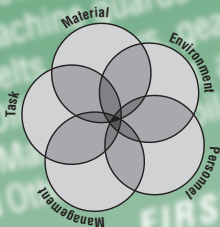


2nd Edition
(Revised)



Health and Safety

Committees Reference Guide



Canadian Centre for
Occupational Health and Safety

Summary

A health and safety committee is a joint worker-management team that assists the employer in creating and maintaining a safe workplace. In most Canadian jurisdictions a health and safety committee is mandatory. Even in workplaces where a committee is not required by the law, the benefits of a joint committee in addressing workplace health and safety needs are widely recognized. As a result, there is a trend toward establishing a committee on a voluntary basis even where one is not mandatory.

The health and safety committee is an advisory committee to ensure a healthy and safe workplace and not as a body responsible for enforcing legislation. The committee recommends actions to management who has the authority to make changes to meet goals and objectives. The following list illustrates some important activities of the committee :

- ✎ Hold regular meetings (at least as many meetings as required by the law)
- ✎ Identify workplace hazards and recommend remedial action(s)
- ✎ Respond to employee concerns regarding health and safety
- ✎ Assist management in the development and implementation of safe work practices and emergency procedures
- ✎ Participate in the development, implementation and monitoring of health and safety policies and programs
- ✎ Participate in workplace inspections
- ✎ Participate in accident/incident investigations
- ✎ Participate in resolving work refusals
- ✎ Promote health and safety education and training

This guide will assist committee members, managers, and health and safety professionals to establish an efficient and effectively functioning committee.

Table of Contents

<i>Section I</i>	Health and Safety Committee Basic Facts	
	1. What is a Health and Safety Committee? .	2
	2. Responsibilities of the Health and Safety Committee	3
<i>Section II</i>	Establishing a Health and Safety Committee	
	1. Who is Responsible for Establishing a Committee?	6
	2. Guidelines for Forming a Health and Safety Committee	14
<i>Section III</i>	Making the Committee Effective and Efficient	
	1. Demonstrating Management Commitment	22
	2. Defining Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures	24
	3. Establishing Procedures and Guidelines for Committee Meetings	30
	4. Measuring the Effectiveness and Efficiency of a Committee	38
<i>Section IV</i>	Recognizing Workplace Hazards	
	1. The Committee's Responsibilities	46
	2. Types of Hazards	46
	3. Methods of Hazard Recognition	60
	4. Hazard Reporting	63
	5. Workplace Inspections	64
<i>Section V</i>	Accident Investigation	
	1. What Types of Accidents are to be Investigated?	90
	2. Purpose of Accident Investigation	91
	3. The Accident Investigation Process	93
	4. Determining the Root Cause	97
	5. Recommendations	101
	6. The Written Report	102

Section VI **Controlling Workplace Hazards**

- 1. Setting Priorities 108
- 2. Hazard Control Strategies 109
- 3. Hazard Control Practices 111
- 4. Fire Prevention 115
- 5. First Aid 116
- 6. Employee Training 117
- 7. Exposure Limits 119

Section VII **Health and Safety Legislation**

- 1. Canadian OH&S Legislation 128
- 2. Workplace Hazardous Materials
Information System (WHMIS) 133
- 3. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) .. 140
- 4. US OH&S Legislation 143

Section VIII **Information Sources**

- 1. Canadian Government Departments
with Responsibility for Occupational
Health and Safety 148
- 2. US Federal Safety and Health Agencies . 153
- 3. State Occupational Safety and Health
Plans 157

Appendices

- A1. OSH Program Checklist 166
- A2. Selecting a Consultant 171
- A3. Abbreviations 174

HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE ESTABLISHMENT CRITERIA (as required by OH&S law)

