



TEXAS ASSOCIATION *of* COUNTIES  
RISK MANAGEMENT POOL

ACCIDENT PREVENTION PLAN  
IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

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## PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE AND THE ACCIDENT PREVENTION PLAN

This guide is intended to help Texas counties eliminate and control hazards through the use of an Accident Prevention Plan (APP). The materials in this guide will provide you with tools and ideas to incorporate the APP as part of your standard operating procedures. Regardless of the size of your county, the guiding components of the APP will help control injuries and related costs.

Every year, counties around the state suffer losses of equipment and property damage as result of work related accidents. In some cases the losses are extremely severe, such as the loss of lives or the creation of permanent disabilities for county personnel.

A safe work environment has a positive effect on productivity and minimizes unnecessary loss costs. Effective safety measures benefit your county's bottom line by:

- reducing lost work time,
- reserving and extending the service life of taxpayer owned property and equipment,
- minimizing injury to contractors or members of the public,
- reducing the risk of lawsuits,
- avoiding increased insurance coverage costs, and
- enhancing workplace morale, teamwork, and productivity.

This guide explains how to effectively develop and perform each program component. The end result will depend on what you do with this guide, and how well you implement your APP.

The sample APP contains basic form language and counties are encouraged to modify the language to best fit the unique operations, roles, and cultures in place.

Other sample policies, procedures, checklists and forms are available in addition to this guide. The sample APP contains a list of forms that are available from the Texas Association of Counties Risk Management Pool (TAC RMP). These forms may also be modified and custom tailored to your county operations.

The APP is a framework for ACTION by all involved! It is vitally important that the APP is more than just a document developed and adopted by a county that resides in one person's office. In order to obtain the benefits of an APP listed above, the components of the plan must be executed, documented, and reviewed for any necessary modifications.

The APP is also a framework for accountability and should clearly establish who is responsible for the various parts of your safety and health programs.

It also services as the framework for when these actions need to take place, whether it be immediate action required by statute following a death or a bi-annual review of the APP by a committee.

The results of implementing an APP may vary from county to county; however, TAC Risk Management Services staff has observed three important keys to success in the past 40 plus years of service to counties.

- Strong support from commissioners court and all elected officials, and supervisors,
- Employee participation and involvement in the programs and processes, and
- Effective communication/leadership from those coordinating the programs.

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## MANAGEMENT COMPONENT

Experience has shown that both sincere commitment and active management participation are necessary if an APP is to achieve the beneficial results. When management demonstrates genuine interest in preventing accidents and providing a safe workplace, supervisors and employees are more likely to do the same.

It is vital for the success of the APP to have the support of commissioners' court, elected officials, and department heads. Proper supervision for employee safe work practices requires active engagement of middle management, such as foremen and supervisors.

Management should demonstrate support by translating ideas into specific safety actions such as:

- Adopting a court resolution supporting the APP
- Developing and implementing a Safety Policy Statement
- Developing and implementing an Authority and Accountability Statement or Policy
- Providing realistic allocations of time and money for safety items
- Assigning responsibility and authority for implementing and enforcing your APP
- Reacting promptly to recommendations developed as a result of the APP (suggestions, complaints, etc.)
- Attending safety talks and meetings

## IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PLAN

Over the years the TAC RMP has encouraged Texas counties to organize safety committees to develop and implement safety programs. Some counties have opted to assign Loss Control Coordinators or Risk Managers to perform this task.

This decision should be left to the discretion of the county; however, we do recommend appointing one individual to:

- Oversee the development of the APP
- Coordinate the implementation of the APP
- Discuss the status of the development and implementation of the APP with members of Commissioners Court and other members of management on a monthly basis

## GOALS

An APP is more likely to accomplish the desired results when safety goals have been clearly established. Goals should give a clear understanding of what you expect. These goals should be realistic and easy for your Coordinator to measure.

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## SAFETY POLICY

A Safety Policy Statement will help you develop employee awareness. Develop a good policy that will help you communicate your intent. The policy should be part of your Accident Prevention Plan. In addition, you may take a copy of the signed policy and place it in a visible location for everybody to see.

A Safety Policy Statement sample is included in the sample APP for counties.

Since commissioner's court is responsible for budgetary consideration for the entire county, TAC Risk Management Services staff recommend that the county pass a court resolution to also be signed by other elected officials in their support of a safe workplace.

## AUTHORITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The authority and accountability policy will help you communicate to all county employees' that the responsibility of implementation and success of the plan falls in the hands of every county employee.

