Continuous Improvement Suggestion Program

1.0 Policy Objective & Scope

The objective of the Continuous Improvement Suggestion Program is to establish a standardized, transparent, and equitable process for all employees to submit ideas that improve safety, quality, productivity, cost reduction, or workplace culture. This program empowers every team member to contribute to operational excellence and ensures that valuable suggestions are evaluated, recognized, and implemented in a timely manner.

This policy applies to all full-time, part-time, and temporary employees across all departments including Production, Engineering, Maintenance, Administration, and Management. Contractors and third-party personnel are not eligible to submit suggestions under this program but may participate in implementation phases if directed by management.

2.0 Roles & Responsibilities

- Continuous Improvement (CI) Coordinator: Owns the program administration, receives all submissions, logs them in the tracking system, assigns review priority, and maintains the suggestion database. Facilitates the monthly review committee meetings.

- Review Committee (composed of Engineering Manager, Production Supervisor, Safety Officer, and one elected floor representative): Meets monthly to evaluate all submitted suggestions, determines feasibility, assigns implementation priority, and approves or rejects suggestions with documented rationale.

- Department Manager (of the area affected by the suggestion): Provides technical input, estimates implementation cost and effort, and assigns a team member to lead implementation if approved.

- Employee (Submitter): Responsible for completing the suggestion form clearly and completely, including a description of the current issue, proposed solution, and expected benefit. May be asked to participate in the implementation team.

- **Plant Manager:** Reviews and signs off on all approved suggestions that require capital expenditure over $5,000 or that affect cross-departmental processes. Provides final approval for implementation.

3.0 Core Rules & Guidelines

- All suggestions must be submitted using the official Continuous Improvement Suggestion Form (available in ShopDocs and at the break room kiosk). Verbal suggestions will not be accepted.

- Each suggestion must address a specific, observable problem or opportunity within the submitter's work area or a related process. General complaints without a proposed solution will be redirected to the appropriate grievance process.

- Suggestions must be submitted individually. Group submissions are permitted only if all group members are listed on the form and agree to share recognition equally.

- Anonymous submissions are not allowed; the submitter must identify themselves to be eligible for recognition and to allow follow-up questions.

- The Review Committee will evaluate all suggestions within 30 calendar days of submission. The submitter will receive written notification of the decision (approved, rejected, or deferred for more information) via email or posted notice.

- Approved suggestions will be assigned a priority level (High, Medium, Low) based on impact, cost, and implementation complexity. High-priority items must be implemented within 60 days; Medium within 120 days; Low within 180 days.

- Recognition and rewards are awarded quarterly. Submitters of implemented suggestions receive a certificate, a $50 gift card, and their name on the Continuous Improvement Wall of Fame. Suggestions that result in measurable cost savings of $10,000 or more annually qualify for an additional bonus of 10% of first-year savings (capped at $2,000).

- Any employee who submits three or more implemented suggestions in a calendar year will be entered into a draw for an additional $500 prize at the annual company meeting.

4.0 Step-by-Step Workflow

1. Employee identifies an opportunity for improvement in safety, quality, productivity, cost, or workplace culture and completes the Continuous Improvement Suggestion Form, including a clear description of the current state, the proposed change, and the expected benefit.

2. Employee submits the completed form to the CI Coordinator via the designated digital submission portal in ShopDocs or by placing the physical form in the locked suggestion box located in the break room.

3. CI Coordinator logs the submission into the Continuous Improvement Tracking Database within two business days, assigns a unique suggestion ID, and sends an acknowledgment receipt to the submitter.

4. CI Coordinator performs an initial screening to ensure the suggestion meets the program criteria (addresses a specific problem, includes a proposed solution, and is not a duplicate of a previously submitted or implemented idea). If the suggestion is incomplete, the coordinator returns it to the submitter for clarification within five business days.

5. CI Coordinator forwards the suggestion to the relevant Department Manager for a preliminary feasibility assessment, including estimated implementation cost, resource requirements, and potential impact. The manager returns the assessment within 10 business days.

6. The Review Committee convenes monthly to evaluate all suggestions that have passed the preliminary assessment. The committee discusses each suggestion, votes on approval or rejection, and assigns a priority level (High, Medium, Low) for approved items. Rejected suggestions are documented with a clear reason.

7. CI Coordinator notifies the submitter of the committee's decision in writing within five business days of the meeting. For approved suggestions, the notification includes the assigned priority level and expected implementation timeline.

8. For approved suggestions requiring capital expenditure over $5,000 or cross-departmental impact, the CI Coordinator escalates the suggestion to the Plant Manager for final sign-off. The Plant Manager reviews and either approves or returns with conditions within 10 business days.

9. Department Manager assigns an implementation lead (which may be the submitter, if willing and capable) and a target completion date based on the priority level. The implementation lead develops a brief action plan and begins execution.

10. Implementation lead completes the change, updates the relevant documentation (work instructions, training materials, CAD files, etc.), and notifies the CI Coordinator that the suggestion has been implemented.

11. CI Coordinator verifies implementation through a brief site visit or document review, updates the tracking database to mark the suggestion as 'Implemented', and prepares the recognition package for the submitter.

12. At the next quarterly all-hands meeting, the Plant Manager presents the recognition certificate and gift card to the submitter, announces the suggestion on the company communication board, and adds the submitter's name to the Continuous Improvement Wall of Fame.

5.0 Documentation & Compliance

All records related to the Continuous Improvement Suggestion Program must be maintained in the designated digital repository within ShopDocs under the 'Continuous Improvement' folder. Physical forms, if used, must be scanned and uploaded within five business days of receipt, after which the original may be shredded.

- **Suggestion Forms:** Stored in ShopDocs with metadata including suggestion ID, submitter name, date, department, description, and current status. Retention period: 5 years after closure.

- **Review Committee Meeting Minutes:** Stored in ShopDocs under 'Continuous Improvement/Committee Minutes'. Must include date, attendees, list of suggestions reviewed, decisions, and rationale. Retention period: 5 years.

- **Implementation Action Plans:** Stored in the project folder for the affected area or process. Must include assigned lead, target date, and completion date. Retention period: 3 years after implementation.

- **Recognition Records:** Stored in HR files for each recognized employee, including certificate copies and gift card receipts. Retention period: Duration of employment plus 2 years.

Compliance is audited quarterly by the CI Coordinator, who reviews a random sample of 10% of suggestions submitted in the previous quarter to ensure all steps were followed, documentation is complete, and timelines were met. An annual compliance report is presented to the Plant Manager, summarizing participation rates, implementation success, and any process improvements needed. Non-compliance by any department (e.g., failure to provide feasibility assessment within 10 business days) is escalated to the Plant Manager for corrective action.