

How to Run an Effective Safety Committee

Your organization established a safety committee – now it is time to assess its effectiveness! Safety committees increase safety and health (S&H) awareness, encourage employee involvement in S&H, and promote the safety and occupational health management system (SOHMS). The following information provides tips to ensure your committee is operating effectively and benefiting your SOHMS.

GOAL SETTING AND EXPECTATIONS

Review your 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, "SMART Goals and Objectives" at [SMCX – Links and Resources \(https://smcx.org/Links\)](https://smcx.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/Mishaps

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

Inspections

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

New Business

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

MEETING SCHEDULES

Develop and follow a schedule with a regular frequency. Also, identify the location of committee meetings. A set schedule every month or quarter increases committee member attendance.

Communicate this information to management. They can adjust tasking, if needed, to ensure committee members can attend scheduled meetings.

Schedule committee meetings during paid working hours. Allocate the appropriate amount of time for employees to attend meetings and carry out assigned action items.

MEETING AGENDAS

Create an agenda before each committee meeting and include a list of topics for discussion. Agendas help meetings run smoothly and stay on task.

Distribute the agenda to all committee members at least 48 hours before each meeting. This gives committee members time to submit additional discussion topics, if necessary. The format of the agenda document and discussion items listed vary per organization. Make sure any topics are relevant, focus on S&H, and add value.

Employees should work with their managers and identify alternate coworkers who can attend a committee meeting in their place, if unavailable.

Alternate employees should be from the same work area and hold a similar job title as the regular committee member.

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Provide hardcopies of the agenda or project the agenda on a screen at the start of the meeting. Take meeting attendance using a sign-in sheet, meeting minutes, or other means.

The committee Chairperson leads the committee meeting. They follow the agenda, prohibit discussions of non-S&H related issues, keep the meeting within the allotted time, and ensure everyone has an opportunity to speak. An effective chairperson is decisive and delegates tasks to committee members with actions and timelines as needed. This process

ensures your committee meets its purpose of improving your SOHMS.

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

Refrain from scrutinizing every single detail during an incident review and postpone any non-S&H related discussions. Only discuss the information needed, including trends, that help identify possible solutions and initiatives to solve a S&H problem or issue. Avoid excessive discussions on topics without concrete solutions. Table new agenda items that were not mentioned before the meeting; however, add any new items to the next committee meeting agenda!

MEETING MINUTES

Use notes to generate meeting minutes. Attach the attendance roster or 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 organizational managers following the meeting. Including managers ensures they can proactively address S&H concerns and see how their employees are involved! 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 SOHMS.



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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 SOHMS!

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