

SASH

SCHOOL ACTION FOR
SAFETY AND HEALTH



Promoting Injury and Illness Prevention Programs for California's School Employees

The Commission on Health and Safety and Workers' Compensation
California Department of Industrial Relations

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEES




Roles of Health and Safety Committees

A health and safety committee can be an important way to improve conditions on the job. The committee provides a forum for employees and management to work together to solve health and safety problems. An effective committee can help prevent injury and illness on the job; increase awareness of health and safety issues among employees, supervisors, and managers; and develop strategies to make the school environment safe and healthy.

Hazard Identification, Evaluation, and Control

- Review injury data, accident reports, and workers' compensation records.
- Conduct regular walkaround inspections to identify potential health and safety hazards.
- Conduct safety and health job analyses to identify problems.
- Design and conduct health and safety surveys.



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- Collect and review Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs).
 - Propose and evaluate various ways to improve safety conditions.
 - Get recommendations acted upon.
 - Review and evaluate corrective actions taken by management.
 - Temporarily “shut down” unsafe operations until a hazard is corrected.
 - Collect and review information on new chemicals, procedures, and processes before they are introduced.
 - Participate in studies conducted by outside researchers or consultants.
 - Establish or improve procedures for employees to report safety hazards or suggest improvements without fear of reprisal.

Information and Education

- Respond to concerns raised by employees and supervisors.
- Recommend training for new employees and supervisors, and refresher training on health and safety practices, procedures and emergency response.
- Plan and organize training programs.
- Establish or improve procedures for employees to report health symptoms without fear of reprisal.
- Keep employees and supervisors informed about the committee’s activities.



Making Health and Safety Committees Effective

Committee Membership and Procedures

- Make sure there is representation of both employees and supervisors.
- Have employees or their union pick their own representatives.
- Make sure there are administrators on the committee who have the authority to make decisions.
- Choose members who will be active and productive team players. Both management and employee representatives should be fully committed to the committee's work.
- Make sure management and employee representatives share responsibility for setting agendas and goals, chairing meetings, and taking on specific tasks.
- Agree on guidelines for effective communication and mutual respect among committee members.
- Establish procedures for employees to report hazards or suggest safety improvements to the committee without fear of reprisal.





Resources Needed

- Secure support from all levels of the organization to commit adequate time and resources to make the committee successful.
- Make sure all members receive enough training to be effective on the committee.
- Provide adequate paid work time for members to attend meetings and carry out their committee responsibilities.
- Ensure that committee members have access to the worksite and to all relevant information necessary to carry out their duties.
- Use outside experts, as needed.

Planning the Meeting

- Plan the meeting with management and employee representatives, including prioritizing the topics that should be covered and when and where the meeting will be held.
- Send the agenda and other relevant committee information to committee members and other interested parties at least five days prior to the meeting.
- Review minutes from the last meeting and check on the status of any pending actions.
- Review any concerns and suggestions from employees or supervisors so they can be brought to the committee.





Running a Productive Meeting

- Start on time.
- Establish the ground rules:
 - Ensure there is agreement on process. For example, will disagreements be resolved by formal votes?
 - Maintain open and balanced discussion, and make sure everyone has an equal chance to speak.
 - Define and agree upon roles and responsibilities.
 - Keep the focus on safety and health issues. Do not allow personal attacks.
- Seek approval of the agenda by participants. Revise if needed.
- Introduce new members and guests.
- Set clear time limits for discussion of agenda items.
- Review action items from the previous meeting.
- Try to make progress on smaller steps while working toward larger objectives.
- Keep good minutes of the meeting to document decisions made.
- Establish action items and responsibilities: Who, what, and when?
- Set the date, time, and place of the next meeting, and develop a preliminary agenda.
- Evaluate the meeting. Were expectations met? Was the agenda followed? Were problems resolved? Can future meetings be improved?
- Close the meeting on time and on a positive note.

Meeting Follow-up

- Prepare the meeting minutes.
- Distribute and/or post the minutes.
- Follow up on action items and publicize your successes.

Adapted from materials developed for The Worker Occupational Safety and Health Training and Education Program (WOSHTEP).