



Safety Bulletin June 2024

Effective Use of A Safety Committee



Safety committees are most effective when they can identify issues and have the power and resources to solve them. When a safety committee is working as it should, employees and managers work together to address safety concerns before they cause injuries. Safety committees are part of the agencies' Illness Injury Prevention Program (IIPP) as required by Cal OSHA Title 8 of the California Code of Regulations (T8CCR) section 3203. This section also requires all employers to include in their safety program a system for communicating with employees. A

Safety Committee is an effective way to do that.

Benefits of a Safety Committee:

- Give employees an avenue to bring up safety concerns.
- Identify and correct hazards before they cause an injury.
- Involve management and employees in making safety part of your agency culture.
- Educate employees about risks.
- Boost morale when employees feel heard and see their concerns addressed.
- Reduce the risk of OSHA citations or other state penalties.

And of course, if the committee's work can prevent even one worker's injury, it is time well spent.

For a Safety Committee to be effective the committee should be following the mission as defined in the IIPP. If not defined in the IIPP here are some best practices to make the committee successful:

1. Define the role and responsibilities of your committee,

Develop a written mission statement. Clearly define the duties and responsibilities of the members. Identify and prioritize goals and establish action plans to achieve each goal.

2. Conduct regularly scheduled meeting

Use the time to discuss accident prevention methods, safety promotion, hazards noted on inspections and other pertinent topics. Review incidents that resulted in injury as well as the "near misses" that did not result in injury or illness.

3. Review accident investigation forms

Digging deep into the circumstances of accidents will help you prevent them in the future. All of the supervisors should use the same form to make it easier for the safety committee to review them. Each agency should develop an accident reporting form. All accidents should be thoroughly investigated.

4. Look for claim trends

Analyze patterns in your liability and Workers' Compensation claims. Consider three data points to start: body part, cause of injury and result of injury. Look for patterns by comparing them with other data, like occupation and accident location.

5. Conduct inspections

It is worthwhile developing a safety review and inspection process – like the walk-through checklist to identify operational hazards and observe employee work methods. Periodic inspections allow you to gauge the effectiveness of your efforts.

During a safety review you should look for: workplace environmental hazards, workstation set-up, work activity, modified work tasks and employees' awareness of conditions.

6. Eliminate hazards. Correct employees' unsafe behaviors.

To be effective, your inspections need follow-through. Unsafe conditions must be eliminated. Unsafe behaviors need to be corrected. Document your inspections, including appropriate follow-up procedures. Determine whether past recommendations have been addressed and implemented.

7. Promote safety

Keeping safety in front of the employees will remind them of the importance and will increase their awareness of hazards. Several types of safety promotions can work in any type of agency.

8. Take action

Following up and taking action are key. If someone is injured or nearly injured, take corrective action to prevent similar accidents from occurring again. Follow up to ensure these corrections are made quickly. This might require increased safety training, additional equipment, or safer work methods.

9. Recommend safety training

The purpose of training is to influence employees' behaviors. Safety orientation should be provided to all workers, especially new employees. It ensures that they are familiar with the hazards of the workplace and know how to complete their job duties safely.

It is a good idea to provide training regularly for workers of all experience levels and to have a training calendar to support those efforts.

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Safety Committees can also help with the following:

- Reviewing agency safety policies and practices.
- Doing regular safety walk-throughs of agency facility and noting any concerns.
- Encouraging employees to report safety hazards through their supervisor.
- Looking at past incidents and "near misses" for patterns and areas to focus on.
- Looking ahead to potential issues that could happen in the near-term.

ICRMA Training Update

University Session – June 27, Effective Use of Safety Committees and Near Misses.

Safety Resources are available at the ICRMA website. Or contact Robert May, Director of Loss Control, for assistance.