

GUIDELINES FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SAFETY COMMITTEES

NOTE: The establishment of a Safety Committee along with its duties does not constitute a Safety/Loss Control program. It is but one part of an overall effort that is required to reduce accidents and protect your resources. Safety and Health Committee establishment should only be the first of approximately thirteen elements that you will need in order for you to be successful in your loss control effort.

Committees are a good place to start. A well organized and functioning safety committee can be a valuable asset to you if used properly. It can provide an avenue for developing and maintaining positive interest in employee health and safety.

To guarantee flexibility and efficiency, the composition of the committee should be tailored to the specific needs and structure of the district. The guidelines that follow can be adjusted for your district.

CONTENTS

Section I	
Introduction	3
Section II	
Structure of Committees	4
Section III	
Members Duties	7
Section IV	
Mission Statement	8
Section V	
Safety Committee Objectives	11
Section VI	
Organizing & Holding Safety Committee Meetings	14

SECTION I - INTRODUCTION

What kind of committee a district needs is dependent on a number of factors such as; size of the district (number of schools), staff available and willing to get involved in the effort, and the budget for the committee. These things also dictate the activities of the committee so these guidelines must be adapted by the individual members to fit their own circumstances.

It is universally accepted by the Safety Community that a Safety Committee should not be the main thrust of a Loss Control program. This committee should be considered an advisory one that assists the district administration in controlling its exposures to loss. The committee's role is like that of a staff function assisting the line management of the district to get the job done. This is not to give them an insignificant role, but to place them in a position where they can contribute and strengthen the existing management structure's efforts to control losses. They can help the management structure in many ways among them being:

- Identifying workplace hazards.
- Eliminating/reducing hazards.
- Helping to enforce safety rules.
- Measuring safety performance.
- Assisting the district administrator.
- Creating & maintaining active safety participation and awareness.
- Safety communication.
- Developing, administering, & monitoring the safety program.
- Reducing accident frequency & severity.
- Ensuring that the district is in compliance with OSHA/PEOSHA.
- Increasing employee awareness & general morale.
- Facilitating cooperation between district management & employees.
- Creating new safety policies & procedures.
- Demonstrating results to management & employees.

No matter what duties are assigned to the committee by the district, this committee will make a contribution by its mere presence because it shows a commitment to the control of accidents to all that work in the district.

SECTION II - STRUCTURE OF COMMITTEES

All aspects of committee structure are up to the individual school districts unless the Safety & Education Committee of the Fund establishes standards that must be met. There is no right way or wrong way to structure a committee. The district's size and its needs play a role in the structure of the committee.

The cardinal rule of good group work of any kind is to keep the group as small as possible, but large enough to accomplish the work set out for it. Keeping the size small allows every member to participate actively. A committee of five to seven (an odd number is recommended to ensure no tie votes) will generally be big enough to allow for the designation of particular duties to particular members without becoming too cumbersome to coordinate.

Committee size depends to some extent on the size of the school district, how many schools are in the district (physical locations) and the areas (teaching, administration, custodial, etc.) that are wanted to be present

Selecting and Rotating Members

The Risk Management Consultant and the Safety Coordinators are permanent members of the Safety Committee. All other members should have terms of two years. However, with the start-up of committees the first members should be given staggered terms so that the entire committee does not turn over all at once. Some members should be given 12-month terms, others 18 months and on, depending on how many members are selected in the beginning.

Selection of members other than the permanent members should be on the basis of;

- How much time does the person have?
- How interested is the person in safety?
- Does the person have the respect of colleagues?
- Will the person be unbiased in all committee work?

Here are some questions to consider regarding overall safety committee make-up when selecting members:

- Are all necessary departments represented?
- Are all shifts, locations, etc., represented?

Districts can use a table like to one that follows to determine the departments/functions that need to be represented to ensure that there is a committee member representing every necessary area.

DEPARTMENT/FUNCTION TO BE REPRESENTED	COMMITTEE MEMBERS
RISK MANAGEMENT	
SAFETY COORDINATOR	
INSTRUCTIONAL (FACULTY)	
BUILDINGS & GROUNDS	
MAINTENANCE	
CUSTODIAL	
TRANSPORTATION	
FOOD SERVICE	
SECURITY	

Individuals who should be included in information and committee meetings as needed on a consultation basis include the following:

Fund Commissioner (if not a normal member of the committee).

Occupational medicine people utilized by the district.

