

WorkSiteRight™

A DIVISION OF NORTHEASTERN HEALTH SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

Safety Committees

Effective safety committees

At WorkSiteRight, believe that everyone benefits from a safe workplace. Maximizing productivity and reducing risk of injury will lead to happier, healthier employees and more profitable companies. An effective safety committee is a key element of this goal. This guideline will act as a resource in evaluating your current safety committee and/or developing a safety committee that positively impacts your workplace.

The information contained here will systematically review the elements necessary for a vibrant, long lasting, successful team. Senior management will recognize it as an asset and employees will receive the benefits of a safe work environment. Key topics include:

- Purpose of a safety committee
- Keys to a successful safety committee
- Safety committee positions
- Safety committee responsibilities

WorkSiteRight's primary goal in working with safety programs is to prevent injury and illness. This should be your overall objective as well. Through education, awareness, intervention, and action your safety committee will have a direct positive impact on your company's bottom line.

We hope the information contained here will provide you a template for success. As with all health and wellness objectives, this information will need to be customized to your company, workforce, facility, and goals. We believe longterm success is directly related to a continual process improvement strategy. We welcome the opportunity to assist you further in setting up or improving your safety committee. Feel free to contact us at any point for more information or to address your questions and concerns.

Let's get started!

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WorkSiteRight vision

We are passionate about keeping employees well and assisting them in leading happy, healthy, and productive lives. We provide consulting and onsite services to assist companies of all sizes and budgets meet their health, wellness, and safety goals.

Purpose of a safety committee

Safety committees should be established for the following purposes:

1. To increase and maintain the interest of employees in safety issues
2. To educate employees that they are primarily responsible for the prevention of workplace accidents
3. To insure that safety activities are an integral part of the organization's operating procedures, culture, and programs
4. To promote discussion of safety problems and possible solutions
5. To inform and educate all employees about safety issues, standards, trends, and successes
6. To help reduce the risk of workplace injuries and illnesses
7. To help insure compliance with federal, state, and company safety standards

Keys to a successful safety committee

- ✓ Committee has the support of senior management
- ✓ Committee members are trained in workplace safety
- ✓ Committee members represent all areas of the company
- ✓ Committee members rotate
- ✓ Committee meets regularly
- ✓ Committee has a clearly defined mission
- ✓ Committee has clearly defined and reasonably obtainable goals
- ✓ Committee has clearly defined responsibilities
- ✓ Committee follows a systematic process: assess, plan, implement, review
- ✓ Committee has an organized agenda: facility review, policies and procedures, employee input, etc.
- ✓ Committee is focused on prevention
- ✓ Committee communicates with employees
- ✓ Committee uses available resources efficiently
- ✓ Committee partners with key consultants

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Safety committee positions

Chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Supportive of company goals and passionate about safety✓ Has the respect and support of other committee members, employees, and management✓ Is familiar with safety management principles✓ Elevates to this position after the departure of the previous chairperson✓ Typically serves a two-year term and then remains on the committee for another two years as a general member✓ Is NOT in senior management at the company
Vice-chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Is competent to lead the committee in the absence of the chairperson✓ Is elected by the committee✓ Typically serves a two-year term and then moves into the role of chairperson✓ Is a good communicator regarding safety topics✓ Is NOT in senior management at the company
Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Typically is part of HR or represents management on the safety committee✓ Has an understanding of OSHA standards and company policy regarding safety✓ Has training in safety, injury prevention, and ergonomics✓ Has knowledge of outside safety resources
General members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Represent a diverse sampling of all company employees, including management✓ Typically serve a three-year term✓ Are interested in being active on the safety committee✓ Have a desire to learn more about safety and injury prevention

Special considerations for companies with less than 100 employees

1-3 general members (typically you would have 3-6)

The HR representative will be responsible for a larger portion of activities

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Safety committee responsibilities

Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Conduct proactive inspections of facility for safety hazards✓ Solicit safety concerns from all employees✓ Investigate accidents and near misses for future prevention✓ Set safety goals✓ Facilitate safety training and awareness✓ Report safety committee activities to all employees✓ Develop written safety policies and procedures✓ Recognize and provide praise for safety accomplishments✓ Communicate with senior management on safety issues✓ Recruit general safety committee members
Chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Sets agendas and leads committee meetings✓ Assigns subcommittees and reviews their progress✓ Serves as primary safety communicator to employees and senior management
Vice-chairperson	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Steps in and functions as chairperson when appropriate✓ Serves on one or more subcommittees✓ Supports Secretary in secondary communication of safety goals and results to employees
Secretary	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Sets meeting times and records meeting minutes✓ Keeps all required OSHA and company documentation regarding safety✓ Provides outside resources to committee when appropriate✓ Sets ballots for Vice-chairperson
General members	<ul style="list-style-type: none">✓ Be an active member on subcommittees✓ Encourage and promote safe work practices through example✓ Further co-workers safety knowledge, understanding, and awareness

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10 steps to forming a safety committee

1. Obtain senior management involvement and support
2. Determine membership structure
3. Assign committee positions and responsibilities
4. Organize and define subcommittees
5. Set attainable goals
6. Determine communication requirements
7. Set up continual process improvement plan (assess-plan-implement-review)
8. Provide education and awareness to committee members
9. Reinforce safety among all employees
10. Take action!

Safety subcommittee examples

- Safety Policy and Procedure Team
- Ergonomic Assessment Team
- Accident/Near Miss Investigation Team
- Facility Assessment (Pro-active) Team
- Communication Team
- Safety Recognition Team
- Safety Training/Awareness Team

Common safety committee pitfalls

- ✓ The group lacks a plan, goals, or schedule
- ✓ Positions and responsibilities are not clearly defined
- ✓ Appointed members are neither interested nor experienced
- ✓ Leaders are unqualified or incompetent
- ✓ Work of the committee is not recognized or reinforced by employees or management
- ✓ All of the work is completed by only a couple of members
- ✓ Too much is required of the HR member
- ✓ Outside resources are not used efficiently

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Safety committee meeting agenda (sample)

Date: _____

Time: _____

Location: _____

Chairperson: _____

1. Call to order (Chairperson)
2. Roll call
3. Approval of previous meeting minutes
4. Injury update and report (Secretary)
5. Old business
 - a. Committee reports and updates
 - b. Subcommittee reports and updates
 - c. Event reports
6. New business
 - a. Committee reports and updates
 - b. Subcommittee actions
 - c. Event planning
 - d. Suggestion box review
 - e. Safety topic mini session (member topic or outside vendor)
7. Safety recognition
8. Announcement of next meeting
9. Meeting adjourned

Notes

Meetings should start on time, stay to agenda, and be void of cross talk

Meetings should be focused on reporting activities and setting subcommittee agendas

Feel free to contact us with questions or to obtain
the full "Successful Safety Committees" packet

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