



Safety Committee & Accident Investigation

Safety Committee Basics

Why this topic?

Many states, like Washington and Oregon, require employers to establish, manage, and involve employees in a Safety Committee when the employer has 10 or more employees. Safety Committees are intended for PREVENTION of occupational illnesses & injuries. Many employers also require committees to make neutral, objective findings of fact, based on accident investigations, to eliminate the causal factors of specific accidents after they have occurred. Presentation of this topic each year also enables companies to restate the rules, and operating principles of the committee, and to train new members. It is an excellent opportunity to ensure all participants have a voice in safety matters that affect their work.

Basic elements

The Safety Committee is made up of employee volunteers and managers that serve for 1-2 year terms. The employees should represent a cross-section of jobs at the facility. The goal of the Safety Committee is to identify hazards and work together to find the root cause of accidents and find ways to prevent a similar accident from happening.

The committee's main function is problem solving. The committee meets at regular times to discuss ways to prevent accidents. By conducting regular inspections and talking with other employees, the committee will identify potential hazards and make appropriate recommendations to prevent the identified hazard from becoming an accident.

The committee is required to remain neutral and objective when investigating an injury, illness or accident. Safety Committees look at accident prevention and ways to control the cause(s). They do not make management decisions regarding disciplinary issues.

Four Factors Causing Accidents

The National Safety Council (NSC) studied accidents to find the root cause of each incident. They found that there are only four causal factors that lead to accidents, they are:

- ▲ Work Environment
- ▲ Equipment
- ▲ Management Decisions
- ▲ Employee Decisions

Although that sounds simple, NSC found that in many cases more than one of these factors were present. Look at the chart on the back and discuss how the examples could happen in your shop!

The Committee

Meeting & Organization

- ▲ Meet at regular times each month
- ▲ Nominate a Chairperson and keep minutes of all discussed old and new business
- ▲ Ensure all views are heard
- ▲ Ensure recommendations are approved by management and implemented

Committee Neutrality Principles

- ▲ All reviews will relate to fact finding
- ▲ Focus on the preservation of life
- ▲ All matters of discipline will be referred to appropriate management
- ▲ Remain positive, look to solve the problem
- ▲ Make decisions by stating the problem and consider the alternatives and then by vote
- ▲ A tie will be broken by the vote of the Chairperson

Preventive Action

- ▲ Conduct safety walkarounds and review for preventive action
- ▲ Look for casual factors that could cause an accident
- ▲ Consider the alternatives for every preventive action situation
- ▲ Involve employees from other shifts for input

Accident Review

- ▲ Conduct/receive accident investigation results as soon as possible
- ▲ Verify received information with the parties involved
- ▲ Analyze for the presence of one or more of the "Four Factors"
- ▲ Consider corrective action
- ▲ Involve the injured person in the corrective action process and train as appropriate

WHAT 4 FACTORS CAUSE ACCIDENTS?

INCLUDING EXAMPLES OF EACH FACTOR

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>OIL or ICE on the floor that causes someone to slip & fall</p> <p>A HOT work environment that causes "Heat Stress"</p> <p>A COLD work environment that causes "Hypothermia"</p> <p>Lumber, wood dust, welding debris, metal parts on the floor that could cause injury</p> <p>Forklifts, or other obstacles in the way that prevent someone from seeing an exit, or other hazards</p> <p>Wood dust that builds up on mill surfaces that can ignite or fall on something</p> | <p>A person operating a forklift that had faulty brakes!</p> <p>A Hydraulic hose, under pressure, that popped loose and hit someone</p> <p>A piece of equipment that was supposed to be locked out, and a lock failed or was not closed</p> <p>Using non-sparking tools where there was an explosive vapor, like gasoline</p> <p>An electrical breaker panel that had uncovered, LIVE WIRES</p> <p>A ground plug that was cut off the electrical cord</p> |
| <p>A supervisor telling you to operate a fork truck that was OUT-OF-SERVICE without completed repairs.</p> <p>A supervisor telling you to get into a CONFINED SPACE without the space being tested and all conditions met</p> <p>A supervisor knowingly telling you to violate a safety regulation</p> <p>A supervisor who BYPASSED a safety procedure, like remove a lockout lock, that caused or could have caused injury to someone else</p> | <p>An employee who operated a fork truck that was OUT-OF-SERVICE without completed repairs</p> <p>An employee who got into a CONFINED SPACE without the space being tested and all conditions met</p> <p>An employee violating a safety regulation</p> <p>An employee who BYPASSED a safety procedure, like remove a lockout lock, that caused or could have caused injury to someone else</p> |

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| Work Environment | Equipment |
| Management Decisions | Employee Decisions |

EVERY ACCIDENT, no matter what, ALWAYS has 1 or more of these factors that existed and led to the accident.

QUIZ

True or False

1. A Safety Committee is made up of the entire workforce. T or F
2. There are 4 Factors that contribute to all accidents. T or F
3. The Safety Committee does not discipline employees. T or F
4. A manager can not be on the Safety Committee. T or F
5. Employees from all shifts should talk to a Safety Committee representative when there are safety concerns. T or F
6. Some states, like WA and OR, require a Safety Committee for employers with 10 or more employees. T or F

1.F, 2.T, 3.T, 4.F, 5.T, 6.T

SAFETY TRAINING SIGN-IN SHEET

Company Name: _____ Date: _____

Subject: Safety Committees and Accident Investigations

The following employees participated in this training.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____