



Department of Labor

# Directorate of Cooperative and State Programs

2020 Action Plan

Federal Customer Experience

**US** BY THE PEOPLE  
FOR THE PEOPLE  
WITH THE PEOPLE

# Who are we?

The Directorate of Cooperative and State Programs implements OSHA's cooperative programs, coordinates the agency's compliance assistance and outreach activities, coordinates the agency's relations with State Plans, and oversees international issues for OSHA.

The Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) recognize employers and workers in the private industry and federal agencies who have implemented effective safety and health management systems and maintain injury and illness rates below national Bureau of Labor Statistics averages for their respective industries. In VPP, management, labor, and OSHA work cooperatively and proactively to prevent fatalities, injuries, and illnesses through a system focused on: hazard prevention and control; worksite analysis; training; and management commitment and worker involvement. To participate, employers must submit an application to OSHA and undergo a rigorous on-site evaluation by a team of safety and health professionals. Union support is required for applicants represented by a bargaining unit. VPP participants are re-evaluated every three to five years to remain in the programs. VPP participants are exempt from OSHA programmed inspections while they maintain their VPP status.



# How do we deliver value to the public?

## Occasion

**NEW APPROVALS:** An individual company has a desire to apply for OSHA's premier program recognizing worksites that show excellence in the development and implementation of occupational safety and health programs – the Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP).

The process includes multiple steps and takes approximately a little over a year to complete from the time of initial worksite application to final acceptance into the program. **Approximately, 60-70 new worksites apply to VPP each year.**

Participation in VPP is voluntary and companies may enter and exit the program multiple times.

**REAPPROVALS:** An individual company is required to be reapproved for OSHA's VPP program every three to five years.

This process requires an on-site evaluation by at least one OSHA field staff member and team of evaluators. **Approximately, 200-300 worksites are reapproved for VPP each year.**

## High-Impact Service

**NEW APPROVALS:** OSHA provides review and oversight to determine which sites should be approved.

Historically, the worksites have reached out to VPP Managers in the Regions to inquire about how to apply for VPP. VPP Managers provide the requirements to apply, any forms or templates, and do an initial review to determine if the application meets VPP requirements. Often, they work with worksites to ensure adequate, clear information about their safety and health processes are included in the application.

After the application is accepted, an on-site evaluation is scheduled and the site is evaluated. A final report is issued and reviewed by both the Regional Administrator and OSHA's National Office.

**REAPPROVALS:** OSHA provides review and oversight to determine which sites should remain in VPP. VPP participants are exempt from OSHA programmed inspections while they maintain their VPP status.

OSHA's Regional VPP staff will review the worksite's annual self-evaluations since the last on-site, schedule, worksite safety and health documentation, and then evaluate the site in-person, including interviewing employees. A final report is issued and reviewed by the Regional Administrator who determines if a site is reapproved. OSHA's National Office provides quality-control review.

## Offering

**NEW APPROVALS:** OSHA verifies the safety and health program status at worksites to ensure they meet VPP safety and health standards.

The outcome is that the worksite is recognized as a VPP site, is allowed to fly the VPP flag and use the logo on its website, highlighting their achievement. In addition, VPP participants are exempt from OSHA programmed inspections while they maintain their VPP status.

**REAPPROVALS:** OSHA verifies the safety and health program status at worksites to ensure they continue to maintain VPP standards.

The outcome is that the worksite remains in good standing, may continue to fly the VPP flag and use the logo on their website, highlighting their ongoing maintenance of the safety and health requirements of VPP.

VPP participants are exempt from OSHA programmed inspections while they maintain their VPP status.

# Where could we improve?

## Steps

### Customer Steps

Name and describe the main steps that a person takes to use the service, left to right, start to finish.

### Service System

Describe the channels, roles, and tools from your agency or partners.

