

Safety Committee **SAFETY** committee

A Guide to the Development and Implementation
of an Effective Safety Committee



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Introduction

There are several ways management can encourage their employees' participation in workplace safety programs. First, it is important to note that without full support of upper management in the development of a safety culture, any efforts may be unproductive. However, if a culture of safety exists, consideration should be given to creating a Safety Committee. The committee enables a group of people to share the responsibilities of implementing safety initiatives and monitoring the program's efforts. Some of the typical duties of the committee might include:

- Workplace self-inspections
- Incident/Accident investigations
- Researching and implementing best practices in safe work practices
- Developing written safety policies and procedures
- Facilitating on-going safety training and awareness

Safety Committees

Safety Committees can take on many different forms and functions. Ideally, the committee should have representation from both management and general employees, as well as from all departments and shifts. A formal Safety Committee is only one way to achieve the desired goals. In small organizations, it may be effective to have all employees attend monthly or quarterly safety meetings, during which safety issues and concerns are discussed and recent incidents and injuries are reviewed. Organizations may elect to have a group such as department heads fulfill the functions of the Safety Committee. However, it is crucial that employee input is solicited.

Scope

This booklet provides an outline for the organization of an effective Safety Committee. As is the case with all parts of a safety program, to be effective the Safety Committee must have clearly defined roles, responsibilities, and goals. Accountability for these tasks must be followed up on in a timely fashion. The other information provided in this booklet is intended to act as guides to assist in developing a Safety Committee.

Forming Your **Safety Committee**

Steps to Forming Your Organization's Safety Committee

1 Determine the Structure of the Safety Committee

Some consideration should be given to the structure of the Safety Committee. The identified members of the committee should elect officers for positions within the committee, such as a Chairperson and Secretary. The Chair will lead the meetings and keep the committee focused and on track while the Secretary will record and document the discussions within the committee.

2 Determine the Size of the Committee

Determining the optimal number of people to participate in a Safety Committee can be tricky. The selection and number of members in the committee is vital to its effectiveness. A target of five to ten committee members can provide a variety of input for the committee and accomplish goals, without too many opinions. Remember to include representatives from various departments.

3 Determine Who the Specific Committee Members Will Be

The goal is to have a group of individuals that can work together as a team, and possess a willingness to promote safety in the workplace. One option is to hand-pick specific employees who seem like they would make good committee members. Another approach is to issue an open invitation to employees and supervisory personnel asking for volunteers to join the committee. Avoid forcing individuals to participate as this may lead to sabotage of the committee or a passive member within the committee.

Although there are no set numbers for the various levels of workers that should be represented in the committee, use the ratio of management to hourly wage employees within the organization as a guideline. Periodically rotate members on and off the committee to keep fresh ideas and energy flowing through the group.

Typically, the rotation schedule should range from six months to a year.





Forming Your **Safety Committee**

While rotating members is beneficial, caution must be taken with regards to the amount of turnover. Experienced and trained members of the committee should be present on the committee at all times. This will provide a good balance between novice and veteran leadership.

4 Management Involvement

Management support is essential for employees to understand that commitment to safety is serious. If choosing to be a member of the committee, be sure to encourage all members' involvement in discussion of safety issues and concerns. If electing not to become a member of the committee, attend the initial meeting and visit periodically after that. Review the meeting minutes and always be available to respond to questions and concerns from the committee.

Remember that one of the Safety Committee's goals is to involve all members in the decision making process. Empowering the workers will allow a culture of safety to develop. Ownership of the safety issues within the organization will become a shared responsibility between management and hourly employees.

5 Conduct the Initial Safety Committee Meeting

Conducting the first Safety Committee meeting may be a challenge. Prior to the first meeting, an agenda should be written and posted where all workers will have access to it. The agenda is used to inform all employees what will be discussed at the meeting and to keep the committee on track.

The first meeting should cover the following items:

- Welcome members to the committee and state the committees' purpose.
- Set a schedule for the committee to meet (for instance, the first Monday of each month at 11:00 a.m.) that is as convenient as possible for all members. The length of committee meetings should be limited to an hour or less, therefore maximizing production and minimizing time constraints.
- Determine who will be the committee officers--Chairperson and Secretary. It may be beneficial to appoint temporary officers until the committee has met at least a couple of times.

Forming Your **Safety Committee**

- Discuss the duties of the committee and determine which duties should initially receive the highest priority. Some examples would include:
 - ❑ Conducting facility inspections
 - ❑ Developing written safety policies and procedures
 - ❑ Conducting Incident/Accident reviews
- Determine the need for sub-committees to take responsibility for some of the priority items. Sub-committees can work on projects in-between committee meetings and report on their progress at the next meeting.

To keep all employees informed, minutes from the meeting should be typed and posted for all employees to read and review.

6 Review the Progress of the Committee

Each year, the Safety Committee's progress should be evaluated to determine the committee's success in developing the organizations' safety goals and objectives. Identifying progress and deficiencies will aid in further refining the committee's efforts in order to continue progressing toward an accident free workplace. Individual member's productivity should also be evaluated and assessed during this time.



