**Creating a safety committee**

**Safety committee mission statement**

*The mission of the* ***(insert company name)*** *Health and Safety Committee is to promote a healthy and safe environment for employees and visitors alike.*

A Safety Committee can vary based upon the organization’s culture, operations and needs. Ideally, the committee will be formed of both management and employees representing the organization. A common pitfall of bringing together management and employees is that it may have a dampening effect on employee participation leaving a tendency of management to take over the committee. A solution to this problem might be developing parallel committees of both employee and management participants which are blended as the committees mature. Another option is to have an employee committee that reports directly to senior management.

The success of a safety committee will not be overnight, nor will it not experience some pitfalls and setbacks. To succeed, the organization needs to be committed to building a successful team, communicating often and be open to adjusting as the group forms and settles into their assigned duties. Creating a safety committee will not be a 'cure all' for identifying and solving safety problems; however, they can be a great tool for developing and improving a safety program.

Safety Committees must have a specific purpose and well-defined goals. Committee members can be the 'eyes and ears' for reporting safety concerns and play a key role in identifying corrective actions.

Safety committee members shall have the following characteristics:

* Sincerity, genuine commitment
* Concern for others
* Leadership
* Positive role model
* Team attitude with co-workers and management
* Manage available resources
* Respected by their peers

**Scope**

The safety Committee will need to have:

* Defined goals
* Defined roles
* Defined responsibilities
* Established line of communication

The information below is provided as a guide to help develop an organization’s Safety Committee.

**Determine the structure of the safety committee.** It is recommended to start small in terms of committee size so that early hurdles may be easily resolved. Allow the group to build upon its successes. Be prepared to communicate with others the reason and value of the committee to dispel fears and build credibility. Management communication regarding the need to create a safety committee should be in place at least two weeks prior to forming the committee.

**Determine the size of the safety committee.** There is no magic number as far as safety committee participants.The only concern is that the larger a committee grows, the more challenging it is in terms of management and focus. Other considerations include the ability of the participants to commit to be at the meetings, thus taking time away from their regular job duties. A target of five to eight committee members is usually an efficient group.

**Determining committee members**. There is the election to choose specific employees that a company feels would make good committee members or employees can be asked to volunteer to join the committee. Either way, the goal is to have a group of individuals that can work together as a team, and who are willing to promote safety in their workplace. Depending on the response to the invitation, there still may be a need to invite additional individuals to join the committee.

*Please Note: It is not unusual for committee membership to be viewed as “favoritism” or limited to “yes men or women.” The need for strong communication and support by management is critical to a successful launch of any safety committee.*

It is important to communicate upfront with all employees the need to make changes in how the organization is controlling risk exposures and how it can affect the financial wellbeing of the company. Increasing employee involvement and providing a better communication pathway between all levels of the organization will have a positive impact within the organization.

It is a good practice to periodically rotate members on the committee with membership overlapping as to allow for some continuity. For example, half of the membership could rotate off every year thereby allowing new members to come onboard yet keep the group’s momentum and focus moving forward. Some of the initial group members would have to have an extended time (additional six months on an annual membership) on the committee to allow for this successful rotation.

**Top management involvement**. Management support is critical to any safety effort so that all employees understand that the commitment to safety is serious and long term. If the choice is to have management representation on the committee, then extra effort will need to be made to encourage all members to actively participate in the discussion of safety issues and concerns.

An option is to have a management representative (preferably top management) attend the initial meeting and visit periodically after that based on committee requests, or to maintain active management support of the group.

**Initial safety committee meeting**. The first meeting should address at a minimum, the following:

* Welcome members to the Committee and review the goals and discuss the plan for meeting these goals.
* Set a reasonable schedule for the committee to meet (for instance, the first Tuesday of every month at 2:00 p.m.). Initial meetings may need to be held weekly to get the committee organized and demonstrate some progress.
* Determine committee officers- Chairperson, Vice-Chairperson, and Secretary. These positions do not have to be filled immediately as you may wish to have temporary officers until the committee has met at least a couple of times and the group becomes comfortable with its role and its members are better able to elect formal officers.
* Discuss and prioritize the duties of the committee. Some examples would include reviewing loss trends, developing required written safety programs, and conducting incident and accident reviews.
* Determine the need for time and resource commitments to assure that the committee will be able to meet its stated goals. Committee meetings should last approximately an hour depending on the topics and issues to be addressed. Initial meetings may last longer.

**Ongoing safety committee meetings**. Once established, committee meetings should perform 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, and the person(s) responsible for follow-up on each item. Minutes should be published and provided to each committee member and be made available to all employees.
* Members should be required to attend all meetings. 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, find ways to recognize the efforts of individuals and groups who make significant contributions to the safety program.