Outside safety specialists who are servicing the Fund.

Maintenance/physical plant department member.

Note: The OSHA reform proposals of the past few years suggest selection criteria depending on whether or not the workforce is unionized. The following table is the selection criteria that have been proposed by OSHA. They are not in effect and are not currently mandatory, but they can provide you with options for selecting members for the safety committee in a unionized or partially unionized workplace.

PROPOSED BY OSHA

In workplaces where:	Then:
None of the employer's employees are represented by an exclusive bargaining representative.	The employees shall select employee safety and health representatives.
The employer's employees are represented by a single exclusive bargaining representative.	The bargaining representative shall designate the employee safety and health representative.
Employer's employees are represented by more than one exclusive bargaining representative, or where some but not all of the employees are represented by an exclusive representative.	Each bargaining unit of represented employees (and any residual group of unrepresented employees) shall have a proportionate number of employees in each bargaining unit or group, except that such unit or group of 11 or more employees shall have at least one representative. The selection process shall be conducted in accordance to the above two parameters as applicable.

**SECTION III -
DUTIES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE SAFETY COMMITTEE**

Duties of the Risk Management Consultant

- Evaluate the district's exposures.
- Review the district's losses and present to the committee.
- Review the service provider's engineering reports with the committee.
- Act as liaison with the service provider's safety consultant and the committee when assistance, research, and materials are needed.
- Participate in the district inspections.
- Help guide the efforts of the safety committee.

Duties of the Safety Coordinator

- Direct the activities of the Safety Committee.
- Schedule and conduct monthly meetings.
- Appoint a secretary to record the activities of the committee.
- Supervise selection and distribution of safety educational and motivational literature or posters on bulletin boards.
- Determine need for authoritative safety references (codes, standards, etc.), procure them and place them in the hands of the persons who are to apply them.
- Review and critique accident investigation reports.
- Assist in the safety education of the committee members.
- Assign committee members special projects.
- Assist and advise in the formulation and presentation of safety training programs.
- Coordinate with service provider and other safety representatives servicing the district, accompanying them on their surveys, and make maximum utilization of their assistance.
- Participate in district inspections.

Duties of the Secretary

- Arrange the meeting place.
- Notify all members of the time and place of the meeting each month.
- Keep track of members, length of service, and reminds Safety Coordinator to have new members appointed.
- Takes minutes of the meetings.
- Disseminates the minutes to all concerned.
- Prepares the meeting agenda, and disseminate it to members at least three working days in advance of the meeting.
- Participates in district inspections.

Duties of Safety Committee Members

- Attend all meetings.
- Follow district safety rules when working.
- Always communicate district safety rules when observing them being broken.
- Show enthusiasm and a positive attitude about safety to fellow employees of the district.
- Take part in all safety committee activities and events.
- Bring to the committee any concerns that you have become aware of.
- Participates in district inspections.

SECTION IV - COMMITTEE MISSION STATEMENT

A safety committee operates best when it has a guiding policy statement, known as a mission statement, to outline its general objectives. This mission statement can then serve as a guide to the committee as it carries out its work, and as a communication to others inside and outside of the district, summarizing what the committee is about and what functions or activities it includes. This mission statement written by the safety committee should be one that complements the overall district mission statement and the mission statement of the School Alliance Insurance Fund.

At a minimum, a mission statement should address four key elements, to whatever degree the District wishes. Those four elements are:

PURPOSE - Why does the safety committee exist? What will be the hoped for end result from the committee's work and the other district resources that will be required?

VALUES - What does the Safety & Education Committee, the district and the district safety committee, believe in regarding employee health & safety, student and visitor safety, environmental safety and community safety? Are those values positive and appealing? How do these values support the overall district strategy? Does the mission statement communicate the support and commitment of the Fund Commissioner and the local school officials in each district?

STANDARDS & BEHAVIORS - What are the standards and behaviors that the committee members are expected to meet? Are the behavior standards clear enough that the safety committee members are easily able to judge whether they are demonstrating the desired behaviors and working appropriately toward committee goals?

STRATEGY - Does the strategy of the safety committee support the overall Fund and district strategy of maintaining or increasing standards of performance for all employees?

The committee mission statement can be very brief and have just a general description of the existence and purpose of the committee, or it can be a more detailed written policy or plan outlining many aspects of the committee work. Each district should decide which format would best suit its committee. If the district feels its committee would work best with just initial guidance and a lot of freedom, then a brief statement works best. If the district feels that the committee could use more guidance to lay out all of the ground rules and direct its actions, then a detailed statement is needed. Of course, a statement can fall anywhere in between.