### Pain Points

Describe the highest priority problems to solve

1: VPP Application Receipt & Application Approval	2: VPP On-Site	3: VPP Regional Office Approval	4: VPP National Office Approval
<p>Historically, the worksites have reached out to VPP Managers in the Regions to inquire about how to apply for VPP. VPP Managers provide the requirements to apply, any forms or templates, and do an initial review to determine if the application meets VPP requirements. Often they work with worksites to ensure adequate, clear information about their safety and health processes are included in the application</p>	<p>Regional VPP Managers coordinate an appropriate date for an on-site evaluation. A team is assembled and verifies the safety and health program status at the worksite to ensure it meets VPP safety and health requirements. A report is issued.</p>	<p>Regional Administrator reviews the report.</p>	<p>National Office reviews the report for completeness and quality control.</p>
<p>The system currently relies on direct contact. VPP applicants reach out to Regional VPP Managers to inquire about VPP. Exchange of application materials and communication is via email and/or even via physical mail.</p>	<p>The system currently uses email contact between VPP Managers and worksites to arrange for on-site evaluation. Reports are drafted using templates and sent via email.</p>	<p>Regional Office receives and reviews VPP on-site evaluation reports via email; and if approved, sends the documentation on to the National Office.</p>	<p>National Office receives and reviews VPP on-site evaluation reports via email; and prepares a congratulatory letter that is then sent to the worksite, welcoming them to VPP.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarity and quality of VPP applications</li> <li>• Coordinated system (with tracking capability) for receiving applications</li> <li>• Coordinated system for reviewing applications.</li> </ul> <p>Application Receipt and Application Approval currently amounts of 53 percent of overall processing time.</p>	<p>Staffing and resources available for on-site evaluations.</p> <p>VPP on-site evaluations currently amounts to 23 percent of overall processing time.</p>	<p>Staffing and resources available for review and approval of on-site reports.</p> <p>VPP Regional Office Approval currently amounts to 16 percent of overall processing time.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consistency in review of on-site evaluation reports.</li> <li>• Speed/Efficiency in review of on-site evaluation reports</li> <li>• Speed/Efficiency in delivery of final approval to worksite.</li> </ul> <p>VPP National Office Approval currently amounts to 8 percent of overall processing time.</p>

# What will we do?

## Purpose

*Why did your agency undertake this project?  
What does it hope to achieve, in specific performance indicators, if possible.*

*What is the problem?*

The issue was included in the 2019 Plan:

- OSHA's customers need clear guidance on program requirements during the application process and then what is expected/required of them once they are an approved participant in the program.
- OSHA currently does not have data on where the customer's needs for guidance are not being met.
- Streamlining of processes to decrease response times

*Desired future state?*

- OSHA seeks a consistent coordinated application process that increases the clarity and quality of VPP applications, and decreases the overall time from receipt of application to final approval letter to the worksite.
- Implementation and review of TouchPoints survey to determine challenges to our customers.

*Any measurable indicators and targets?*

- Creation of baseline data from implementation and review of TouchPoints surveys
- Changes in response overall times to VPP approval process.

## Approach

*Describe the timeline and work plan to achieve that purpose. If this is an ongoing initiative, describe your progress.*

*Process, methods, and expertise?*

Solution is to:

- Create clear guidance on program requirements.
- Collect and analyze baseline customer data from surveys to determine any unmet needs
- Development of VPP Online Application Portal
- Examine resources and staffing for opportunities for improvement via policy/process change.

*Timeline, stage gates and dates?*

FY20: Q3 – Review w/Regional staff of resource concerns around approval process  
Q4 - Finalize VPP Online Application Portal  
FY21: Q1 – Review/analyze Yr 1 baseline CX data  
Q2 - Refine survey or examine expansion of TouchPoints for better customer feedback for policy/process recommendations  
Q3 – White paper/report on resource concerns  
Q4 – Review/analysis of impact of streamlining processes

*Deliverables being produced?*

- Full year of TouchPoints Survey data for better understanding of Customer needs
- Streamlined VPP Application
- Complete VPP Online Application Portal
- White paper/report on possible policy/process changes to address resource concerns

## Resources

*Describe the stakeholders involved, financial and human capital dedicated to the work, and any partners contributing to the work.*

*Who is responsible?*

OSHA National Office Staff

*Who is contributing to the project?*

OSHA Regional Office Staff (including VPP Managers)

# What are we proud of this year?

## Service Improvement

*Who is the user and what was the problem?*

OSHA's prior efforts to examine customer needs + frustrations was through comments from Stakeholder Events or was filtered through VPP Managers. There was no formal mechanism for collecting direct information from our customers. There are currently 1,400 companies in Federal VPP representing more than 1 million workers. Every year approx. just under 100 applicants will seek VPP membership.

*What did you build / improve? What does it do for the public or how you deliver your mission?  
What was the resulting impact?*

OSHA developed and has implemented a TouchPoints survey to determine a baseline understanding of our customers' needs in a more systematic and focused manner that maps directly to customer engagement with OSHA through VPP processes.

This is the first time OSHA is seeking quantitative baseline data individually from customers.

*Any lessons for other agencies emulating this work?*

Adding some basic "demographic" questions to A-11 surveys that better define and categorize respondents/customers can help provide more actionable feedback. OSHA added additional questions to better determine which Regions the responses came from, company size, and how long worksites had been with OSHA. Connecting that kind of company information to customer satisfaction allows us to better pinpoint potential problem areas: whether based on location (regional), or if we were more/less responsive to companies dependent on size, or if satisfaction differed for companies who had been with VPP longer.

OSHA is most proud of its commitment to shifting the program culture to focus on customer experience by permanently incorporating the surveys into our VPP process. These customer-focused activities are now part of an ongoing cycle of program feedback.