**Committee progress reviews**. Visible progress may be difficult in the early stages, but it is important that progress is defined and measured to both recognize achievement, as well as address impediments that are slowing the committee’s effectiveness. Quarterly reviews evolving into annual reviews will allow for the committee’s growth and allow the organization to continue to make progress toward an accident-free workplace.

**Sample activities and responsibilities:**

* Identify unsafe work practices and conditions and suggest corrective actions.
* Conduct inspections of facilities to identify hazards and recommend corrective measures.
* Review incident reports. Trend incident causes and identify corrective action.
* Assist in the development and implementation of effective health and safety awareness programs.
* Serve as an advisory body to management on health and safety issues. Providing employee feedback as well as suggestions and recommendations for resolution of health and safety concerns.

**Members:** Committee members will constitute a diverse group of employees and shall serve a staggered 12-month term.

**Officers:** The officers of the committee will serve a staggered 12-month term. The officers will consist of a Chairperson, a Co-Chairperson, and a Secretary. Officers will be elected by the committee membership in October of each year to begin their tenure the following January.

**Responsibilities:**

Management's responsibilities:

* Actively promote health and safety.
* Allow time for appointed members to participate in meetings and fulfill assigned responsibilities.
* Allocate necessary resources to implement safety and health committee activities.
* Provide feedback to the committee.
* Perform the initial investigation of all incidents.

Chairperson's responsibilities:

* Actively promote health and safety.
* Serve as communication liaison between management and the committee.
* Facilitate committee meetings.
* Assign activities to committee members.
* Establish deadlines and follow up.
* Schedule and develop meeting agendas
* Prepare an annual report detailing the committee accomplishments.
* Introduce new members.

Co-chairperson's responsibilities:

* Facilitate the meeting in the absence of the Chairperson.
* Facilitate meeting agendas and monitor meeting times.
* Assist with development of the agenda.

Secretary's responsibilities:

* Record meeting minutes and distribute at each meeting.
* Record attendance.
* Arrange for the meeting room.
* Distribute any correspondence or directives developed by the committee.
* Maintain files of meetings and correspondence.

Committee members responsibilities:

* Attend meetings or arrange for an alternate to attend.
* Communicate committee activities to their department.
* Serve on appointed project teams or sub-committees.
* Bring safety or health concerns to committee meetings.

Employee responsibilities:

* Bring health and safety concerns to their supervisor or committee representative.
* Attend training courses relevant to their job classification.

**Meetings:**

Meetings will initially be held monthly, preferably on the \_\_\_ of each month from \_\_\_to \_\_\_\_After six months, regular meetings of the committee will be held at least every two months.

Special meetings of the committee may be called by Chairperson, or upon the request of most of the committee members.

(Optional) The minutes of the meeting will be posted on bulletin boards throughout the facility.

**Common safety committee pitfalls:**

* The group has no clear-cut job to perform, or the committee has no reason to exist.
* There is a lot of talk without any action.
* People are appointed who are neither interested nor experienced.
* The chairpersons are not qualified by experience, desire, or ability.
* The group has no agenda, or time schedule.
* People do not show up for meetings or inspections are incomplete.
* The work of the committee is not recognized by employees or management.
* Agendas are sent out late or distributed only at the meetings.
* Minutes are sent out late. They should be distributed within a week after the meeting with assigned tasks noted.

**Effective safety committee requirements**

* Top management officials should attend safety committee meetings (at least quarterly). They must show an interest in the safety program to both supervisory management and employees.
* Chairperson must exhibit strong leadership and be able to keep things moving forward.
* The committee should address safety issues only. The committee should not become a format for addressing convenience issues, or airing grievances.
* Meeting agendas must be established and provided to members in advance. The agenda should state the meeting start and end time.
* Minutes of each meeting should be provided to all members and management within 2-3 working days following the meeting.
* Committee members must attend meetings and be allowed time away from regularly assigned job duties.
* The minutes should record who was present as well as who did not attend.
* Advise all employees about the committee. Post minutes and notice of meeting dates or put articles in newsletters. Solicit input from “fellow” employees.
* Be positive. Give credit where credit is due. Keep employees informed of the committee’s activities.

**Sample safety committee guidelines**

**Meeting agenda**

The Committee Chairman should call the meeting to order, the secretary should take minutes of the meeting, if the secretary is not present, the chairman should designate a member to record meeting minutes:

**1. Call to order**

a. Call the meeting to order, introduce guests, speakers, agenda changes, etc.

b. Read the minutes of the previous meeting. Note corrections or changes.

**2. Old business**

a. Discuss status of previously submitted recommendations.

b. Request status report on any other pending old business.

c. Set target dates for completion of recommendations and other pending items.

d. Status report of goals and objectives.

e. Introduce new business.

