



H.R. LaBounty Safety Awards Nomination Form

Nomination Deadlines:

Spring Awards: February 28, 2019

Fall Awards: September 30, 2019

Agency: Orange County Water District (OCWD)

Project/Initiative Title: Water Quality (WQ) Department Safety Program –
Elevating Safety Culture

Implementation Date: • January 2019

Cost to Implement: • \$150-\$250 (Binders and Cable/Wire Ties)

Staff Time Required: • Ongoing

Number of Employees/Facilities Impacted:

- 12 employees
- Field sites for water quality monitoring (over 1,000 sites) and all Water Quality Department work areas at OCWD (WQ Administration Area, WQ Sample Prep Lab, WQ Workshop, WQ Carbon Building)

Employee/Department/Committee Nominated:

Name(s): Water Quality Department



Job Title/Department: Water Quality Department

Patrick Versluis (Director of Water Quality)

Michelle Boyd (Supervising Environmental Specialist)

Ben Lockhart (Supervising Environmental Specialist)



Nomination Summary

Write a brief summary of your project/initiative. Clearly state the problem/hazard recognized by the nominee and the specific reasons that they initiated corrective action.

The Water Quality Department has always maintained a high-priority on safety, which included a successful and proactive safety program, but recent efforts to improve organization of the safety program and elevate department safety culture have further helped to lessen risk and increased safety awareness. The main objectives of the enhanced program are to elevate safety consciousness, improve safety organization and communication, and optimize safety practices. To achieve these objectives, the department has established safety information areas, organized safety materials in a centrally-located area, met individually with field staff to elevate the importance of safety culture, begun more routine field site safety inspection visits, and developed a more robust schedule for department safety meetings and presentations.

Describe the specific actions taken to resolve the problem(s) or challenge(s). Share the best practices that made this initiative successful for the agency and its impact.

- 1) **Separate Safety Meetings:** Safety meetings have been separated from regular staff meetings to ensure safety is the only topic covered. This elevates the focus on safety-only items and discussions. In addition, discussions of safety items are included in weekly department staff meetings.
- 2) **Monthly Safety Meetings:** The Department Safety Representative is required to hold monthly safety meetings using different techniques (videos, hands-on demos, PPT presentations, etc.) to keep safety meetings interesting and engaging. In addition to monthly meetings, one or two ToolBox Talks with brief and practical safety advice are emailed to staff each month.
- 3) **Monthly Department Safety Report:** A monthly Safety Summary Report is sent to department management staff summarizing all safety activities for the previous month. This report provides management an easy reference and reminder of monthly safety activities.
- 4) **Individual Safety Binders:** Safety binders were created and given to each staff member. Supervisors also received a safety binder that included extra material specifically related to Supervisors. These binders hold all safety meeting handouts and notes. Binders are brought to each safety meeting by all staff members. All safety materials and safety training handouts are kept in the binders for organization and easy reference, instead of being in different locations (files, on desks, or unknown locations). Everything is centralized in the binders for organization and consistency.
- 5) **Water Quality Department Safety Area:** A designated Safety Area was established in the WQ Administration Area. All official safety documents are contained in this area and are posted or in designated binders. For example, there are postings for the Injury and Illness Prevention Plan (IIPP) document, Emergency Contacts information and Safety Meeting Minutes. There are also binders for the Annual-Quarterly-Monthly Inspections, Safety Meeting Minutes, JPIA Lending Library options, and Safety Data Sheets (SDS), etc. located in the Safety Area.
- 6) **Electronic Safety Information Folder:** An electronic Safety Information Folder was set up on the department's shared drive on the OCWD network which is a file destination for all things related to department safety. Many items from the WQ Safety Area are mirrored on the shared drive. The shared drive also contains safety SOPs, safety training info, safety incident forms, etc. The department electronic safety folder allows easy access and printing options for all department staff to have copies of safety references and forms at any time.
- 7) **Monthly Safety Inspections:** In addition to required comprehensive quarterly inspections by the Department Safety Representative, more frequent monthly inspections have been implemented for common safety concerns such as slip trip, fall, fire extinguisher checks, eye wash checks, etc. The intent of these additional monthly inspections is to enhance overall housekeeping and more frequently monitor the status of basic safety items.
- 8) **Monthly Field Safety Inspections (FSI):** Monthly Field Safety Inspections are conducted by two supervisors. Department supervisors are not online supervisors who work alongside staff in the field, so a



