

"Gotchya!" That's what many of us hear when we are caught doing something wrong, incorrect, making a mistake, or whatever we don't want to be caught doing. The one time you enter a noisy area without your hearing protection - "Gotchya!" Or you forget to put on your safety glasses - "Gotchya!" There's the supervisor, safety officer or a coworker pointing a finger at you.

But what if, instead of pointing out when you do something wrong, you received recognition for doing something right? You went out of your way to clean up a spill of water, preventing a potential slip or fall - "Gotchya!" You pointed out an evacuation route to a contractor - "Gotchya!" The supervisor or safety officer is patting you on the back. Maybe they even mention you at the next toolbox or tailgate meeting. That puts a whole different meaning to the word, doesn't it?

California OSHA requires that employers have an Injury and Illness Prevention Plan. In that regulation, it specifies that employers are to have a system to recognize "*employees who follow safe and healthful work practices*" - 8 CCR, Section 3203(a)(2). ([To see the regulation, follow this link.](#))

While not a Federal OSHA requirement, as a State Plan State - meaning one that has its' own OSHA ([to see the list of State Plan States, follow this link](#)) - California requires employers to recognize safe work practices. When you think about it, rewarding good behavior is a good management practice, and one that just makes sense. You reward a behavior that you want to encourage, and compliance with that behavior and safe work practices often follows.

If you have an employee safety program, you may already have some recognition or reward system in place for safe work practices. If not, we have a few suggestions. There are programs on the market where you can play safety bingo, or earn free pizzas for your work team to encourage good safety "gotchya's".

One of our clients has a system of awarding points for safe behaviors. The more points you have, the more you can purchase from a catalog of items. A few points, you can get a t-shirt or hat. More points, you can earn a mag flashlight or set of tools for your vehicle. A lot of points can earn a jacket or even a steak dinner for two at a nice restaurant.

If you are in the State of California, you are required to have a system to recognize the safe work practices of your employees. No matter where

you are located, rewarding good behavior just makes sense.

If you are not sure if you have or need an Injury and Illness Prevention Plan, contact us, we will be happy to help you with that.