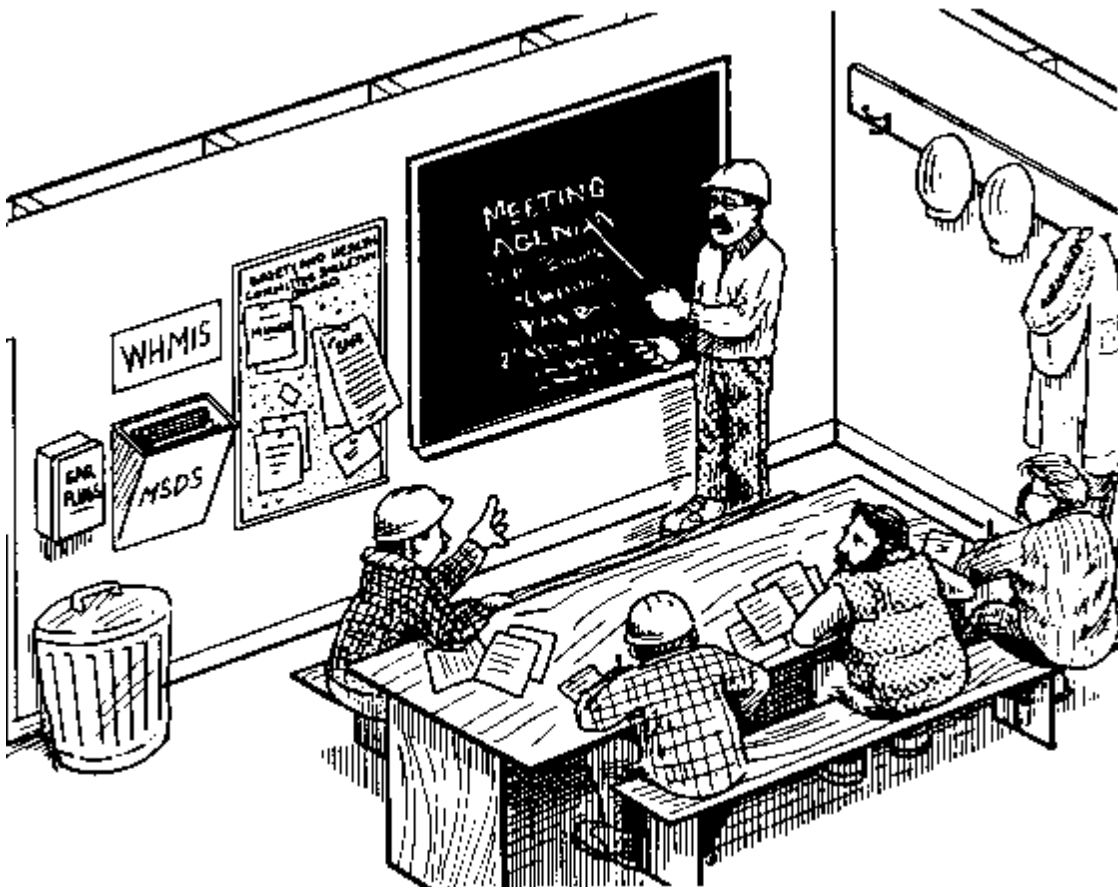


work **Safe!** Bulletin

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Construction Workplace Safety and Health Committees



The Workplace Safety and Health Act, W210, section 40(1), requires the employer or principal contractor to establish a safety and health committee at any of the following types of construction projects:

- (a) at a construction project where the total floor space exceeds 50,000 square feet
- (b) at a construction project where there is the construction of:
 - (i) a power generating station,
 - (ii) an oil refinery,
 - (iii) a chemical plant,
 - (iv) a steel mill,
 - (v) a pulp mill or paper mill or pulp and paper mill,
 - (vi) a brewery
 - (vii) a distillery
 - (viii) a compressor station
 - (ix) a mining installation above the surface of the ground
 - (x) a mineral refinery, or
 - (xi) a smelter; and
- (c) at any other individual workplace or classes of workplaces which the Minister may designate.

The principal contractor, the sub-contractors and the trade unions involved with the project shall determine who the committee members will be. Where no union exists, the principal contractor shall consult with the sub-contractors and the workers on the project. Then, the workers will elect their members on the committee.

The number of employer members shall not exceed the number of worker members on the committee. There shall be a quorum at the meetings where at least one half of the employer members and one half of the worker members are present.

The size of the safety and health committee shall be determined by the type and complexity of the workplace.

The committee should hold its first meeting within one week of the time when there are 15 or more workers on the project site.

The Committee at a construction project should meet regularly at intervals to be determined by the committee (but not less than once a month).

The Director of the Workplace Safety and Health Branch may require more frequent meetings of committees in specific workplaces, or classes of workplaces, by reason of particular hazards, complexity of operations, large numbers of workers employed, or similar conditions and situations.

The principal contractor shall post the names of the committee members, and all the minutes of the meetings, in a prominent location at the project site. Safety and health committee meeting minute forms are available free from the Branch. A copy of the completed minute form shall be sent to the Branch, after each meeting.

The specific objectives of a Safety and Health Committee, as stated in Section 2(c) in the Code of Practice include:

- i) assisting workers and the employer to identify, record, examine, evaluate and resolve safety and health concerns in the workplace
- ii) developing practical procedures and conditions to help achieve the highest possible degree of safety and health in the workplace, and
- iii) promoting education and training programs to develop detailed knowledge of safety and health concerns and responsibilities in each individual in the workplace.

Responsibilities of Committee Members

In Section 40(7) of The Act the duties of the committee include:

- a) the receipt, consideration and disposition of concerns and complaints respecting the safety and health of the workers
- b) participation in the identification of risks to the safety or health of workers or other persons, arising out of or in connection with activities in the workplace
- c) the development and promotion of measures to protect the safety, health and welfare of persons in the workplace, and checking the effectiveness of such measures
- d) co-operation with the occupational health service, if such a service has been established within the workplace
- e) co-operation with the safety and health officer who is exercising his duties under this Act
- f) the development and promotion of programs for education and information concerning safety and health in the workplace
- g) the maintenance of records in connection with the receipt and disposition of concerns and complaints and the attendance to other matters relating to the duties of the committee, and
- h) such other duties as may be specified in this Act or regulations.

Workers and employers share an equal concern in preventing accidents and ill health arising out of conditions at the workplace. Safety and Health Committees enhance the ability of workers and employers to resolve safety and health concerns reasonably and cooperatively.