program is now in place where supervisors can perform more regular safety inspections to address safety concerns in the field with a goal to lessen risk when and where possible. Department supervisors have visited and inspected two or three sites each month at random. A basic safety inspection form is used to check on common field safety concerns such as slip, trip, fall, heat illness, PPE, SOPs, etc. Supervisors interact with staff in the field and make recommendations for improving safety and lowering risk during the inspections. Staff also is encouraged to comment and address any safety concerns. After returning from field site inspections, supervisors meet with the Director and discuss any concerns or necessary corrective actions. Good displays of safe practices and procedures are also discussed and noted for positive reinforcement. It is important to acknowledge what has been done well and to promote good safety behavior and practices. Recommendations or corrective actions resulting from the inspections are discussed at regular weekly staff meetings to highlight the issue(s) and formalize any changes. These discussions also allow and encourage input from all staff.

9) Annual Safety Survey: An annual survey regarding all safety items will be given to all department staff in December of each year with the intent to encourage staff participation in safety discussions and potential improvements to the department safety program. Encouraging staff suggestions to reduce or eliminate risk promotes buy-in to the program and will aid in developing and continuing a strong safety culture. The department safety program is dynamic and evolving, and we will continue to engage staff to promote a strong, collaborative, and proactive safety culture.

10) Annual Safety Summary: A summary of department safety statistics will be given to all staff covering accidents/incidents, inspection correction items, FSI recommendations, SOP changes, BMP updates, etc.

11) Department Safety Representative: The department began rotating the Department Safety Representative for a minimum 2-year term and added one designated back-up/assistant staff. There is one designated staff member to oversee safety items (conduct meeting, perform inspections, send out toolbox talks, order safety PPE, attend District Safety Team Meetings, etc.). Beginning this year, another staff member is the designated back-up and will assist the safety representative, when needed. The back-up will become the next Department Safety Representative when the term is up, and a new back-up/assistant will be chosen. The goal is for all department field staff to have a 2-year term as the department safety representative so that everyone can participate in safety leadership.

State whether the hazard was reduced with engineering controls, introduced a new administrative or work procedure, or relied on personal protective equipment to solve the problem.

Many administrative and work procedure improvements have been made to the department's safety program, and risks in many areas have noticeably been reduced with additional precautionary emphasis and/or new equipment. Most importantly, establishment of safety areas, increases in safety communication, and other enhancements to the safety program have elevated the safety awareness of staff and engaged them in a collaborative effort to improve safe practices. For example, slip trips and fall hazards have been improved with more organized site set-up and new wire/cable-tie binding. As a result of this improvement and related discussions, staff are more aware of the need for clear paths of travel when loading and unloading trucks or performing other tasks at well sites. Loose items such as well fixtures and tools are now also more centralized and organized. Resulting from the monthly FSI observations in the field, department staff have increased their awareness while performing traffic control be constantly be aware of oncoming traffic by positioning themselves in a direction with a clear view of traffic. Also resulting from monthly FSI observations and recommendations, staff are more aware of potential for public interaction and interaction with homeless, including the potential for theft. Awareness and safe practices are improving with regard to valuables kept in the cab of the truck (out of sight, locked doors, etc.).

Describe any extraordinary circumstances that made this nominee's safety accomplishments significant. Describe whether the nominee influenced safety in the workplace, encouraged employee participation in safety efforts, obtained organizational "buy in" to implement the solution.

The safety culture within the department has been significantly elevated and formalized following increased organization of materials, more clearly defined safety program structure, institution of monthly field inspections, and collaborative implementation of administrative and procedural improvements. These and other enhancements are producing better safety awareness and more deliberate precautions among all department staff. The Director, Supervisors, and field staff have all become more engaged in a



proactive and interactive assessment of safety concerns and opportunities to mitigate risk. Because of the actions begun in January 2019 and carried out since by all levels of staff, safety has been positively influenced in the WQ Department office, working areas of the lab, and at all field sites.

