



Have you heard the news? ACI is currently taking applications for the OSHA Voluntary Protection Program (VPP) Challenge program! Why is this important, you really want to know? Well, here are the facts:

The OSHA VPP program has been around for several years and was established by OSHA to promote effective safety and health programs. In VPP, OSHA works cooperatively with companies, helping to promote safety and health, and providing the benefit of removing them from the scheduled inspection list. Until recently, construction companies were left out of the VPP process since their work involved moving from job site to job site. Constant change on construction jobsites makes it extremely difficult for construction companies to establish a history of safety - something that is necessary for VPP acceptance. OSHA recently revised their VPP requirements, making this program accessible to everyone.

Now, you may ask, why should my company want to achieve VPP status? That's like saying, "Why should I bother making my employees wear their hard hats." You bother because it is the responsibility of your company to care for your employees as well as the overall success of the company. Studies have shown that VPP status can help achieve both. Since it was started, statistical evidence has shown that VPP companies have a significant reduction in worksite injuries and illnesses, particularly in cases of days away from work. The average VPP site has a Lost Workday Incidence Rate of 60-80% lower than non-VPP sites. This means lower workers compensation premiums, less down time due to injuries, and greater company profit as company resources are able to be directed to greater earnings.

There are many other benefits as well. Once you are a VPP company, OSHA will remove your company from their list for programmed inspections. OSHA also provides each VPP site with a designated

OSHA contact person who coordinates the relationship with OSHA. VPP members have unique networking opportunities with OSHA and other VPP sites. Finally, and sometimes most important, VPP allows for companies to enhance their public relations, as they are able to promote their own outstanding efforts in promoting worker safety and health. This often allows for simpler bidding opportunities as General Contractors are able to recognize companies with a commitment to safety.

Since we all know why we want to attain VPP, the question becomes, how do we get there? This is where VPP Challenge comes in! The process of attaining VPP may seem insurmountable. All the programs and paperwork and hours spent in the effort can seem huge, especially if you are trying to accomplish this task on your own. **ACI** helps make the whole process much easier. The Challenge program has taken the many steps of VPP and broken them down into manageable bites. Once you enroll in the challenge program, you are provided with an easy to follow matrix that will guide you thru the process. And, even better, you are no longer trying to do this on your own. In fact, if you enroll now; you have the opportunity to become part of a VPP Challenge discussion group that will meet to share ideas and strategies. Remember, applying for VPP challenge is free! Consulting help is also available to those companies who need some extra support as they work thru the steps. The Safety Alliance is available to support you thru the VPP Challenge Process in conjunction with ACI.

Still wary? How about some more information? Depending on the current depth of your safety program, you may find that you have already completed many of the steps. Even if you are just starting your safety program, the matrix allows you to start, and take one step at a time. Most companies are surprised as they review the matrix to see what they've already accomplished.

What happens if I submit our Challenge application and then get really busy at work? Again, we have you covered! There is no time requirement for completing the challenge program. Most companies can expect to take several years to work thru the process. You go thru the steps at your own pace, with assistance available at every step. Should you find that you are truly bogged down; the process does allow you to change your mind. Even better, since there is no cost to apply, your company does not need to worry about a financial commitment.

Now, here is one of the most outstanding benefits of the challenge program: once you have worked through the Challenge Matrix and completed all the steps, you are now ready to submit the OSHA VPP application for your company. This means you have all the necessary paperwork and programs in place to make the OSHA VPP approval process very easy. There will be no surprises during the OSHA approval process.

Now, I have to ask, why are you still sitting there? Get on the phone and call ACI! Enroll today!

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