

How to Form a Safety Committee

Safety committees have a positive impact on organizations because they can help improve your safety management system and involve employees. Safety committees create a forum to discuss safety and health (S&H) concerns, inform and educate employees on S&H 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 committee members believe possible solutions will or will not work, which may trigger solutions not discussed before.

SAFETY COMMITTEE REQUIREMENTS



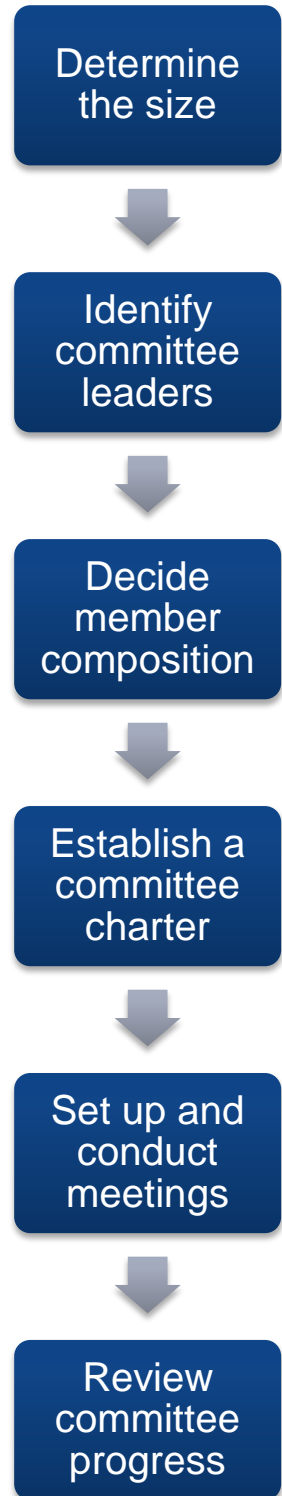
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[29 CFR 1960.40, Establishment committee duties](#), calls a safety committee an integral part of a safety and health program. This standard lays out some guidance regarding committee operation. Additionally, your Service or Agency may specifically require a safety committee at each organization and lay out specifics as the representation, participation, resources, and other committee requirements.

While not a requirement for Federal government organizations, many OSHA State-plans lay out committee requirements. You can consider incorporating some of the State requirements (e.g., minimum number of employee representatives, training) into your committee charter or overall committee process.

COMMITTEE SIZE

Look at the size of your organization to determine the optimum size of your committee. Larger organizations generally want larger safety committees. If you have strong levels of enthusiasm or a large committee and wish to make communication easier, consider establishing sub-committees or even committee teams. Sub-committees help keep the main committee size down while also providing valuable ways for others to participate in committee activities. Sub-committees or teams usually focus on specific committee activities or actions, such as a trend analysis sub-committee, for example.



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.

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

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION

Think about how to fill the general member positions on your safety committee. 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 representing employees and management. Consider allowing department heads to select their representative, or solicit volunteers from each department. Ensure a top manager is involved on the committee to support and facilitate actions. Consider keeping a few members on the committee permanently and rotating the others – this approach helps establish a little continuity!

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.



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COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Develop a safety committee schedule at the beginning of each year and determine when and where the committee will meet. This timing 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 Committee](#)," for additional information.

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/>.