

Safety Committee Handbook

The Functions and
Responsibilities of a
Safety Committee



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The Functions and Responsibilities of a Safety Committee

A safety committee is one of the best ways to assist management with a facility or department safety program. Effective safety committees may vary in size and functions, but all have one thing in common: they must have strong support from top management. Management's guidance and participation is necessary in order to enlist and maintain employee interest in the safety program.

Before the safety committee and its functions can be defined, it must be thoroughly understood that supervisors must be primarily responsible for the control of accidents in their departments. Supervisors are the key to any good safety program. They must be educated to accept this responsibility, for it cannot be passed along to any other individual or to any committee.

Organizing a Safety Committee

Safety committees of various types are found in any successful safety organization. They, in themselves, should not be considered as a "safety program", but they do have basic functions:

1. *Create and maintain an active interest in safety.*
2. *Serve as a means of safety and health communications.*
3. *May make inspections and recommend methods for elimination of hazards.*
4. *Provide information towards improvement of the safety program.*

The membership of the safety committee should reflect the size of the organization and the degree of safety hazards encountered.

The safety committee must have the following objectives to be effective:

1. *Safety rules must be designed to prevent safety and health violations. However, they should not replace a need for safety education.*
2. *They must relate with the employees and their safety concerns.*
3. *Assist management in their efforts to discover safety concerns which currently exist.*
4. *If required, assist management in the enforcement of the rules when violations are discovered.*

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The safety committee membership may consist of any one of the following:

1. *Executive safety committee would consist of management personnel, Safety Coordinator, and department heads.*
2. *Departmental safety committee would consist of the department supervisor and whoever else he/she would want on the committee from the department.*
3. *Supervisor's committee would consist entirely of supervisors.*
4. *Workers' committee would consist only of employees below supervisor rank.*
5. *Joint labor-management committee would consist of part management and part labor below the rank of supervisor.*

The advantages of a joint management-labor type of safety committee are:

1. *It permits employees to share in the responsibility for accident prevention.*
2. *Employees have a chance to communicate the employee's view on elimination of hazards and/or review the safety program with management.*
3. *Management has an opportunity to help build the morale of the employees by showing they care about their safety and health.*
4. *Management can more readily identify unsafe workplace conditions and expedite efforts to correct them.*

Administration procedures for committees can be either effective or ineffective. Management's frequent inclination to delegate all responsibility for safety to a committee must be avoided. Management must take an active interest in the safety committee activities and accept constructive recommendations. Standard operating rules of procedure should be followed.

Management, supervisors, and safety coordinators must give their best efforts to detecting and correcting unsafe conditions and unsafe practices, but employees are in an especially good position to observe such hazards.

A safety committee should have adequate representation from the employees, the supervisors, and top management. Its main purpose is to assist in the development of a successful safety program.

The committee's activities will be determined by the employer, but the following guidelines should be considered if the safety committee performs a periodic safety inspection.

1. *Findings of inspections should be reviewed in committee meetings.*
2. *Recommendations should be forwarded to management.*
3. *Management must respond by carrying out the recommendations or by explaining why no action can be taken.*
4. *The committee should meet regularly, preferably once a month.*
5. *Rotate or alternate some members of the committee at least once a year.*
6. *The management and safety coordinator should always participate in any policy and procedure development.*



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Policies and Procedures

When the committee is formed, certain policies and procedures should be set forth in writing, and should cover at least:

1. *Scope of committee activity.*
2. *Extent of committee authority.*
3. *Procedure:*
 - a. Time and place of meetings.
 - b. Frequency of meetings.
 - c. Order of business.
 - d. Records to be kept.
 - e. Attendance requirements.

Although records of activities should be kept and procedures to be followed should be in writing, the paperwork should be kept to a minimum. A recordkeeping system that requires excessive writing and filing can be a waste of valuable time and effort.

The authority of the committee will vary from one company to another and is generally dependent upon its responsibilities. Much depends upon the size of the organization, the type of problems faced, and the quality of employer/employee relations.

Effective Committee Meetings

Good safety meetings require thorough planning and effort. Notice of meetings, preferably accompanied by an agenda, should be sent to each member of the committee.

The frequency of meetings varies, depending upon the type of committee and the program. There should be sufficient items of business for at least one meeting a month. When the interval between meetings is longer than one month, the members tend to lose interest.