## MANAGEMENT CHECKLIST

Question	Yes	No
Have you adopted a court resolution?		
Have you developed and adopted a safety policy statement?		
Position or job role responsible for development of APP?		
Position or job role responsible for implementation of the plan?		
Position or job role responsible for compliance with the plan?		
Position or job role responsible for timelines and progress updates?		

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## RECORDKEEPING COMPONENT

Recordkeeping is a necessary function of managing your Accident Prevention Plan. Records provide written documentation of your actions and assist you in administering your program components.

Sample forms and policies are attached and may be used for the documentation of the efforts called for in your plan. Some forms or policies may not adequately represent the current practices employed by the county, therefore, we encourage sample forms to be customized to fit specific needs. It is the responsibility of the county to modify the necessary forms, and policies to be effective and useable.

The recordkeeping policy outlines where the records are to be kept, who will keep the records, and how long the records will be maintained. Five years is the recommended time period for maintaining records, unless otherwise required by the individual county.

### RECORDKEEPING CHECKLIST

<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Have you designated the records to be kept as part of the APP?</b>		
<b>Have you designated a person(s) to maintain your records?</b>		
<b>Have you stipulated where the records will be maintained?</b>		
<b>Have you stipulated timelines for proper reporting?</b>		
<b>Forms adopted to document workplace injuries/illnesses?</b>		
<b>Forms adopted to document county property damage?</b>		
<b>Forms adopted to document third party injuries or property damage?</b>		
<b>Forms adopted to document accident investigations?</b>		
<b>Forms adopted to document building/jobsite inspections?</b>		
<b>Forms adopted to document vehicle/equipment inspections?</b>		

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## ANALYSIS COMPONENT

An Analysis component of the plan assists counties to study data to determine trends or problem areas. The analysis should be presented in the form of a report. The report will allow you to concentrate on areas of your business that pose the greatest threat to the health and safety of your employees.

The Safety Analysis Report should help managers identify areas within the county or within their respective departments with the highest exposure or frequency of accidents.

Trend analysis is used to identify trends indicated by statistical data gathered from other program components. By keeping accident and injury data, you can identify particular types of injuries, and the causes of the injuries. Inspection data may reveal problem areas or particular hazards that continually recur. The trend analysis may indicate the need for additional training, new procedures, or engineering controls to eliminate the problems.

### ACCIDENT LOG

Accident logs are recommended as part of the analysis component. The log will facilitate the analysis process. As a minimum the log should maintain:

- Areas where accidents are taking place
- Type of injuries (sprain, strains, lacerations, etc.)
- Nature of injuries (pulling, pushing, etc.)

The log may provide a quick look at the county's current experience. The idea is to identify the trends before they continue to cause more injuries to employees.

### WHAT IS INCLUDED IN THE ANALYSIS POLICY?

- To formulate the analysis component, what do you need to establish in writing?
- Who (by position) is responsible for conducting the analysis?
- What type of analysis will be conducted?
- How often the analysis will be conducted?
- What data will be analyzed?



## WHY CONDUCT A SAFETY ANALYSIS?

Mistakes or errors that result in employee injuries, loss time or damaged equipment affect the county's productivity. A simple analysis can help you obtain maximum efficiency, safety, and productivity.

## HOW IS THE ANALYSIS CONDUCTED?

- Select the data to be analyzed (accidents and injury data or hazards identified during inspections)
- Determine a time period the analysis will cover (quarterly, annually, multi-year).
- Identify similarities in data (e.g. three out of four accidents involved back injuries from same work area, three out of four involved same work activity, same hazards identified during the inspection).
- Develop corrective measures to address unfavorable trends.

## ANALYSIS CHECKLIST

Question	Yes	No
Has an individual been appointed to conduct the analysis?		
Have you decided on the frequency and the time frame the analysis will cover?		
Have you decided what type(s) of analysis to conduct?		
Has the date for the analysis to be conducted been identified?		

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## **SAFETY TRAINING COMPONENT**

Employee training is your most valuable accident prevention tool to develop employee safety awareness. Through training, your employees learn to recognize and eliminate hazards. Training may also influence the employees' behavior. The wrong behavior or attitude may lead to work related accidents. After all, 80 to 90% of all accidents are attributed to human behaviors.

Many accidents can be avoided if the employees are shown safe work practices and made aware of the hazards of the job. You may use other components of the program to develop a training schedule for your county or department.

### **THE SUPERVISOR**

Supervisor's participation in employee training is vital for the prevention of work related accidents, and with your support and guidance they can have a direct impact on the reduction of workplace accidents.