Forming Your **Safety Committee**

Key Elements

To be effective, the Safety Committee should consider the following:

- Hold meetings on a regular basis, following a consistent schedule.
- Set clear meeting agendas, publish them in advance, and follow them.
- Keep minutes of each meeting that summarize the issues discussed, the proposed actions to be taken, timeframes for completion, and the person(s) responsible for follow-up on each item. Minutes should be published and provided to each committee member, as well as made available to all employees. If the organization has an Intranet page, this may be an ideal place to publish the minutes.
- Members should be required to attend all meetings, except in the case of emergencies. If a member cannot attend a meeting, then an alternate should be sent. Attendance should be taken at each meeting and recorded in the minutes.
- Publicize the committee's accomplishments, as well as assistance to management; find ways to recognize the efforts of individuals and groups within the organization who make significant contributions to the Safety Program.



Planning Guide and Sample Safety Committee Meeting Minutes

The next section of this booklet is intended to assist in the formation of the Safety Committee. Each organization will need to carefully analyze safety issues and available resources, and structure the Safety Committee to these specific concerns.



Safety Committee Planning Guide

General Organization of Safety Committees

- The formation of the Safety Committee should be announced officially by the Executive Director. This should include a brief description of the committee's mission, current membership, as well as soliciting cooperation from all departments.
- The committee membership should have knowledge of their work area and interest in supporting safety. The committee size should be consistent with this requirement.
- Safety Committees should have communications with upper management through direct reporting or via distribution of minutes to all key management officers and department heads.
- The Safety Committee should have the full support and participation of management to function effectively. Management should monitor the committee to ensure that targeted goals and objectives are met.

General Responsibilities of a Committee

- Report unsafe and potentially unsafe conditions and suggest corrective measures.
- Meet at least once a month, but no less than quarterly.
- Review incidents, near misses, Accident Investigation Reports, claim summaries and loss analysis on a periodic basis.
- Review all serious injuries to prevent a re-occurrence of the same or similar incident.
- Contribute ideas and suggestions for improvements in safety.
- Work safely and influence others to work safely as well.
- Make periodic facility safety audits, these may be scheduled or unannounced.
- Sponsor and coordinate contests, poster programs, safety drives, etc., and supply other informational materials which can assist in promoting safe operations.
- Develop, implement, and review written safety policy and procedures annually.
- Participate in organization-wide safety training.



Safety Committee Planning Guide

Setting of Goals

- Short term goals - less than six months, and long term goals - greater than six months
- Set measurable and achievable goals
- Review goals periodically to determine effectiveness, and need to reset or restate goal targets
- Examples of goals could include:
 - Reduce fall rate by quantifiable benchmark target
 - Reduce medication administration errors by quantifiable benchmark target

Safety Committee Meeting Agenda

The committee Chairman should call the meeting to order, and the Secretary should take minutes of the meeting. If the Secretary is not present, the Chairman may designate a member to take minutes and proceed with business in the order that best suits the set-up of your committee. The following is a suggested order.

1. Call to Order

- ☐ Call meeting to order, introduce guests, speakers, agenda changes, etc.
- ☐ Read minutes from prior meeting noting corrections or changes

2. Old Business

- ☐ Discuss status of previously submitted recommendations
- ☐ Request status report on any other pending old business
- ☐ Set target dates for completion of recommendations and pending items
- ☐ Status report of goals and objectives
- ☐ Introduce new business

3. Accident Review

- ☐ Brief summary of number and type of incidents reported since the last meeting
- ☐ Discuss severe or potentially severe cases including action to be taken or suggestions to minimize exposure
- ☐ Brief summary of number and type of accidents for the year to date, discussing any problem trends

Safety Committee Planning Guide

4. Inspection Reports

- ❑ Report findings of safety inspections conducted by committee members or others
 - ♦ Have members of outside departments perform inspections to help identify hazards that others may have learned to live
- ❑ Discuss and decide on action to be recommended as a result of reports
 - ♦ Identify who will be responsible and establish time frame for action

5. New Business

- ❑ Request committee members to submit safety suggestions
- ❑ Comment on new safety procedures, equipment, etc., of interest to the committee
- ❑ Plan and schedule safety-training programs

6. Recommendations

- ❑ List each new recommendation submitted at the meeting
 - ♦ Identify action to be taken, accountability timeframe, and by whom prior to the next meeting

Common Safety Committee Pitfalls

- The group has no clear-cut job to perform, or the committee has no reason to exist
- Too much processing of information without resolutions
- Appointed members are neither interested nor experienced
- Unqualified or incompetent chairperson
- The group lacks a plan or time schedule
- Work of the committee is not recognized or reinforced by employees or management
- Members do not show up for meetings or inspections
- Agendas are sent out late or distributed only at meetings
- Minutes are sent out late



