

Fall Protection and Training

How to Manage Fall Protection Training During Challenging Times

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Falls continue to rank in the top four most common occupational hazards. How much does training impact the number of fall-related incidents? What type of training impacts people's behavior most? How is face-to-face training adapting to evolving customer needs and state regulations?

Honeywell trains over 6000 students a year, so they've talked to Lisa Lopes, Sr. Training & Services Leader- Americas, who has been leading Honeywell's fall protection training team for the past nine years to find out these answers and more.

Is training the key to better fall protection?

Unfortunately, the statistics are still high every year and Honeywell has not seen a significant enough decline in fall-related injuries and deaths. But without adequate training, employees may not know what plans or procedures exist to protect them from harm.

Also, human error is one of the leading causes of incidents, so instilling good behaviors through training is important in preventing injuries and preserving a strong safety culture. Additionally, employers who do not perform the actual high-risk safety jobs may not understand what is truly required for the worker in terms of safety protocols, rescue or the right products to use.

However, training wasn't initially included in OSHA's list of recordables. Under [29 CFR 1910.30(a) (1)], "the employer must provide training for each employee who uses personal fall protection systems or who is required to be trained as specified elsewhere in this subpart." A full list of training requirements and OSHA standards can be found at www.OSHA.gov.

What types of training does Honeywell offer?

Any safety-at-height application requires a competent person onsite, so Honeywell built a diverse training program to help support companies so they have the right people with the right skills on the job. Honeywell offers various types of training that meet or exceed OSHA and ANSI standards.

Their Competent Person training takes two days or 16 hours, and an optional day for equipment inspection can be added. Their EM385-1 course is a staple for army engineers as they only use (SME) subject matter experts that meet the Army Corp's stringent criteria of skills and credentials.

Tower, wind energy and telecom-related applications are also prevalent, so Honeywell has a number of dedicated trainings such as the Wind Energy Competent Climber Training course.

They offer Confined Space Entry, Supervisor and Rescue courses with gas detection and respiratory components to fit the varying requirements of such spaces.

How do you make sure the information sticks?

Honeywell's focus is behavior-based, hands-on training which means performing activities for real-world scenarios and offering a perspective that cannot be "felt" in a quick online class.

Unlike product training, behavioral training is geared towards learning the essential tools, knowledge,

and skills for not only meeting regulatory requirements but to truly understand all aspects of safe behaviors, equipment usage and how to apply that to your daily activities. It is very hands-on, you receive instructor-led theory and perform activities to support the job you're doing. Knowledge and behaviors can be applied to every industry – construction, energy, mining, etc.

How does Honeywell do things differently?

There is a great deal of competition for training – but what differentiates Honeywell is the expertise and attention to real needs and challenges in the workplace. Miller Fall Protection (now Miller by Honeywell) was at the forefront of fall protection training and developed the actual Competent Person training course years ago. And, as a fall protection equipment manufacturer, Honeywell has a pulse on any regulatory changes.

There is a myriad of online courses available nowadays, but Honeywell offers a minimum of 16 hours to give someone a Competent Person certificate. In the eyes of OSHA, if an accident occurs, that paper trail comes back to them, the trainers, so they take it very seriously and they never deviate from their 16-hour rule.

Also, their SMEs have spent years understanding fall protection requirements, products, markets and applications. They teach classes to people with every level of expertise, who work in different industries and utilize the equipment in different applications. And they are qualified instructors who work to not only certify workers to ensure organizational compliance but truly provide the set of skills and tools needed to go home safe to their families every day.

What is "customizable" training?

On-site contract training is 70% of what Honeywell does. They send trainers to job sites and adapt their program to meet specific customer needs. Their customers may have very specific applications and having true subject matter experts on board helps them adapt quickly to their requirements.

How is confined space training different?

Confined space applications are complex. Honeywell's job is to understand the working environment and provide training that goes beyond meeting the regulatory need.

Confined spaces are one of the most dangerous work environments and require a complete understanding of the challenges and applications to support training and plans for entry, exit, rescue and how to supervise.

Although they have standard Entry, Rescue and Supervisor programs, much of what Honeywell provides is semi- or fully customized to meet the needs of a particular site. They also have a program for sellers, to help them identify the important requirements as well as which products are to be used in confined space applications.

How often is the content updated?

Honeywell audits their programs twice a year and updates them with any regulatory changes on an on-going basis.

How has the pandemic changed the way training is being conducted?

They had to cancel their instructor-led classes, but fortunately, they have been developing their online LMS (Learning Management System). This platform allows them to provide online courseware, as well as free product learnings, videos, tools and white papers.

The Competent Person Refresher and EM385-1 refreshers can be found there, where re-certifications can be done online in less than half the time and a diploma is shipped to the participant. This site will be

Honeywell's hub of information and tools for customers who are interested in saving time and money and having a blended learning approach to support their needs.

Lisa Lopes is currently analyzing each individual request for training. Training in 36+ states and nine provinces is quite a challenge with a lot of logistics to consider. State and local requirements are also changing on the fly. And as Honeywell is typically going to a multitude of sites or customers want to come to theirs, they need to pay extra attention to safety protocols for each location and situation.

That is why she instituted a plan of action/return-to-work document detailing safety precautions, including social distancing, PPE protocols, and cleaning and sanitization instructions. Their goal is to work with their customers and sites to manage through this difficult time while creating a safe environment to train and support their needs for safety training of their workers.

The biggest takeaway from your training career?

Lopes has learned that when it comes to safety training, you cannot cut corners or just “check a box”. Safety protocols and safe behaviors are learned and should be practiced at all times, and no matter how many years you have been working in a high-risk environment, accidents happen. If you work in a culture of safety and have proper training, your chances of becoming a statistic are far less.

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