



Safety Committees: A Safety Training Program



Goal

This training program aims to give employers the essential tools to create a safety committee and make it thrive! We want to help you build a committee that actively contributes to a safer, healthier, and more productive work environment for everyone.

Objectives

This publication has a few key objectives. We want to show you why having a safety committee is a smart move for your business and your employees. We'll also give you some straightforward guidelines about how big the committee should be, how it should work, and what direction it should take. Finally, we'll give you some simple rules to keep the committee engaged, productive, and making a difference over time.

Why have a safety committee? What's the point?

A safety committee isn't just another box to check; it's a valuable tool for improving your

workplace. Think of it as a bridge between management and workers, a place where everyone can come together to address safety concerns and create a better environment for all. Here's what a safety committee can do for you:

- **Address workers' safety concerns.** It gives employees a dedicated space to bring up safety issues and know their concerns will be heard and taken seriously.
- **Give workers input on safety rules.** Instead of rules being handed down from above, workers get a chance to shape the safety policies that affect their daily lives.
- **Empower workers with safety responsibilities and authority.** The committee isn't just a talk shop; it gives workers the power to act, investigate incidents, and suggest real improvements.

- **Involve workers in facility processes and procedures.**

Safety becomes a team effort when workers are involved in developing the procedures and processes that keep the facility running smoothly and safely.

- **Improve communication between management and other workers.**

A safety committee opens lines of communication that might not otherwise exist, fostering trust and understanding between management and other workers.



anyone else. A safety committee taps into that valuable firsthand knowledge.

- **Provides valuable information at minimal cost.**

You're getting the insights of your most knowledgeable employees without having to pay for expensive consultants or outside experts.

- **Improves worker morale and involvement.**

When workers feel like their opinions matter and they're contributing to a safer workplace, their morale goes up, and they become more invested in the company's success.

The benefits are real: How a safety committee pays off

Having a safety committee isn't just about doing the right thing; it also makes good business sense. When workers feel valued and heard, and when safety is a priority, good things happen. Here are a few of the benefits you can expect:

- **Allows workers to voice safety concerns without fear of criticism.**

Employees are more likely to speak up about potential hazards when they know their concerns will be taken seriously and they won't be ridiculed or dismissed.

- **Utilizes workers' expertise in their work areas.**

The people doing the job day in and day out know their work areas better than

- **Reduces incidents and creates a culture of safety.**

A proactive safety committee can identify and address potential hazards before they lead to accidents, creating a culture where safety is valued by everyone.

- **Supports open communication across all levels of the organization.**

The committee breaks down communication barriers, fostering a spirit of teamwork and collaboration between management and workers.

Building your safety committee: Setting the foundation for success

Setting up your safety committee the right way from the start is crucial for its long-term success. Think of it like laying the foundation

for a strong building – if the foundation isn't solid, the whole thing could crumble. Here's how to build a safety committee that will stand the test of time:

- **Size.**
Aim for a sweet spot of 10-15 members. This allows for diverse perspectives without becoming too unwieldy.
- **Representation.**
Make sure you have voices from all levels of your organization, from front-line workers to supervisors to managers. Everyone should have a seat at the table.
- **Selection.**
Keep it voluntary! People who are genuinely interested and enthusiastic will contribute more effectively.
- **Rotation.**
Change the membership every 6-12 months to keep things fresh and bring in new ideas.
- **Terms.**
Overlap the terms of experienced members with new members, so the new people can learn from others. This helps to keep the committee running smoothly.
- **Safety department involvement.**
Have a member of your safety department attend meetings to provide expert guidance, answer questions about regulations, and keep the committee on track. However, they should guide, not dictate!

Managing your committee: Keep the momentum going

Once your committee is up and running, it's important to keep it properly managed. A well-managed safety committee is one that's effective, engaged, and making a real difference in your workplace. Here's how to keep your committee on the right track:

- **Elect officers.**
Choose a speaker to lead the meetings and a secretary to keep accurate records of what's discussed.
- **Create and post agendas.**
Give everyone a heads-up about what will be discussed at the meeting. This helps people prepare and keeps the meeting focused.
- **Keep and distribute meeting notes.**
Share the meeting minutes with everyone in the company, so they know what the committee is working on and what progress is being made.



- **Establish regular meeting times.**
Find a meeting time that works for most members and stick to it. Keep the meetings to an hour or less to respect everyone's time.
- **Set meeting frequency.**
Aim for bi-weekly, monthly, or quarterly meetings. The more often you meet, the more engaged the committee will stay.
- **Identify committee members.**
Give committee members badges or tags so other employees know who to talk to about safety concerns.
- **Allow all members to speak.**
Create a safe space where everyone feels comfortable sharing their ideas and concerns without fear of being criticized or dismissed.

Safety committees provide:

- 1. Innovative and cost-effective safety solutions.**
Tap into the collective knowledge of your workforce to come up with creative ways to solve safety problems without breaking the bank.
- 2. Improved safety procedures and programs.**
Get input from the people who use the procedures every day to make sure they're effective and easy to follow.
- 3. Better communication of safety concerns.**
Give employees a direct line to voice their safety concerns and get them addressed quickly and efficiently.
- 4. Additional staff for accident investigations and inspections.**
Train your committee members to assist with accident investigations and regulatory inspections, so you have more eyes and ears on the ground.
- 5. Increased worker ownership of safety programs.**
When workers are involved in creating and implementing safety programs, they're more likely to take ownership of them and follow them.
- 6. Improved morale and reduced turnover rates.**
A safe and supportive workplace leads to happier employees, which in turn leads to lower turnover rates and a more stable workforce.



SAFETY COMMITTEE

**In summary:
A safer workplace
is a team effort**

A safety committee is more than just a group of people meeting in a room. It's a powerful tool for building a culture of safety in your workplace, where everyone is involved in making the environment safer and healthier for all. When you empower your workers, listen to their concerns, and give them a say in the decisions that affect their safety, you create a workplace where everyone feels valued, respected, and committed to working safely.

Review Questions

1. A safety committee will give the workers a sense of:
 - a. Fear about the safety program.
 - b. Empowerment in the safety program.
 - c. Apathy about the safety program.
 - d. Indigestion.

2. The number of members that are selected for the safety committee should range from:
 - a. 1 to 5
 - b. 6 to 10
 - c. 10 to 15
 - d. 20 to 30

3. Management representation on the safety committee allows them to:
 - a. Take control of the meetings.
 - b. Dictate the production protocols for the plant.
 - c. Force members to keep quiet about unpopular ideas.
 - d. Have authority to make the changes that the group decides are needed.

4. Topics of concern for safety committee consideration:
 - a. Should reflect the varying concerns throughout the facility.
 - b. Should be restricted to what upper management would like to have discussed.
 - c. Should be drawn from a hat.
 - d. Should be restricted to what the safety department would like to have discussed.

5. Upper management's quick correction and follow-up on safety issues that are discussed at the safety committee will give the workers a sense of accomplishment.
 - a. True
 - b. False

Review Answers:

1. B 2. C 3. D 4. A 5. T



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