysis [1.5%]
 - Test equipment usage [1.2%]
 - Enforcement techniques [1.6%]
 - Proper tool and equipment selection [1.2%]
 - Reporting techniques [2.4%]
 - Accident/incident investigation techniques [1.2%]

What are the benefits?

Supervisors, managers, safety committee members, foremen, crew chiefs, and other work group leaders play very important roles in planning and making work safe. By validating their safety knowledge through the training and certification process, supervisors are making decisions regarding safety issues that are within their direct responsibilities, rather than expecting the ES&H professional to make the call. By managing safety at all levels, projects have fewer losses due to accidents and injuries with improved productivity and reduced project costs.

OSHA recognizes the STS credential as a leading indicator of a contractor's commitment to an effective safety and health program (see May 21, 2002 OSHA Trade News Release). OSHA compliance safety and health officers consider it a factor in deciding whether to utilize a focused inspection. Penalty factors for recorded violations may consider the STS program in final fine settlements in some cases.

What are the benefits for employers and owners?

The overall benefits of the STS certification program may include any of the following:

- A standardized evaluation of employees' fundamental safety knowledge.
- Demonstrated competency of its employees by examination and certification.
- Increased safety awareness among employees.
- Improved safety culture.
- Reduced workers' compensation claims and reduced insurance premiums.
- Reduced need for safety professionals on smaller projects or assignments.
- Improved productivity from better communication within work groups.
- Higher profits from reduced losses due to accidents and injuries.
- Company recognition by having employees who hold a nationally-accredited credential.
- Competitive marketing advantage for bidding work.

What are the benefits for employees?

- Demonstrated knowledge of fundamental safety practices.
- Opportunities for increased job responsibilities or employment.
- Documented personal development for performance reviews
- Increased value to employer.
- Recognition for safety leadership from an employer or other employees.
- Increased confidence when dealing with safety and health matters.
- Recognition by holding a nationally-recognized and accredited credential.

When did Washington Group International's STS program begin?

In 1995, Brad Giles and Mike Nicholson were discussing possible approaches to instilling a new safety culture, driven by the concept of Zero Injuries. The discussion included how the company recognized employees who attained the CSP, CIH, PE, MBA, CPA and other types of professional certifications. While there were established support and recognition programs for professional certification there was an obvious lack of certification that recognized line management on a national level. First line managements' influence on safety culture change usually resulted in the greatest improvement and therefore a program that promoted safety at the management level should result in the greatest improvement. Further investigation revealed that CCHEST had a newly created STS for Construction certification (CCHEST, 1995). It was proposed to the company President that a company program recognizing and supporting our supervision in attaining the STS would drive the culture in the direction we all were wanting. Our President agreed that we would pay certification fees, provide training and preparation materials and time and reward those that attained the STS with a personal letter of recognition and an STS company logo watch. The first Washington Group STS certification was awarded in 1997 and the program continued to grow with between 60 to 200 new employees gaining certification each year. With a growing employee response to the program the, STS certification became a Leading Safety Indicator for Washington Group International.

Since the 1996 Leading Indicator for STS was established over 1800 management members and supervisors have attained the STS certification. This effort has improved safety culture from the executive level down to the craft foremen level. Washington Group International supported CCHEST in their effort to create an STS certification in General Industry as well as Petrochemical. Washington Group International has STS certified supervisors in all three fields

of certification. Washington Group International was the first company to have supervisors certified in the General Industry category. The Presidents of a number of the Business Units have themselves attained the STS certification and drive the initiative through the Vice Presidents that report to them directly. The STS Certification is currently a Leading Indicator that all projects are measured towards accomplishing 100% STS certification for all supervisors on the projects.

Washington Group International has expanded the STS Leading Indicator to international projects as well. Most U.S. government funded overseas projects recognize compliance with U.S. safety and health regulations along with local government regulations so the study and application of STS training is applicable for all projects, regardless of geographic location.

Training support is provided through a 16 hour classroom training covering the following topics:

- 1) OSHA 10 hour technical aspects,
- 2) Supervision responsibilities and accountability,
- 3) Accident investigation,
- 4) Economics of safety,
- 5) Control of energy
- 6) Design considerations.

This training is supplemented with the JJ Keller personal safety handbooks and the company's safety and health guidelines manual as the main resource. Sample questions are provided for practice in test taking methods and modules of on-line training programs allow individual subject refresher and review opportunities. When classroom training is not available, the on-line training provides individuals and smaller projects as well as the international projects the access to courses that assist in exam preparation.

Currently, approximately 96% of all supervision in the business units having specific OSHA (federal and state) jurisdiction that are assigned to projects have their STS certification. Many executive level managers and director level managers have attained their STS and have included the designation on their Washington Group International business cards/letterhead and proudly display their STS watch.

The following outlines the observed benefits that Washington Group International believes have been achieved from supporting the STS certification process:

- Improvement of injury and illness rates by 80% as demonstrated by reduced recordable injuries and illnesses.
- Reductions in workers' compensation costs by 80%.
- Observed increase in supervisory confidence for making day to day safety decisions.
- Greatly improved quality of field safety inspections and audits performed by field supervision.
- Reduced risk on small projects that lack a full-time safety professional.
- Demonstrated commitment by Washington Groups to employee Professional Development.
- Enhanced technical confidence level.

- Improved productivity and profitability of projects.
- Continued professional development through the recertification process.
- Demonstrated commitment to clients and regulatory personnel of a goal of Zero Injuries.

Summing it up

Washington Group International supports professional certifications of our supervisors by recognizing the achievement at multiple levels. The high visibility of the program keeps the safety culture of Zero Injuries vibrant and alive and offers personal satisfaction to employees who participate. There is a demonstrated correlation of company safety performance and project profitability that can be attributed to the continuing commitment and support of this program across the company.