

Stepping into Safety Excellence: SOLO Laboratories and OSHA’s SHARP Program

By Iris Erickson

SOLO Laboratories, established in 1983, is a premier custom orthotics manufacturer. From their external customers seeking patient foot problem solutions to their internal employees working to provide a living for their families, SOLO is committed to providing outstanding service to all.

The manufacturing process is quite hands-on and exposes employees to various machines and hazards. SOLO has always been rooted in the ethos of “Serving Others, Loving Others.” In the realm of occupational safety, this commitment recently played out with SOLO’s acceptance into OSHA’s Safety & Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP). This achievement is not just a recognition but a culmination of decades-long efforts to prioritize the safety and well-being of its employees.

SHARP is more than an acronym; it embodies a proactive approach to workplace safety. SHARP certification is a mark of distinction, signifying a company’s dedication to creating a safe and secure working environment. For SOLO Laboratories, admission into SHARP became the goal guiding them toward a culture where safety isn’t just a requirement but an integral part of their identity.

Reflecting on SOLO’s history reveals a progressive evolution in their approach to safety. In the early days, safety was essential but often relegated to the background—primarily concerning production and compliance with regulations. However, the early 2000s marked a change with the formation of a safety committee. Although this momentum wavered after the departure of the manager who started the committee, the foundation for a safety-conscious culture had been laid.

The transformation continued in the early 2010s with the development of SOLO’s Environmental, Health and Safety (EH&S) manual. This comprehensive document, crafted with inputs from several dedicated employees, encapsulated SOLO’s commitment to safety protocols. A 2015 OSHA audit continued the progress, urging a more focused approach.

SHARP was first considered after Jason Miller, Safety Manager, heard about the program at the Pennsylvania Governor’s Occupational and Safety Health conference in Harrisburg. SOLO started the process towards certification in early 2020, but a few weeks



after that, an employee’s fall from a ladder resulting in traumatic injuries helped to emphasize the imperative need for an enhanced safety culture.

Under the leadership of Jason and Brian Riegel, EH&S Coordinator, SOLO Laboratories diligently embraced SHARP’s stringent requirements. Over 18 months, the company underwent multiple safety and health inspections, implementing vital recommendations. These changes ranged from technological upgrades, like

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adding light curtains on machines, to refining internal safety documentation and systems.

These efforts culminated with the official recognition of SOLO Laboratories into the SHARP program. This achievement is not merely a certification; it’s a testament to the consistent commitment of SOLO. Safety, once just a requirement, has become an intrinsic part of the company’s identity. It is now woven into the daily operations, ensuring that every employee steps into a safe and secure workspace.

In embracing SHARP, SOLO Laboratories has not just met a standard; they have exceeded it. Their journey underscores the power of steadfast dedication, persistence, and a fundamental belief in the importance of employee well-being. As they continue this journey, the story of SOLO Laboratories stands as an inspiration, reminding us all that safety is not a requirement to meet; it’s a culture to embrace. In each step, SOLO Laboratories reaffirms their commitment: Serving Others, Loving Others, and ensuring a workplace where everyone can thrive.

SOLO is very thankful for their loyal customers, and if you have not experienced the difference that working with SOLO makes, try them today by calling 800-765-6522 or click here.