### **THE EMPLOYEE**

County employees are busy people who are exposed to a variety of tasks within their respective departments; therefore, it is important to provide them the correct tools and education on how to accomplish tasks safely and effectively.

### **NEW EMPLOYEES**

New employee orientation should be in writing and it should include safety information. In addition, new employees may be provided with a tour the work area explaining the operations, processes and equipment. Explain hazards that could lead to injury and the safety precautions to prevent injury.

### **TRAINING POLICY**

When developing the Training Policy, the following information must be specified:

#### **RESPONSIBILITY FOR TRAINING**

Indicate, by position, who will be responsible for conducting the training. When selecting the designated trainer, take into consideration that they will have to train on a variety of topics, specific to their respective areas. Therefore, we recommend appointing individuals that are knowledgeable of the department operations, policies, and the hazards associated with county operations.

## FREQUENCY OF TRAINING

How often training should be conducted depends on the exposure of the department. Some departments, by the nature of their responsibilities, have higher risk exposures than others. Consequently, these departments require additional training throughout the year to maintain a high level of awareness. Road & Bridge and Sheriff's departments normally are expected to conduct training on a monthly basis.

## TRAINING TOPICS

Some counties like to adopt a core of training topics for the year. Unfortunately, sometimes these topics do not address some of the factors contributing to work-related accidents. We recommend that the county conduct an analysis of the most common type of injuries over the past two years to identify developing trends. The training schedule should reflect the specific county needs. Some areas may need specialty training to address their safety needs.

## WHO NEEDS TRAINING?

Everybody needs training. New employees need training to get off on the right foot. Existing employees need constant training to remind them of the hazards associated with their jobs, and remind them of the county's standard operating procedures. Also, existing employees who change jobs need training to perform their jobs more efficiently and safely.

Additional consideration should be given to those employees working in more hazardous situations, such as those assigned to activities with strenuous manual labor, heavy lifting, pulling or pushing.

Supervisors need specific management techniques that may help them implement and enforce the APP. Supervisors need training analyzing jobs to identify unsafe acts and conditions that may lead to work-related accidents.

## WHO SHOULD CONDUCT THE TRAINING?

Many Texas counties rely on the training services made available by the TAC RMP or other agencies. It is highly unlikely that outside organizations to provide the necessary training to build and maintain a high level of safety awareness. Counties should be responsible to provide most training and job coaching for employees with their own resources. Outside resources are useful for specialized training and training should be planned accordingly. Training by supervisors is a key, as they are also responsible for compliance with policies and the work being done.

TAC RMP has an extensive safety resource library, which provides training materials on a number of topics related to county operations. We recommend that all counties allow personnel within the county to become trainers. Train the trainer instruction will allow the trainer to expand their knowledge on training techniques so they can maximize their training sessions. Your TAC Risk Management Services risk control consultant can assist you with this.

## **NEW EMPLOYEE ORIENTATION**

As previously mentioned, new employee orientations are important to get new employees off on the right foot. As part of the written orientation program, you should consider the following:

- Discuss the county's policy and dedication to safe and healthy work environment.
- Provide a copy of the county's rules and procedures to employees, and discuss any questions or particular items of interest with the employee including accident reporting, hazard reporting, etc.
- Discuss the APP with the employees.
- Supply employees with any personal protective equipment needed for the job. Include instruction on its proper use, adjustment, maintenance, and replacement.
- Discuss and provide training on specific hazards of the employees' jobs.
- Communicate what is considered safety training for the purpose of the APP.
- Safety training for the purpose of the APP should include topics on matters affecting county employees' health and safety, with an emphasis on most recent injury experience (minimum last two years).

## **SAFETY VIDEOS**

Safety videos are a good source for safety training; however, a video will not be capable of addressing all the specific needs of the department. Therefore, we will expect personal involvement by the immediate managers and supervisors to complement video presentations.

## **JOB RELATED DISCUSSIONS**

Job related discussion will be considered training sessions if they discuss safety-related matters, i.e. sexual harassment, although an important matter, is not considered safety related.