MINIMUM MISSION STATEMENT (SAMPLE)

Our mission as the safety committee for our district is to identify the sources of actual or potential injury, illness or other loss to the employees, students and visitors of the district and the community in which we live. We believe that the safety and health of our fellow-employees is of the highest priority if our district is to achieve significant improvement of its operations and effective use of the resources available. As members of the safety committee we recognize that our fellow employees, the students and the public look to us for safety guidance. They will judge our commitment to safety excellence by our safety behavior. Therefore, we will demonstrate our commitment by exhibiting safe, positive safety behavior at work and off the job.

DETAILED MISSION STATEMENT (SAMPLE)

The safety committee of this district serves several purposes, including the following:

- Safeguarding the safety and health of all employees in this district;
- developing, administering, and monitoring the safety program;
- reducing the accident frequency and severity rates; and
- ensuring that the district is in compliance with OSHA/PEOSHA standards.

The safety committee will meet monthly and is composed of at least one of the following:

- Risk Management Consultant
- Safety Coordinator
- A member of the faculty
- Buildings and Grounds
- Custodial Services
 - Transportation (if in-house)
 - Food Service (if in-house)
 - Security

Optional members can include, but not be limited to, the Fund Commissioner, Principal, superintendent, or any member of the School Board who is interested.

To insure expertise from various line and staff functions, the following activities should be represented on the committee at any one time; ENGINEERING, MAINTENANCE, INSTRUCTION, ADMINISTRATION, TRANSPORTATION, FOOD SERVICE.

The committee should appoint a secretary assigned to it to take minutes, type and distribute them to all committee members, department heads, and other appropriate personnel. One copy will be posted in each department, remaining so posted until the next minutes are available for posting.

The committee will maintain a file of committee minutes for at least two years. These minutes should be made available to new department/office committee representatives as they are appointed.

The safety committee members will:

Review accidents and recommend appropriate action. Check on all activities to see that they are being carried out effectively. (Some examples are; monthly department inspections by supervisors, accident investigations by supervisors, meetings on safety between employees and their supervisors, prompt action on safety work). Assist all supervisors in their efforts to implement accident prevention. Review recommendations submitted, and take appropriate action. Promote and maintain interest in departmental safety activities, inspections, etc. Investigate accident reports as a basis for recommending means to prevent recurrence. Expand and review safety rules.

This safety committee should meet at least monthly.

Detailed mission statements can get even more detailed by including the duties of the various members. Some will even include sample agendas. It is our opinion that those duties should be treated separately and that the agenda should also be presented separately.

SECTION V - SETTING OBJECTIVES

A safety committee can set objectives at the same time it is writing its mission statement, because the objectives set can then be laid out in writing in the mission statement. Or, if a mission statement already exists in some districts, the committee can go back to that statement when needing guidance on what its month-to-month or year-to-year objectives should be.

ACHIEVING OBJECTIVES

The following steps will help the district safety committees to set and achieve its objectives:

1. Identify and prioritize goals and establish action plans to achieve each goal.
2. Include representation from all areas and levels in the district.
3. Clearly define the duties and responsibilities of the officers and general members of the committee.
4. Meet as required by the Fund Commissioner, at least quarterly, but monthly is recommended.
5. Document all committee meetings, including attendance, issues discussed, etc..
6. Make attendance required for all members.

On the following page you will find some examples of appropriate safety committee objectives.

SAFETY COMMITTEE OBJECTIVE FORM

GENERAL FUNCTIONS (GOALS)	DISTRICT COMMITTEE'S FUNCTION OBJECTIVES (SPECIFIC ACTIVITIES)
Identify workplace hazards	Identify workplace hazards through inspections of the schools, employee input, and other means
Eliminating/reducing hazards	Lower workers' compensation claims by 25%, reduce all accidents by 40%
Enforcing safety rules	Identify unsafe practices by observing employees at work, reviewing accident investigation reports and recommending corrective action
Measuring safety performance	etc.
Assisting the district administrator	etc.
Creating/maintaining active safety participation and awareness	
Safety communication	
Developing, administering, and monitoring the safety program	
Reducing accident frequency and severity	
Ensuring that the district is in compliance with OSHA/PEOSHA	
Increasing employee safety awareness and general morale	
Facilitating cooperation between the district's administration and employees	
Creating new safety policies and procedures	
Demonstrating results to district administration and employees	

The form lists specific tasks for the safety committee in the left-hand column while leaving space for the district's safety committee to develop its similar objective in the right-hand column space. This form should be used to set the district's safety committee's task objectives related to the specific task on the left. The first three are filled out here as examples.

