

How to Run an Effective Safety Committee

Your organization established a safety committee – now it is time to assess its effectiveness! Safety committees can increase safety and health (S&H) awareness and encourage employee involvement when employed correctly. The following information provides tips to ensure your safety committee is beneficial to your safety management system (SMS) and operating effectively.

GOAL SETTING AND EXPECTATIONS

Review your safety committee charter to ensure it clearly states the purpose of the committee and member responsibilities. Consider establishing yearly committee-specific goals to monitor the progress, successes, or limitations of the committee. Make sure any committee-specific goals align with your organization's overarching S&H goals. Refer to the SMCX One Pager, "S&H Goals and Objectives" at <https://smcscx.org/Links> for additional information.

AGENDA ITEMS

Old Business

- Minutes from last meeting
- Status of assigned tasking
- Progress of established goals and objectives
- Target date revisions, if needed

Accidents

- Number and types of incidents reported since last meeting
- Significant cases, including corrective actions and suggestions
- Accident trends
- Effectiveness of implemented accident prevention efforts

Inspections

- Completion of safety inspections
- Significant findings
- Corrective actions
- Responsible person(s) and timeline

New Business

- Safety suggestions and improvements
- New safety procedures, equipment, and other items of interest
- New safety goals or objectives
- Upcoming S&H events and committee involvement

MEETING SCHEDULES

Develop and follow a meeting schedule to identify the frequency and location of committee meetings.

Communicate this information to management – they can adjust assigned tasking, if needed, so committee members are available and can get to the meetings on time.

Schedule committee meetings during paid working hours. Allocate the appropriate amount of time for employees to attend meetings and carry out assigned action items. A set schedule every month or quarter increases committee member attendance.

MEETING AGENDAS

Create an agenda before each safety committee meeting to identify the topics of discussion. It is a good idea to circulate the agenda to all committee members at least 48 hours before each meeting. Allow committee members to submit additional discussion items before each meeting. The format of the agenda and agenda items vary per organization. Make sure the items for discussion are relevant and add value. Consistent agendas help meetings run smoothly and stay on task.

Employees should work with their managers to identify alternate coworkers if they cannot attend a committee meeting.

Alternate employees should be from the same work area and level as the regular committee member.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Have hardcopies of the agenda available for committee members or project the agenda on a screen. Use a sign-in sheet or ask your committee secretary to capture committee member attendance.

Call the meeting to order. Introduce any guests, speakers, or agenda changes. Stick to the agenda – stay on track and finish in a timely manner. Discuss progress made on assigned action items from the previous meeting.

The committee Chairperson shows strong leadership by following the agenda, prohibiting discussions of non-S&H related issues, and keeping the meeting within the allotted time. They ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak during the meeting. A strong chairperson is also decisive and tasks committee members with action items and timelines. This process ensures your safety committee meets its purpose of improving your SMS.

Refrain from spending too much time scrutinizing every detail during accident reviews and postpone non-S&H-related discussions. Only discuss the information needed, including trends, to identify possible solutions and initiatives to solve a S&H problem or issue. Avoid excessive discussions on topics without concrete solutions for addressing S&H and your SMS. Table new agenda items committee members did not mention before the meeting until the next committee meeting, being sure to add the new item to the next agenda!

MEETING MINUTES

Use your notes to generate meeting minutes. List the committee members who did/did not attend. Include a summary of assigned tasking, responsible person(s), and established timelines.

Distribute meeting minutes to all committee members and managers within one (1) week of the meeting or by the timeframe established in your committee charter. Include managers, even those not on the committee, during distribution so they can proactively address S&H concerns! Consider publishing finalized meeting minutes in newsletters or on your organization's website to keep non-committee members informed of the committee's progress and involvement in the SMS.



Image courtesy of
Cloudinary.com

Action Items, Follow-Up, and Improvement

Following up on action items and evaluating improvements is critical to your committee's success. Ask responsible person(s) for periodic progress updates on committee assignments to see if they are on target for meeting established timelines. Assess implemented actions to make sure they are effective and working well.

Use trend information, employee feedback, and input to identify ways to improve your safety management system!

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

