

Your Safety and Health Program

Continuing the Journey: Growth and Collaboration

Do you have a safety and health program in place for your business? You might have gotten a program off the ground on your own or completed Level 1 of **OSHA's growth framework**. The program might consist of activities that seem disjointed and inefficient. Perhaps some elements of your program are well developed, but you need to work on others. Or maybe you continue to have incidents and near misses, and inspection findings raise serious concerns. If any of this applies to you, it's time to **continue the journey** and grow your program with Level 2.

How is Level 2 similar to Level 1?

Like Level 1, Level 2 is organized by seven elements:

- Management leadership
- Worker participation
- Hazard identification and assessment
- Hazard prevention and control
- Education and training
- Program evaluation and improvement
- Communication and coordination for host employers, contractors, and staffing agencies

Each element contains one to four worksheets that begin with some background information, followed by activities to guide that step of your program. You can easily tailor activities to your workplace and program needs. You can start with whichever element is motivating you to improve your program (see [Starting the Journey](#)) or sequence the elements according to an assessment of your current program activities. There is no single path to improvement (Figure 1)—you can work through the worksheets in the order and at the pace that best meets your business's needs. Are you unsure if you're ready for Level 2? Each worksheet contains a set of questions to help you determine if you're in the right place.



Figure 1. There is no single path for improving a safety and health program.

What makes Level 2 different?

Level 1 introduces entry-level actions that can help businesses start implementing their program. Level 2 guides you to start taking a broader, more integrated approach. In Level 2, you'll see how the elements work together to better address hazards and risks. For example, in Level 1, you started prioritizing hazards and selecting controls as separate activities. Level 2 involves prioritizing and controlling hazards *together* as closely related, interconnected activities—supporting continual improvement in managing risks (Figure 2).

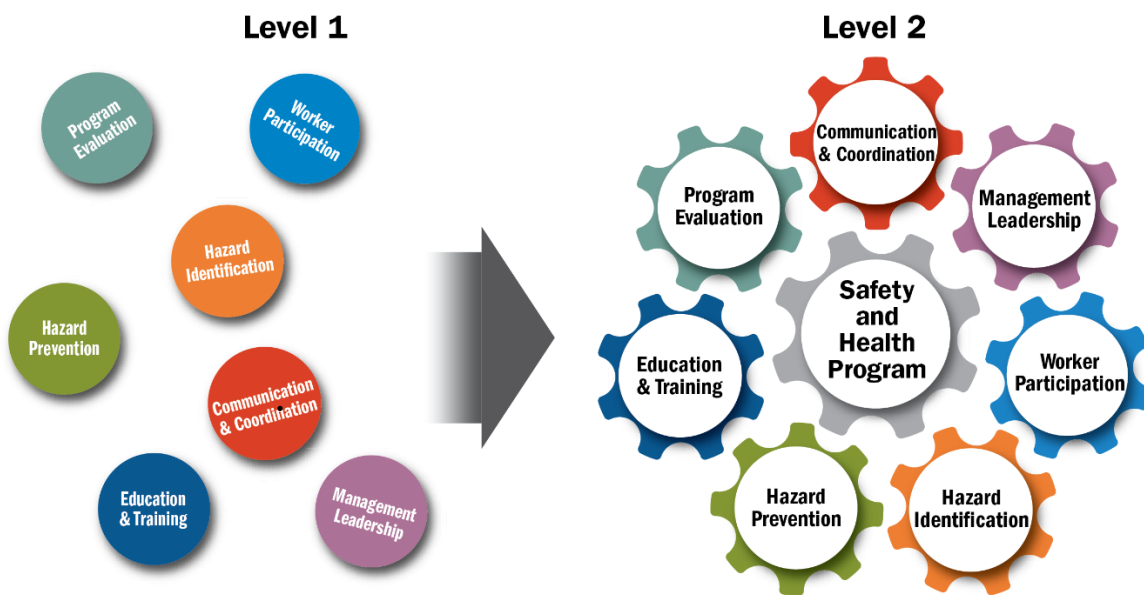


Figure 2. Level 2 involves prioritizing and controlling hazards together as closely related, interconnected activities.

What will set you up for success?

