Safety rules are a key part of an employee safety program. The primary objective of safety rules is to provide a safe work environment. Safety rules protect employees from injury, and prevent equipment and property damage.

The most effective safety rules are in writing and hazard specific to company operations. By creating a team of safety personnel, supervisors, and employees, is is easier to develop a more complete set of rules to address work practices and behaviors contributing to accidents. Written safety rules should begin with general rules that apply to the entire workforce, and then expand to department-specific rules for individual job tasks.

When developing a written set of safety rules:

- Review OSHA regulations and state requirements prior to actually writing the rules.
- Conduct a Job Safety Analysis to develop job-specific rules. Further information on Job Safety Analysis is available from Umialik's Loss Control Department.
- Seek input from experienced employees and supervisors with exceptional job performance and accident records.
- Draft rules based on logic and enforceability. Writing rules that cannot be enforced will create confusion and could impair enforcement of other rules.
- Make rules easy to understand. Use short sentences and simple words.
- Once developed, have other employees review the rules in order to determine if they can be clearly understood.
- Include a section on the graduated disciplinary penalties for rule infraction for first and subsequent offenses. Discuss with your legal counsel the procedure for notifying an employee of potential dismissal because of a rule infraction.
- Include a disciplinary write up sheet for a supervisor to use when writing up an employee for a rule infraction.

All employees should receive a copy of the finalized safety rules. Incorporate the general safety rules into the employee handbook and post them on employee bulletin boards. Review general safety rules with newly hired employees during their orientation program. Supervisors should review job-specific safety rules when training new hires or transfer employees on job tasks. Obtain a sign off sheet from each employee that states that management has reviewed the general and job-specific rules with them. Make the sign off sheets part of the individual employee's personnel file.

Management responsibility involves the review and enforcement of the rules. Safety rules require uniform enforcement by the Management Team in order to be effective. Uneven enforcement from department to department erodes effectiveness of the rules. Supervisors have the primary responsibility of safety rule enforcement. They must be thoroughly familiar with safety rules and abide by them. Employees should be corrected for each rule infraction as soon as it is observed. Uniform enforcement will result in fewer rule infractions, and in a short time require less disciplinary action.

Management should require periodic review of the written safety rules, such as every two years or as operations change. This review will keep safety rules current and meaningful.