

How to Form a Safety Committee

Safety committees have a positive impact on organizations because they can help improve your safety management system. Safety committees create a forum to discuss safety and health (S&H) concerns, inform and educate employees on safety topics related to your work activities, help ensure compliance with S&H regulations, and allow employees to provide input on possible solutions.

Safety committees also drive culture change. These committees create an opportunity for S&H professionals to hear employees out before making impactful decisions. Employees generally appreciate this opportunity, especially as committee participation increases and they begin to take more ownership of S&H. Your S&H professionals get to hear if possible solutions will or will not work, which may trigger solutions not discussed before.

Safety Committee Requirements



Some states that follow the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) state-plans may require safety committees and have formation and operation requirements. If you are in a state with a state-based plan, check your local S&H regulations to see if a safety committee is required:

<https://www.osha.gov/dcsp/osp/index.html>

Many states also offer workers' compensation discounts for establishing a safety committee. While this is not a major benefit for some government organizations, there may be a list of committee requirements you can consider incorporating (e.g., minimum number of employee representatives, training requirements).

Committee Size

Look at the size of your organization to determine the optimum size of your committee. Larger organizations generally want larger safety committees. It is ideal to have a mixture of employees representing different work areas and various levels of the organization. Strike a balance between the number of committee members that represent employees and management. Ensure a top manager is involved on the committee to support and facilitate actions.

Determine the size

Identify committee leaders

Decide member composition

Establish a committee charter

Set up and conduct meetings

Review committee progress



Committee Leaders

When setting up your safety committee, you need to identify who will lead it. Safety committees generally have the following positions: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary.

While management can appoint the safety committee leaders, consider holding an election and using the majority vote to fill these positions. It is also a best practice to choose an employee to be the Chairperson, not a manager or S&H professional.

Composition

Think about how to fill the general member positions on your safety committee. It is important to have all departments represented, so all discussions are communicated to/from each department. Consider allowing department heads to select their representative, or solicit volunteers from each department. Consider keeping a few members on the committee permanently and rotating the others – this approach helps establish a little continuity!

Chairperson – Coordinates and conducts committee meetings and communicates information between management and committee members

Vice Chairperson – Maintains continuity of the committee when the Chairperson is absent

Secretary – Maintains, records, and distributes meeting minutes to committee members and management; must have good writing and organization skills

Safety Committee Charter

Ensure you document member eligibility requirements and terms of service in a safety committee charter. A safety committee charter states the overall purpose of your safety committee, the frequency of meetings, and member responsibilities and expectations.

Committee Meetings

Develop a safety committee schedule at the beginning of each year; determine when and where the committee will meet. This allows your organization to shift tasking and other work responsibilities for committee members, as needed. Refer to the SMCX One Pager, [“How to Run an Effective Safety Committees.”](#) for additional information.



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Progress Reviews

At least once a year, evaluate safety committee operations to see if it is effective. If you are not reaching set goals or objectives, you may have to make changes!

For additional information on the SMCX's services, please visit the SMCX-hosted website at: <https://www.smscx.org/>.