The following are considered job-related discussions:

- Discussion of county or department standard operating procedures changes
- Discussions with employees about new equipment or machinery operation

- Discussion of hazards associated or special precautions with the equipment

## **SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS FOR SAFETY TRAINING**

In addition to the safety meetings called for in the APP, employers may supplement safety meetings in a variety of ways, such as:

- Conducting tail gate meetings
- Making written safety information, such as safety posters or envelope stuffers available to the employees
- Watching employees demonstrate the task, explaining each step back to you
- Checking employee performance through job site observations
- Discussing safety topics during departmental staff meetings

## **HOW TO DEVELOP A TRAINING SCHEDULE PROGRAM**

### **STEP 1: DETERMINE TRAINING FOCUS**

Review recent accident related data, such as accident reports, loss runs, accident investigations, incident reports, and conduct an analysis by:

- Exposures
- Type of injuries
- Cause of injuries
- Work areas

### **STEP 2: IDENTIFY TRAINING NEEDS**

Determine which training needs will have the greatest impact in the reduction of current accident trends.

### **STEP 3: IDENTIFY GOALS & OBJECTIVES**

Specify what you want your employees to gain from the training, and how you will evaluate the results.

### **STEP 4: DEVELOP OR ORGANIZE LEARNING ACTIVITIES**

Develop a training activity to be used during the training. This may include researching what materials are currently available within the county, and what outside sources may assist you in the process.

## STEP 5: CONDUCT TRAINING

Conduct the training method you have determined will be most effective for your needs. Prioritize your training based on immediate needs. First Aid and CPR are important training; however, these topics will have little impact in the reduction of most work related accidents.

## STEP 6: EVALUATE PROGRAM EFFECTIVENESS

Review accident investigation and inspection reports and job site observation to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

## STEP 7: IMPROVE THE PROGRAM

After the review, determine what areas or topics need to be addressed to improve the current program. Sometimes serious accidents or unsafe conditions may force you to improvise on your safety training program.

## AVAILABLE FREE TRAINING RESOURCES

[TAC RMP Safety Resource Catalog](#)

TAC RMP Toolbox Talks

[Texas Department of Insurance Resource Center](#)

[Texas Local Technical Assistance Program](#)

## SAFETY & HEALTH TRAINING CHECKLIST

Question	Yes	No
Has an individual responsible for conducting training been appointed?		
Has your representative received "Train-the-Trainer" training?		
Have you developed a training schedule?		
Have you developed training topics by department?		
Have you assigned training dates?		
Has training been documented?		

Question	Yes	No
Have employees signed attendance rosters?		

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## HAZARD IDENTIFICATION

A good system for identifying unsafe conditions and unsafe acts which lead to accidents is a vital part of a safety effort. A high number of accidents among county employees is attributed to poor housekeeping or unsafe acts by employees. Most prevailing types of injuries include slips, trips, falls, lifting, reaching, twisting, being struck by an object, caught in or between objects, cuts, burns, etc.

Knowing what to look for and where to look is important in the reduction of accidents; therefore, during the inspection look for locations where injuries can or have occurred.

Management should give guidance to their personnel in the development and implementation of the safety inspection program. A good inspection form should facilitate the process for the person responsible of conducting the inspections. Management should regularly review inspection reports for the identification of conditions which may lead to accidents and for implementation of corrective actions necessary for the elimination of the identified conditions.

### WHAT TO INCLUDE IN THE HAZARD IDENTIFICATION COMPONENT?

The policy should state who will be responsible for conducting the inspections. The unique structures and operations of counties around the state, require counties to indicate by position the person(s) responsible for this task.

The policy should also indicate how often the inspection will take place. Road & Bridge and Sheriff's departments should, at a minimum, conduct monthly safety inspections of their facilities.

County vehicles and other operating equipment should be inspected regularly. Currently, counties around the state generally document the number of gallons of fuel consumed by the equipment, flat repairs, as well as parts used in the repair and maintenance of the equipment. For the purpose of an effective APP, counties should conduct inspections of the equipment, emphasizing the identification of conditions that may affect the safe operation of the equipment. This should include, but is not limited to, all safety equipment from factories, as well as windshields, tires, brakes, lights, back alarms, etc.



For county vehicles, including pickup trucks, cars, patrol cars, etc. the following schedule is recommended:

- Daily vehicle inspection
- 3,000 mile thorough inspections
- Heavy equipment
- Minimum 250 hours inspections

All inspections should be documented. Attached are sample forms that may be used for documentation of the equipment inspections.

The plan should also indicate who will be responsible for reviewing the reports and corrective actions.

### **WHEN SHOULD INSPECTIONS BE CONDUCTED?**

Increases or changes in operations, or installation of new equipment often creates new hazards, such as congestion, poor housekeeping, and other conditions that may contribute to employee accidents. Consider scheduling an inspection if any of these changes in conditions occur.