Where possible, the meeting place should provide appropriate accommodations. Each person attending the meeting should be provided with a seat and be in a position to see and hear the speakers. A telephone may be useful.

Meetings should be conducted according to the general accepted rules of order. Formality should not be allowed to overwhelm the meeting and inhibit free and frank discussions.

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The following is presented as a suggested order of business that may be adopted for safety committee meetings in general:

1. **Call to Order** - *The meeting should be called to order promptly at the appointed time.*
2. **Roll Call by the Secretary** - *Names of members and others present should be recorded. Members who cannot attend should notify the secretary in advance and the reasons for absence should be noted in the minutes and arrange for a substitute during absence.*
3. **Introduction of Visitors**
4. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** *should be read and corrections and/or additions made.*
5. **Unfinished Business** - *All matters on which definite decisions have not been made are brought up for needed action.*
6. **Review of Accidents and Statistics** - *The cause should be determined for each serious accident.*
7. **Safety Education** - *When desirable, the chairperson should request a member to speak at the next meeting. The subject to be discussed should be reviewed with the management and approved.*
8. **Posters** - *The chairperson should question each member as to the condition of bulletin boards in the jurisdiction of the committee. Posters are useful in obtaining subject matter for meetings.*
9. **Activities** - *The chairperson may wish to appoint subcommittees to arrange for:*
 - a. Competition between departments.
 - b. Special no-accident weeks or months.
 - c. Safety rally programs.
 - d. Speakers' announcements.
 - e. Accident statistic summaries.
 - f. Revision of safety rules and practices.
 - g. Review safety suggestions.
10. **Adjournment**

Minutes should be taken, prepared, and circulated by the secretary, after approval by the chairperson. The minutes are of great importance since they are often sent to others besides committee members, especially top management. The minutes must record accurately all decisions made and actions taken, since they serve as a means of keeping management informed of the group's work and as a follow-up tool.

The following is a typical safety committee structure and their functions:

A. Chairperson's Duties:

1. Notify members of meeting.
2. Arrange meeting/program.
3. Schedule and notify committee members of next meeting.
4. Arrange for a meeting place.
5. Review previous minutes and materials prior to meeting.

B. Secretary's Duties:

1. Report unsafe conditions.
2. Distribute minutes.
3. Report status of recommendations.
4. (May assume chairperson's duties.)

C. Members' Duties:

1. Report unsafe conditions.
2. Attend all safety meetings.
3. Report all accidents or near accidents.
4. Contribute ideas and suggestions for improvement of safety.
5. Set an example for safe performance.
6. Induce others to work safely.
7. Make inspections as delegated.



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- A. *Discuss safety policies and recommend their adoption by management.*
- B. *Discover unsafe conditions and practices and report them to management.*
- C. *Assist management to implement safety recommendations or to improve on enforcement of existing safety rules.*
- D. *Teach safety to all personnel by:*
 - 1. Generating and maintaining the interest of superintendents, managers, supervisors, and group leaders in safety committee meetings.
 - 2. Generating and maintaining the interest of workers and convincing them that their cooperation is needed to prevent accidents.
 - 3. Making safety activities an integral part of operating policies.
 - 4. Providing employees an opportunity for free discussion of accident problems and preventive measures (a suggestion system may be used to obtain information from workers in unsafe conditions).
 - 5. Helping management evaluate safety suggestions.
- E. *Consider alternate methods to improve safety performance for both facilities and processing.*
An effective safety committee can:
 - 1. Better inform management by presenting objectives and problems.
 - 2. Familiarize management with safety problems.
 - 3. Bring together various points of view for discussion.
 - 4. Promote interest and cooperation for safety and health among the committee members themselves.

Safety committees are essential if the safety program is to be an effective and a productive part of the organization's operations.

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Safety Committee Meeting Agenda

Date: _____

1. **Roll Call**
2. **Approval of Last Meeting Minutes**
3. **Safety Manual Development/Revisions**
4. **Accident Review**
 - Employee Accidents
 - Motor Vehicle Accidents
 - Participant Injuries
 - Visitor Incidents
 - Property Damage
5. **Inspection Reports**
 - Gallagher Bassett Survey Inspections
 - Fire Department Inspections
 - Department of Health inspections
 - In-house Inspections
 - Department of Labor Inspections
 - Other Outside Agencies
6. **Review of Goals and Objectives**
7. **Old Business**
8. **New Business**
9. **Adjournment**



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