



Creating a Healthy Partnership: Strategies for Union Participation



Objectives



After this training you will be able to:

- Identify union and management misconceptions
- Identify participation requirements
- Describe communication tips for unions and employees
- Describe the value of mentors and training for unions
- Identify ways to encourage meaningful union and employee involvement.



Unions, Management and VPP



- VPP is a cooperative partnership between the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and Management and Labor
- Keys to establishing this partnership are to:
 - Involve the unions early
 - Include unions in the decision to begin the path to VPP
 - Consult Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBA) and Union By-Laws for your organization.



Union Misconceptions about VPP



- VPP will infringe on employee rights, or Union authority
- VPP will inhibit the bargaining process
- VPP will remove OSHA from the safety oversight
- Management will introduce unrelated items under the blanket of VPP.



Teamwork is the Ultimate Goal!





Participation Requirements





Participation Requirements

- Support requirements to participate in VPP include:
 - Written documentation stating union support
 - Participation on S&H activities.
- Union has the right to withdraw its support for S&H concerns
 - It is important that site understands and address the reason for union withdrawal.
- S&H is **NOT** a bargaining tool, but a responsibility.





Support Letter

- Sites should provide written documentation to OSHA of either union support or union non-opposition
- Examples of Support Letters may be found at: <http://vppcx.org/> under “Mgmt Commit & Emp Involve”





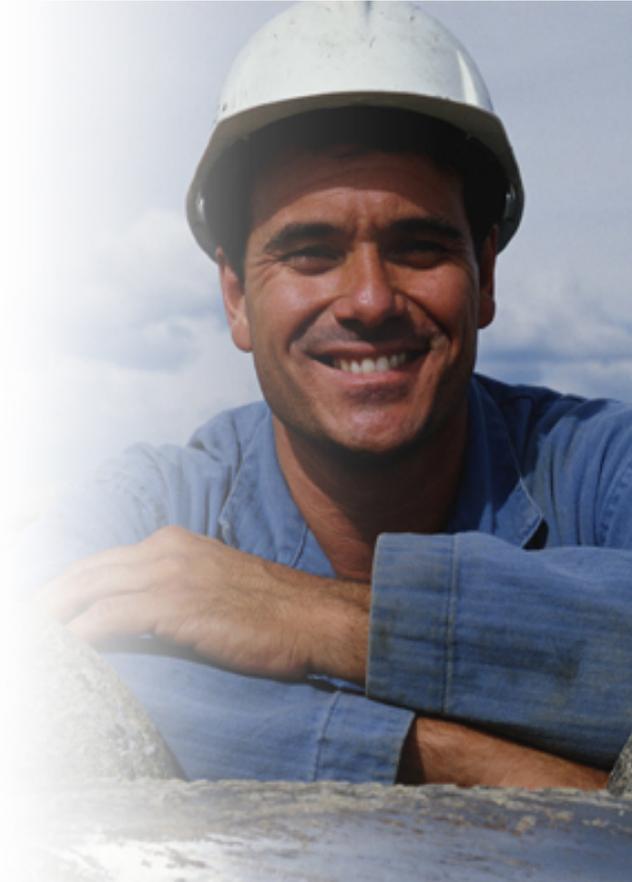
Communication Guides



Communication for Employees and Unions



- OSHA VPP requires that employees be notified about:
 - Site's participation in VPP
 - Feedback on such items as hazard abatement, industrial hygiene sampling (IH)
 - Rights in accordance with the Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) Act.
- Union involvement in this communication process is critical to ensure VPP thrives in the workplace.



Union Engaging Tips



- Start early and talk often
- **ALL** Unions need to be in on initial discussions to solicit their support
- Encourage mentorship by including union representation on VPP site benchmarking visits
- Support union attendance at regional Voluntary Protection Programs Participants' Association (VPPPA) conferences.