**3. Accident review**

a. Summary of number and type of incidents reported since last meeting.

b. Discuss trends, severity and frequency and recommended action to eliminate future losses.

c. Summary of number and type of accidents for the year to date. Discuss any

incident trends.

**4. Inspection reports**

a. Report findings of safety inspections. Department operations should be inspected on a rotating basis.

b. Discuss and decide on actions to be made because of reports.

c. Identify who will be responsible and establish time frame for action.

**5. New business**

a. Request committee members to submit safety suggestions (brainstorm).

b. Comment on new safety procedures, equipment, etc.

c. Plan and schedule safety-training.

**6. Recommendations**

List each new recommendation submitted at the meeting. Identify action to be taken and assign responsibility.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Safety committee Minutes | |
| Date: |  |
| Time: |  |
| Location: |  |

**A. Attendance**

**B. Call to order**

**C. Accident review**

**D. Inspection report review**

**E. Recommendations**

**F. Corrective actions taken**

**G. New business**

**H. Review of committee goals**

**I. Next meeting date**

**Safety committee duties**

* Assist in evaluating the injury and illness prevention program
* Make recommendations to improve the program where applicable
* Establish procedures for workplace inspections (teams)
* Teams must have employee and Management representatives
* Locate and identify safety and health hazards
* Conduct workplace inspections
* Recommend how to eliminate workplace hazards and unsafe behaviors
* Need written documentations of inspection locations, hazards, and recommendations for correction of hazards
* Evaluate the accountability system
* Make recommendations to improve supervisor and employee accountability
* Establish procedures for accident investigation
* Investigate all safety related incidents
* Committee does not have to conduct the investigation
* Safety Committee members must have training on
* Hazard identification in the workplace
* Principals of effective accident and incident investigation
* What are your:
* Missions
* Objectives
* Authority — Advisory only or Authorized to act?
* Metrics used to determine effectiveness
* Methods of communication with Management
* Goals
* Prioritize task based on probability and frequency
* How to keep the committee alive
* Do a hazard inspection before the meeting and talk about the results
* Pick a recent incident and discuss the cause and how to prevent
* Send out another copy of the last minutes to remind members of topics at hand
* Identify training needs, based on assessments, and prioritize
* Periodically rotate members or introduce new members to provide input

**Standard agenda items:**

* Sign in or attendance record
* Review open action items for progress, status and effectiveness
* Amend open action items as appropriate (modify action, change target, trending information, etc.)
* Review accident and inspection data (investigation reports, inspection reports, trending information etc.).
* Review employee concerns and comments (written, verbally voiced to members etc.)
* Prioritize issues from data and employee concerns and select an issue to be addressed
* Perform an Action Plan on the selected issue and address the root cause
* Assign persons primarily responsible and target dates for each action plan item
* Open the floor for discussion of committee administrative issues – (training for committee members, rotation of members, changes in standard agenda, etc.)
* Set next meeting date, time and location
* Adjourn meeting

**Action plan**

**Hazard identified:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Task:** Was a safe procedure used? Did conditions change to make the procedure unsafe? Were all hazards addressed relating to the procedure?

**Explaination:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Equipment/material:** Was there equipment failure? Poor design? Were hazardous substances involved? Guarding issues? Electrical hazards? Flammable materials? Was PPE adequate for hazards?

**Explaination:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Environment:** Weather conditions? Did noise interfere? Lighting? Was temperature a factor? Preventative maintenance? Housekeeping?

**Explaination:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Personnel related causes:** Lack of training, knowledge or skill? Were employees trained? Physically able (i.e. sick or injured)? Fear of discipline? Employee experienced? Adequate motivation? Lack of communication?

**Explaination:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Management related causes:** Were written rules or procedures in place? Were they followed? Were employees provided with training? Were jobsites frequently inspected? Were rules or procedures being enforced?

**Explaination:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Preventative action:** What interim action has or will be taken to prevent reoccurrence? (Name person responsible)

**Explaination:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Final action:** What corrective action has or will be taken to prevent reoccurrence? (Name person responsible)

**Explaination:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Management control:** What management controls need to be implemented to prevent additional losses?

**Explaination:**\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Comments:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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**Prepared by:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Reviewed by:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Date reviewed:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Target completion date:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Safety committee meeting record form**

Meeting date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Attendees: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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Open action items discussed, and changes made:

Data reviewed (check each source used):

* Investigation Reports
* Inspection Reports
* Employee Concerns
* Other

Multi-voting used to select issue to be addressed: Yes ❑ No ❑

List the issue or problem to be addressed:

Action plan developed: Yes (included with minutes) **❑** No ❑