### **INSPECTION COMPONENT CHECKLIST**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Have you appointed a responsible person to conduct safety and health inspections?</b>		
<b>Have you establish how often inspections will be conducted?</b>		
<b>Have you stipulated how inspections will be documented?</b>		
<b>Have you determined who will be responsible for the review of the inspection reports?</b>		
<b>Have you conducted an inspection follow-up to ensure corrective action?</b>		

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## ACCIDENT REPORTING & INVESTIGATION COMPONENT

All work-related accidents must to be documented immediately after they occur. This should be followed by an accident investigation to identify contributing factors leading to the accident, and any corrective action needed to prevent similar accidents in the future.

The component should outline the procedure to report and document work-related accidents including:

- Personnel to be notified
- Reporting timeline

The next item in the component should indicate the procedure to follow for the investigation and documentation of work-related accidents. The investigation procedure should indicate:

- • Individual responsible for conducting the investigation
- • Forms to be used during the investigation
- • Individual(s) responsible for the review of the investigation findings
- • Follow up process for the implementation of the corrective actions

### WHEN SHOULD ACCIDENTS BE INVESTIGATED?

Every accident should be investigated as soon as possible after it occurs. If you wait, facts could be forgotten and evidence may be lost. Prompt investigation will result in the most complete and useful information. Investigations should take place at the scene of the accident.

### WHY SHOULD INVESTIGATIONS BE CONDUCTED?

Accidents do not just happen—they are caused. First, find out what caused the accident. Second, develop a plan of action to eliminate or control the cause. All accidents should be investigated, no matter how minor. Eliminating the causes and contributing factors of minor accidents can prevent serious accidents in the future.

### WHO SHOULD CONDUCT THE INVESTIGATIONS?

The immediate supervisor of the area where the accident took place should conduct the investigation. The reasoning behind this practice is that supervisors have better knowledge of all employees under his or her supervision, not to mention they have a better understanding of the various operations and operating procedures of the

department. Upper management should review all accident investigation reports within their respective departments.

## **HOW SHOULD AN INVESTIGATION BE CONDUCTED?**

Effective accident investigation skills are developed through experience. Basically, find out what causes the accident and what can be done to prevent its recurrence. Some suggestions include:

- Check the site and obtain facts before anything has changed
- Discuss the accident with the injured employee as soon as possible, after first aid or medical treatment has been given
- Obtain facts from witnesses regarding the conditions and circumstances before and after the accident
- Compile all facts, regardless how small, to assist you in determining the real cause
- Be objective—the purpose of accident investigation is to find the real cause and contributing factors behind the accident, not someone to blame.

Once the investigation process is complete take corrective actions to eliminate the cause and prevent recurrence. Upper management needs to make sure accident investigation recommendations are implemented.

- If employee failure was involved, make sure the employee is now properly trained. In addition, make sure to train other employees in similar operations.
- If the operation can be changed to eliminate the hazard, change it.
- Decide if equipment changes or guards are needed. Seek assistance, if necessary, to obtain the proper type of device.
- Follow up on corrective actions to make sure they are effective.

A TAC Risk Management Services risk control consultant may be able to assist you in this process by conducting Accident Investigation Training.

## ACCIDENT INVESTIGATION & REPORTING CHECKLIST

Question	Yes	No
Have you developed county accident reporting policy procedure?		
Have you appointed, by position, the person to conduct accident investigation?		
Have you developed accident investigation guidelines covering how investigations will be conducted?		
Have you specified in the policy who will review the accident investigation reports?		

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## REVIEW & REVISION COMPONENT

The purpose of the review and revision component is keep your APP current and working efficiently and effectively to prevent losses, accidents, and injuries.

This component will provide the opportunity to fine tune your program and make necessary adjustments to better suit your specific county needs. Schedule, in advance, a thorough review of each component of the plan and make necessary changes.

Ensure new equipment procedures or operations are incorporated into the appropriate component of the plan. Check existing equipment procedures and operations to ensure that your current component guidelines are meeting your safety needs.

Remember to notify all county employees of the changes to the APP.

Counties should select an individual responsible for preparing and presenting the Accident Prevention Implementation Status Report to Commissioners Court. The purpose of the report is to keep Commissioners Court informed of the progress of the implementation of the APP. As indicated on the sample APP, the report should be presented to Commissioners Court monthly.

### PROGRAM REVIEW CHECKLIST

<b>Question</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Has a person been appointed to conduct and document the program review?</b>		
<b>Have you stipulated when the program review will be conducted?</b>		