Describe whether the project/initiative addressed a hazard or exposure included in the JPIA Commitment to Excellence Program.

- ☒ Office/Field Ergonomics
- ☒ Vehicle Operations
- ☒ Slip/trip/falls – falls from heights
- ☒ Other: Safety Culture

List and attach any supporting materials that you feel are important for the reviewers to gain a complete picture of the nomination. Digital photos, supporting documentation, sample forms, etc.

See Attached Templates and Photos

Nominated by: Paula Bouyounes

Date: 9/10/19

General Manager:

Date: 09-16-19

Please email this form with supporting documents and digital photos (jpg) to tlofing@acwaipia.com.



Water Quality Safety Report

June 2019

INSPECTION DATE: WQ Monthly - 6/19/19

NEW ACTION ITEMS:

- Annual fire extinguisher inspections were completed on all portable fire extinguishers on 6/12/19

DEPT. INCIDENTS: None

INCIDENT DESCRIPTION: N/A

TOOLBOX TALK TOPICS:

TOPIC	TOOLBOX TALK TITLE	DATE ISSUED
Sun Protection	Sun Protection – IHSA.CA	6/13/19

SAFETY MEETING: Date: 6/6/19

Topic: Industrial Ergonomics Training

Summary:

- Dr. Clapper provided overall ergonomic ways to perform water industry related tasks safely and provided useful stretching techniques to warm up our muscles prior to work. Training included a practical application of techniques taught using OCWD equipment staged in the old lab area parking lot.

Date: 6/20/19

Topic: Traffic Control and Flagger Training

Summary:

- Instructor Peter P. from ACWA/JPIA provided our annual Traffic Control and Flagger safety class focusing on recent changes in the MUTCD and handed out updated 2019 WATCH pocket booklets.

OCWD SAFETY REVIEW TEAM MEETING:

- No meeting this month.

EQUIPMENT PURCHASES:

- Hats/Sunblock order for field staff
- Received new traffic safety vests for field staff.

UPCOMING SAFETY NEWS/EVENTS:

- Annual safety program audit is being coordinated/scheduled for next month.

Monthly Water Quality Safety Report



List and attach any supporting materials that you feel are important for the reviewers to gain a complete picture of the nomination. Digital photos, supporting documentation, sample forms, etc.

See Templates and Photos to Follow



Water Quality Department Safety Information Area



FIELD SAFETY INSPECTION

DATE / TIME:				
SITE / LOCATION NAME:				
STAFF PRESENT:	Field Staff at Site: BMO MG PKH PGM MRD KWO ZGB CLP			Inspecting Supervisors: BDL MB PV
Is staff wearing all required PPE?	Y / N	Corrective Action Required	Y / N	Corrective Action:
Heat Illness Concerns? Temp: _____ Heat Index: _____	Y / N	Corrective Action Required	Y / N	Corrective Action:
Adequate Hydration Supplies?	Y / N	Corrective Action Required	Y / N	Corrective Action:
Slip/Trip/Fall Hazards?	Y / N	Corrective Action Required	Y / N	Corrective Action:
Utility or Electrical Hazards?	Y / N	Corrective Action Required	Y / N	Corrective Action:
Traffic Concerns?	Y / N	Corrective Action Required	Y / N	Corrective Action:
Procedural / SOP Concerns?	Y / N	Corrective Action Required	Y / N	Corrective Action:
Public Interaction or Homeless Concern?	Y / N	Corrective Action Required	Y / N	Corrective Action:

COMMENTS

FOLLOW-UP SUPERVISOR / DIRECTOR MEETING

DATE:	ATTENDEE(S): PV MB BDL
NOTES:	
FOLLOW-UP or ACTION ITEM:	Planned Due Date: Actual Completion Date:
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Before: Electrical Cord Trip Hazard



After: Improved Electrical Cord Management (Help Prevent Tripping Hazards)