



Why We Do Audits

When we begin working with a maintenance client, we do an audit, a detailed review of the facility's safety, health and environmental (SH&E) program. We look at existing safety programs, injury records, environmental reports, other inspection reports.... By the time we're done writing up the audit, we think we have a pretty good feel for the strengths and weaknesses of the SH&E program. But that audit, that deep dive, is usually a one-time event. It takes a lot of time and a lot of effort from both our clients and ourselves.

Why do we do this deep dive?

The obvious reason is to learn where you are vulnerable, where you are not in compliance with OSHA and environmental regulations and where you are exposing employees to excessive hazard. But there's more to it than that.

- § We learn what you do or, more specifically, how you do what you do. We see the different processes that go into making your widgets.
- § It provides a baseline from which we can help you build your safety program. From observing your processes, we get a feel for your potentially hazardous exposures. From looking at your injury records and loss run reports, we know where problems have already occurred. We'll learn what existing programs you have. We can build on those. Or if they're good and fit your needs, we'll know we don't need to redo them, so we can put our efforts elsewhere.
- § Once we've done the audit, we can provide training that focuses on your operations and your exposures. We can make the training relevant to your employees, because we can show them the shop and hazards they work with daily.
- § The audit ensures that we can draft the programs that work for your operations. We can include information about processes and equipment unique to you.
- § The audit gives us enough information to begin drafting an emergency plan that spells out where people should gather in inclement weather or where they need to go if there's a fire. If you are a hazardous waste generator, we learn the information about waste and chemicals needed for a contingency plan.

Our long term goal for you as a client is that we continue to help support your operations, keeping programs up to date, providing required training, and helping with any questions that come up. But we hope, from the audit report and working with us, that you and your employees will have a good sense of what is required. So we hope that future walkthroughs confirm that you're on the right track.

Think of the audit report as a teaching tool. When we write up the audit report, we try to tell you what's good, as well as what we think needs improvement. We tell you what we looked for and why we looked for those things. Instead of simply saying, "extension cords were misused," we explain what's required. We'll prioritize, letting you know what things require your immediate attention and what things we'll be helping you with. The one thing we can't do, in the audit report, in the walkthroughs, or in working with you long term, is make your workplace a safe place to work. ["But that's why we hired you!?!"] That's your responsibility. We're consultants. We can provide you with the knowledge and guidance. Implementation is up to you.

Your accountant can tell you that you need to pay taxes and can provide guidance on how much to pay and to whom. But you're the one who has to write the check. Your doctor can tell you to exercise. You're the one who needs to get on the treadmill. We can advise and coach and train. We can draft the programs and coordinate the safety committee. Ultimately, the responsibility for your safe workplace comes down to you.