Note: The Risk Management Consultant's role here is to help the safety committee set these objectives. A district and its safety committee may want to involve other interested parties from outside the committee in this objective setting process.

A safety committee should set up a schedule to achieve its objectives. It can follow a regular calendar year or it can use the school year (as shown below) which may be better for the district's purposes. Based on what objectives are set on the form on the previous page, the committee should place them on the calendar as to when they want to deal with the specific objectives. This schedule, of course, should be with the approval of the Fund Commissioner.

This sample is shown here to help the safety committee plan its activities.

SAMPLE CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	JANUARY	FEBRUARY
Review last year's: ACCIDENT RECORD	Address the following: ACCIDENT INVEST. REPORTS	Review: DISTRICT SAFETY PROGRAM	Review: BLOODBORNE PATHOGENS PROGRAM	Review: CONFINED SPACE ENTRY PROGRAM	Review: RIGHT TO KNOW TRAINING
MARCH	APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
Review: LOCK OUT/TAG OUT	Review: JOB HAZARD ANALYSIS	Review: INSPECTION PROCEDURE	Review: MAJOR SAFETY WORK PROJECTS	(OPEN)	(OPEN)

Annual planning for safety committee activities and objectives should be done whether or not the safety committee uses a calendar to accomplish such planning. Setting specific time lines will spur the committee to accomplish more, and to do so more efficiently and effectively.

SECTION VI - ORGANIZING AND HOLDING SAFETY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Making a safety meeting successful takes a team of people who actively exchange ideas to accomplish goals. To help insure success, the members should understand the purpose of the meeting. A lot can be accomplished when the members have a clear understanding of what needs to be done. Some common goals are to:

**Exchange information;
solve problems;
share concerns; and
make decisions.**

The members should be prepared prior to the meeting. In other words, they should do their homework. Members should express their feelings. Differences of opinion expose members to other points of view. Members should keep an open mind and listen when another member brings up an idea.

The frequency of meetings depends on the issues the committee must cover. Safety committees function best when they meet at least monthly. This allows them to keep continuity to their work and demands that committee actions or implementations be addressed in the intervening time period.

Meeting Agendas

Meeting agendas are essential to the smooth flow and efficiency of committee meetings. An agenda sent out in advance to all members allows members to think about the topics and prepare necessary information.

In addition, post the agenda on bulletin boards for all employees to read, perhaps a week in advance of the meeting. The date, time, and place of the meeting should be noted on the posted agenda. It should also solicit comments from employees and district management. These should be directed to one of the committee members, or the Safety Coordinator, in order to be properly reviewed by the committee. This is another means of communication with the employees of the district and lets them know that their input is wanted and appreciated. Feedback from the committee is essential if comments are to keep coming.

Sample agendas for safety committee meetings can be found on the following page. Although committee agendas may vary depending on district and the issues under consideration in those districts, these samples can assist districts in developing their own first agenda and then later meetings can reflect their desires

for meeting length and activities.

Sample Agenda One

1. Start of meeting (Start on time!)
2. Secretary notes members present
3. Introduction of any visitors
4. Minutes of previous meeting
5. Business from previous meeting
6. Review of recent accidents, incidents, near misses
7. Safety training or education
8. Inspection results and recommendations
9. New business (Topic of the month)
10. Conclusion

Sample Agenda Two

1. Call to order
2. Roll call of members
3. Introduction of visitors
4. Unfinished business
5. Review of accidents and injuries
6. Speakers on subject of accident prevention
7. Results of safety committee audits and statistics
8. Promoting safety campaigns
9. New business (Topic of the month)
10. Adjournment

Minutes Of The Meeting

A standard reporting format and distribution convention should be established. At a minimum, the minutes should include:

- Date of the meeting
- Members in attendance and absent
- Opening comments by chairperson
- Report summaries by each subcommittee or task group
- A review of accidents, property losses, and significant near-misses that have occurred since the last meeting, their causes, and an evaluation of the quality/thoroughness of the accident investigations that were completed
- Committee member assignments for the next meeting
- Closing comments
- Date, time, and place of the next meeting