	WHEN DO I NEED ONE?	COMMITTEE SIZE	REPRESENTATION
Canada: Federal	Mandatory—20 or more employees	At least 2	At least half to represent employees
British Columbia	Mandatory—when there are 20 or more employees or when "required by order"	Not less than 4	At least half must be worker representatives
Alberta	As directed by the Minister	At least 3 and not more than 12	At least two employees and one employer or at least half employees
Saskatchewan	Mandatory—when 10 employees or more	At least 2 and not more than 12	At least half to represent employees
Manitoba	Mandatory—20 or more employees or as designated by Lt Governor	At least 4 and not more than 12	At least half to represent employees

2. Defining Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures

State Purpose and Objectives

The purpose and objectives of the committee should be declared in the company's safety policy statement. As well, the committee may establish its own mission statement specifying its purpose and goals. It helps to define the committee's duties and responsibilities more specifically than those which are only broadly stated in the health and safety legislation.

The following are examples of committee objectives:

Create and **maintain** active interest in health and safety, and accident prevention.

Recommend effective action about accident causing conditions.

Promote awareness about health and safety issues.

Promote cooperation between management and employees in dealing with health and safety issues.

Help identify problems, evaluate risks, and recommend control measures.

Assist employer in implementation of control measures and evaluation of their effectiveness.

Cooperate with the employer in formulating policy and procedures.

Monitor and **improve** workplace health and safety.

The committee should have only a limited number of objectives in the policy statement; having too many objectives can lead to members having different priorities and spreading their energy in too many directions.

JOB SAFETY ANALYSIS (JSA) WORKSHEETIndustry: ConstructionOperation: Road repair Job: Pavement repair

Task	Who does it	Hazards	How to prevent injury/accident
Operating a jack-hammer	Joe Doe	- noise - vibration	- ear protectors - vibration-absorbing gloves

Applicable Legislation: OH&S Act and Regulations (refer to the act and regulations in your jurisdiction)

Date: _____

Developed by: _____

5. Workplace Inspections

Health and safety committees plan, conduct, report and monitor workplace inspections which are an important part of the overall occupational health and safety program.

Purpose

Inspections allow committee members to:

- ✎ hear the concerns of employees and supervisors
- ✎ gain further understanding of jobs and tasks
- ✎ identify existing and potential hazards
- ✎ determine underlying causes of hazards
- ✎ monitor hazard controls (personal protective equipment, engineering controls, policies, procedures)
- ✎ recommend corrective action

Aspects to Examine

Every inspection must examine the who, what, where, when and how. Pay particular attention to items most likely to develop into unsafe or unhealthy conditions because of stress, wear, impact, vibration, heat, corrosion, chemical reaction, or misuse. Inspect the entire workplace area each time including areas where there is less activity such as parking lots, rest areas, office storage areas, and locker rooms.

Different inspection teams can examine different aspects of the workplace. Teams can divide their areas of responsibility in two ways:

- ✎ by location (yard, warehouse, maintenance facility, office, production line), or
- ✎ by class of items (tools, buildings, utilities, materials, mobile equipment)

This division results in a separate inspection report from each team based on location or hazard category. Teams should alternate areas of responsibility from month to month.

3. Hazard Control Practices

Ventilation

The purpose of ventilation is to control air contaminants, temperature and humidity in the work environment and provide *fresh* air. Two kinds of ventilation are used:

Local Exhaust Ventilation

Local exhaust systems trap and remove contaminants near the generating source.

Local ventilation is used when :

- ✎ contaminants released are toxic,
- ✎ sources of contaminants are localized (released in a small area), and
- ✎ direct exposure of employees is possible.

Local exhaust ventilation is typically used for abrasive blasting, grinding, polishing, buffing, spray painting, open solvent baths, and toxic chemical storage areas.

General or Dilution Ventilation

The dilution ventilation removes the contaminated air and brings in outside air to dilute the concentration of airborne contaminants in the work environment.

Dilution ventilation is appropriate when:

- ✎ contaminants released are relatively non-toxic,
- ✎ quantity of contaminant is not excessive,
- ✎ contaminant is released at a substantial distance from the breathing zone of employees, and
- ✎ emission sources are widely distributed in the area.