

How to Form a Safety Committee

Safety committees are forums to discuss safety and health (S&H) concerns or new initiatives, inform and educate employees on S&H topics related to their work activities, ensure S&H regulation compliance, and give employees opportunities to present solutions and provide feedback on S&H issues that directly impact them. They improve your safety and occupational health management system, increase employee involvement in the S&H program, and positively impact your organization's safety culture by bringing management, employees, and S&H professionals together at one time. Use the tips in this one pager to form a safety committee at your organization.

SAFETY COMMITTEE REQUIREMENTS



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[29 CFR 1960.40, Establishment committee duties](#) calls a safety committee an “integral part of the S&H program, and helps ensure effective implementation of the program.” Review this standard for committee operation guidance. Additionally, your Service or Agency may require forming a safety committee at each organization. Review your Service or Agency regulations for specific safety committee requirements (e.g., representation, participation, and resources).

While not a requirement for Federal government organizations, many OSHA State-plans lay out committee requirements. 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

Review the size of your organization to determine the optimum size of your committee. Larger organizations will have bigger safety committees. Considering establishing sub-committees or even committee teams depending on the committee size, level of enthusiasm, and organizational tasks or events. Sub-committees provide valuable ways for others to participate in committee activities even if they cannot participate in the safety committee. Sub-committees or teams usually focus on specific committee activities or actions. For example, your organization may have a trend analysis sub-committee, S&H awards and recognition sub-committee, safety day/safety standdown sub-committee, or Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) annual self-evaluation sub-committee.

Determine
the size



Identify
committee
leaders



Decide
member
composition



Establish a
committee
charter



Set up and
conduct
meetings



Review
committee
progress

COMMITTEE LEADERS

Identify who will lead your safety committee. Safety committees generally have a Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary. Ask for volunteers or consider holding an election and using the majority to fill these positions. Management can also appoint safety committee leaders, if necessary.

Best Practice: Choose an employee to be the Chairperson, not a manager or S&H professional. This will encourage other employees to join the committee!

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

Vice Chairperson – Maintains committee continuity 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 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. Find a balance between the number of employee committee members and management committee members. Consider allowing department heads to select their representative or solicit volunteers from each department. Ensure a senior leader is involved on the committee to support and facilitate actions. Consider keeping a few members on the committee permanently (or for an established length of time) and rotating the others – this approach establishes continuity!

SAFETY COMMITTEE CHARTER

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, frequency of meetings, and member responsibilities and expectations.



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COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Develop a safety committee meeting schedule at the beginning of each year and determine when and where the committee will meet. This gives your organization time 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

Evaluate safety committee operations annually to see if it is operating effectively and as anticipated. You may have to make changes if you are not achieving your goals or objectives!

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