- **Leadership:** In Level 1, management led development of a policy, roles, and responsibilities and provided resources for program activities. In Level 2, management also leads efforts to connect program elements, encourage collaboration, and facilitate learning rather than blame. This requires actively increasing worker participation and encouraging personnel to identify underlying causes rather than focus on problem symptoms. Leadership can influence how the organization thinks about safety and health and what leads to continual improvement.
- **A team:** Your leadership is crucial, but you should not be developing your program alone. Many of the Level 2 activities require collaboration among people with a range of technical skills, levels of experience, and types of knowledge, as well as people from different divisions, job functions, or locations. In Level 2, you are growing basic skills and competencies across your organization and might be able to start relying less on external expertise. Create a diverse team that you will work with to grow your program. Some organizations have a safety committee that can serve this purpose.
- **Existing program work:** Level 2 is not for complete beginners to safety and health program development. All Level 2 worksheets require a foundation in some type of preceding work, either from a worksheet in Level 1, another worksheet in Level 2, or your existing safety and health program.

- **Attention to communication:** Feedback loops between you, your safety and health program team, and your workers are essential to raising your program to Level 2. Workers have a unique understanding of workplace processes and conditions. Therefore, they must be encouraged and able to give input and participate in the program, and you must be able to communicate with them about the importance of the program and how it is developing. Remember that *everyone* has a role in the program, so two-way communication is essential throughout the organization as you move to Level 2.
- **Broadening perspective:** Most of the work in Level 1 correctly focused on specific hazards and controls related to specific jobs. In Level 2, organizations are encouraged to step back and look at context—that is, the factors that may influence a hazard, a hazardous situation, a communication breakdown, or an incident not being reported. Figure 3 contrasts Level 1 and Level 2 approaches to investigating the failure of a pressure relief valve that caused the piping to burst.

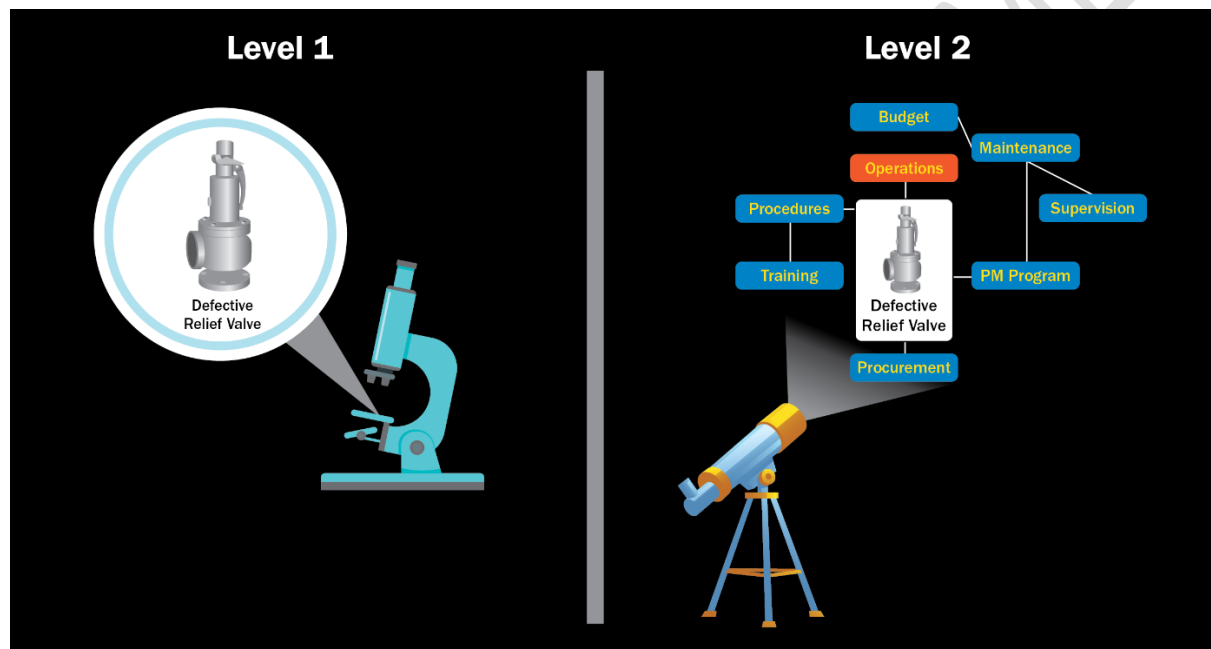


Figure 3. Looking closely at a defective relief valve (Level 1) and stepping back to look at the broader context for the failure (Level 2).

Where does this lead?

Ensuring safety and health in your business is a journey, and there's always room for growth. It's just like a person's health—you don't have to be sick to get healthier. By working through Level 2, you will develop a more mature, integrated safety and health program and a safer, healthier environment for your workers. If it is right for your business, you can extend your journey with **Level 3** to further formalize and expand your program.