

## Make sure your health and safety committee works

Effective management of safety and health protection improves employee morale and productivity, and significantly reduces workers' compensation costs and other less obvious costs of work-related injuries and illnesses.

Businesses are continuously making safety and health changes in the workplace, but when making those changes, successful employers and managers want to be sure they really work. What were the results? Was the change an improvement? Here are some examples of positive outcomes:

- Increased employee satisfaction
- Improved safe work practices
- Reduced absenteeism
- Reduced workers' compensation costs
- Increased productivity
- Reduced injury and illness

It is critical to the success of your program to collect accurate data on workplace safety and health. You should consider:

- Conditions before the change
- Information about how the change was put in place
- What happened once the change was implemented. Reports of changes will help if you want to make further changes because they tell you what happened. Data on the outcomes will tell you whether to consider doing it again.

## Additional Resource Information

The Workers' Compensation Education Unit offers *A Basic Guide to Developing and Implementing an Effective Safety Committee*, which makes recommendations on creating/improving a safety committee. To obtain a copy or to contact the the Education Unit:

Phone: (401) 462-8100-press 1.

Email: [dlt.wcedcunit@dlt.ri.gov](mailto:dlt.wcedcunit@dlt.ri.gov)

### US Department of Labor/OSHA

Phone: (401) 528-4669

Website: <https://www.OSHA.gov>

### RI Committee on Occupational Health and Safety

Phone: (401) 751-2015

Website: [www.coshnetwork.org/node/132](http://www.coshnetwork.org/node/132)



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## Workers' Compensation



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# Health and Safety Committees



## Why have a health and safety committee?

The **purpose** of a health and safety committee is to bring workers and management together in a non-adversarial and cooperative effort to promote safety and health in the workplace.

Creating an effective committee requires commitment and an organized joint effort. Consider any safety committee provisions mentioned in an existing union contract. The following elements will assist you in getting started on your way to a successful committee:

### ◆ Lay the groundwork

Develop a company policy statement and communicate it to all levels of your company, educating all employees on the committee's purpose - when it begins, why and what is expected of them.

### ◆ Develop safety committee membership

Determine how many employer and employee representatives are necessary. Identify and speak with potential members and consider:

- Dedication to accident/illness prevention
- Effective communication skills
- The ability to get the job done

### ◆ Identify your goals and objections and coordinate them with the elements of a successful committee

Consider the basic organization, project completion tracking and evaluation, training needs and schedules for all employees and reporting systems.

### ◆ Develop a safety policy statement

Outline the responsibilities of management, supervisors, the safety committee and company employees. Include a sample safety committee policy statement which may include:

- An introduction
- Purpose of the committee
- Organization
- Extent of authority
- Functions
- Recommendations
- Procedures
- Summary

### ◆ Conduct your committee meetings

Elect a chairperson and secretary, set meeting ground rules and logistics and follow the agenda planned for each meeting. Also, discuss the training needs of each committee member as they relate to compliance with all appropriate state and federal laws.

### ◆ Conduct follow-up activities

Did all participants understand their roles and arrive prepared for the meeting? Were the minutes posted timely? Any problems with logistics and with management participation and response?

## Examples of Committee Functions

◆ **Management Commitment** - establish procedures for review and response.

◆ **Meetings with employee involvement** - include input on agenda and include recommendations in the meeting minutes.

◆ **Hazard assessments** - establish procedures for inspections to be conducted quarterly. Distribute written hazard report to members and management. Review corrective measures for adequacy and timeliness.

◆ **Accident/Incident investigations** - develop a policy to determine accident/incident cause and the appropriate action needed to correct the hazard.

◆ **Safety and health training - What - When - How?** Consider new and transferred employees who may not have been trained in the duties and hazards of the new job and assess the efficacy of the training provided.

## Safety and Health Achievement Recognition Program (SHARP)

Sharp recognizes small employers who operate an exemplary safety and health management system. It is an achievement that singles out businesses and exempts them from programmed inspections by OSHA for each period that the SHARP certification is valid. Visit [www.osha.gov/dcsp/smallbusiness/sharp.html](http://www.osha.gov/dcsp/smallbusiness/sharp.html) for more information about this program.



***This brochure is not a complete summary of committee members' obligations, nor is the information provided intended to determine full compliance with state or federal law.***