Strategies to Reduce Occupational Injuries and Illnesses in Government Agencies

Sandra Montgomery, Walden University

Date of Conferral
2018

Degree
Doctor of Business Administration (D.B.A.)

School
Management

Advisor
Gergana Velkova

Abstract
Despite regulatory efforts of the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), 104 cases of nonfatal occupational illnesses and injuries (OIIs) per 10,000 full-time workers required time away from work in 2015. Although OII rates in private and public sectors are high, the rates among state and local government agencies were over 50% higher than private sector rates in 2015, especially in the healthcare industry. OIIs can lead to reduced organizational productivity and performance. Guided by the leader member exchange theory (LMXT) and risk homeostasis theory (RHT), the purpose of this single case study was to explore effective strategies that supervisors in a government agency in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States use to reduce OIIs. Data were collected from face-to-face semistructured interviews with 8 purposefully selected supervisors who had reduced OIIs and the review of company documents. Data were analyzed using inductive coding of phrases, word frequency searches, and theme identification. Four themes emerged: managing employee risk-taking behaviors reduced OIIs, communicating the importance of safety with employees decreased OIIs, having high-quality relationships with employees reduced and mitigated OIIs, and continuous education and training reduced OIIs. Both the LMXT and RHT were essential in exploring the role that education and training played in reducing OIIs. Findings may provide government agencies with valuable information that may lead to a healthier and safer work environment, increased productivity and profitability, and healthier lifestyles inside and outside of the workplace.