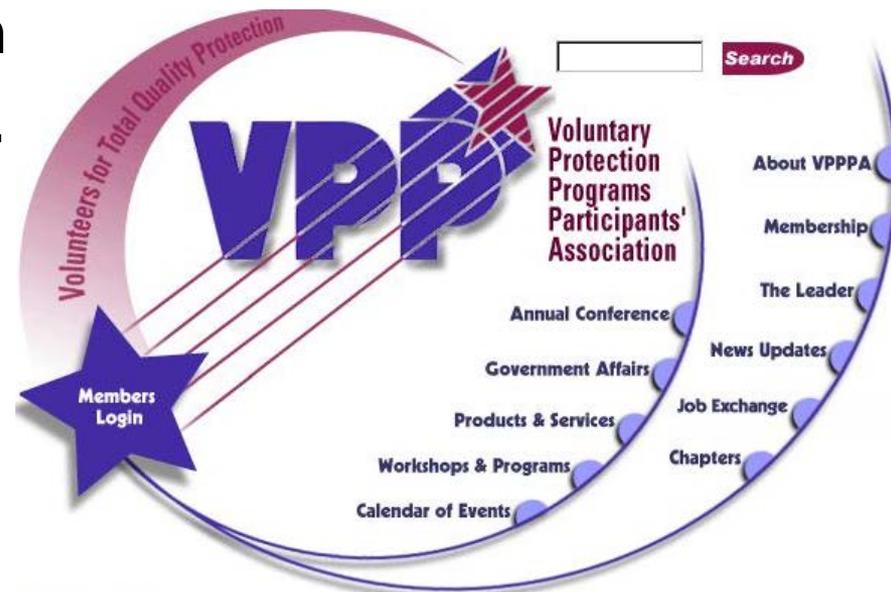
Training and Mentorship



Mentorship



- Ask union members from other VPP sites to help initiate and develop VPP programs at new sites
- Consider utilizing the VPPPA to assist with union mentorship and support
 - Optimal way to gain appropriate mentor.





Mentoring Activities

- VPP mentoring activities may include:
 - Supporting mentoring workshops
 - Hosting benchmarking visits
 - Offering tips for effective VPP application development
 - Helping analyze problem areas
 - Sharing knowledge of other resources
 - Sharing techniques and preparation strategies
 - Advising mentees.



Benefits of Using a Mentor



- Provide “real world” examples of techniques used to resolve safety and health issues
- Access to resources both at the mentor site and other sites in their network
- Contribute to accelerated culture change
- Ease development and submission of an application.





Employee/Union Involvement



Union Participation in VPP



- Union employees must be involved in at least three meaningful ways in the VPP process such as:
 - Safety committees
 - Hazard analysis” JSA/JHA development
 - Monthly safety inspections
 - Accident/incident investigations
 - Hazard recognition.



Committees



- Consider forming committees that include a membership balance of management and union/labor
- Consider using union members as Committee Chairs
- Make committee meeting minutes available for distribution throughout the workforce
- Consider using committees and sub-committees to perform S&H related tasks such as trending, goal setting, identifying training needs etc.



Employee / Union Involvement



- Unions are built on loyalty
- Union leadership is a conduit for S&H communication
- Create a workable partnership
- Be **FLEXIBLE.**



Summary



In this module you learned about:

- Union and management misconceptions
- Participation requirements
- Communication tips for unions and employees
- Value of mentors and training for unions
- Ways to encourage meaningful union and employee involvement.



Knowledge Check



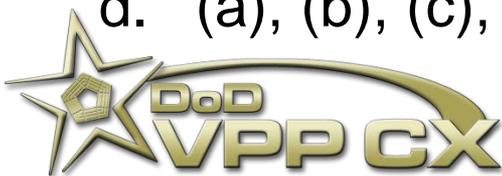
1. At a VPP Star site, the labor-management partnership forged through VPP results in fundamental changes in the authority of management and unions, and in the collective bargaining process.
 - a. True
 - b. False
2. Which of the following is not one of the suggested VPP mentoring opportunities for site union representatives:
 - a. Serving on safety and health problem solving teams
 - b. Attending VPP workshops/conferences
 - c. Reporting suspected safety problems to OSHA
 - d. Participating in safety and health benchmarking visits



Knowledge Check



3. Which of the following is true concerning OSHA requirements for site participation in VPP: (a) written documentation of union support for VPP participation must be provided; (b) union support for VPP participation must be included in the local union contract; (c) a union may withdraw its support for site participation in VPP at any time; (c) if union support is withdrawn, OSHA will re-evaluate continued site participation in VPP?
- a. (a), (c), and (d)
 - b. (a)
 - c. (b)
 - d. (a), (b), (c), and (d)



Knowledge Check



4. Because union representatives can learn a lot by attending Voluntary Protection Programs Participants' Association (VPPPA) conferences, it is essential to that they become VPPPA members so they can attend those conferences.
 - a. True
 - b. False
5. Allowing union members to participate in accident investigations is an acceptable method of employee involvement, provided information security and employee privacy requirements are met.
 - a. True
 - b. False