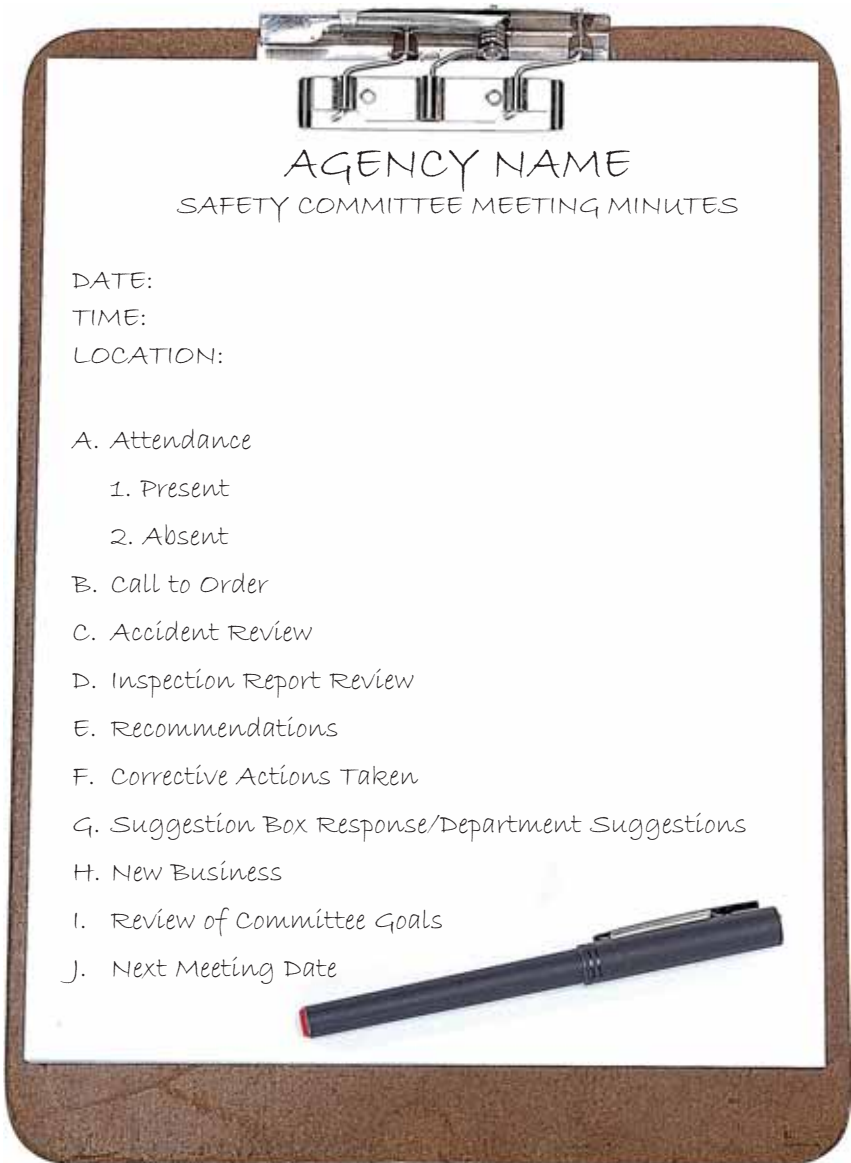
Safety Committee Planning Guide

Essential Elements of an Effective Safety Committee

- Top management attends the meetings (at least periodically), showing interest in the safety program to both supervisory management and employees
- Chairperson shows strong leadership and keeps the meeting focused
- The committee addresses legitimate safety issues only and does not become a format for airing grievances
- Meeting agendas establish a starting and ending time for the meeting and are provided to members in advance
- Minutes of each meeting are circulated to all members and management within 2-3 working days following each meeting
- Members are expected to attend meetings by management and schedule the necessary time
- Minutes include the names of members who attended as well absentees
- All employees of the organization know about the committee
 - ♦ Minutes or notices are posted and articles are put in newsletters
 - ♦ Input is solicited from “fellow” employees
 - ♦ Employees are informed of the committee’s activities



Sample Meeting Minutes



AGENCY NAME
SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

DATE:
TIME:
LOCATION:

- A. Attendance
 - 1. Present
 - 2. Absent
- B. Call to Order
- C. Accident Review
- D. Inspection Report Review
- E. Recommendations
- F. Corrective Actions Taken
- G. Suggestion Box Response/Department Suggestions
- H. New Business
- I. Review of Committee Goals
- J. Next Meeting Date

Visit us at www.siegelagency.com or email solutions@siegelagency.com for a sample Meeting Minutes document for use at your next Safety Committee meeting



Additional Resources

Printed Publications

- The Investigation Process
- Disaster Preparedness
- The Exit Interview

Flyers & Bulletins

- Slips, Trips and Falls
- Various Auto Related Bulletins
- Safety Card Series

Newsletters

- Executive Perspective
- Matter of Record
- Safety Matters

Video Lending Library

- Effective Safety Committees
- Transporting Passengers with Special Needs
- Back Tips for Healthcare Workers

Partner Programs

- Essential Learning Online Training
- Affordable Background Checks through Intellicorp
- Praesidium's Abuse Prevention Hotline
- Driver's Alert - Vehicle Incident Monitoring

Contact our Risk Management Department
for additional resources and partner services

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