



Title: **Employee Involvement Methods**

Purpose: Describe procedures for involving employees in the Safety and Health programs, projects, and activities.

Introduction: There must be a developed means for employees to participate in identifying and addressing workplace hazards, as well as reviewing departmental Safety and Health programs. This input is essential in creating a culture where employees take an active role in safety, prevention and control efforts. Employee involvement methods become an invaluable vehicle where employees can communicate the importance of safety to their coworkers. Employee involvement can be accomplished through a variety of methods, but safety committees are the most common, due to their organized structure and effectiveness. However, safety committees are not the only way to satisfy the employee involvement methods requirement. There are other methods that can be instituted, as described in this document.

## **A. Methods of Involvement**

Each department is responsible for developing and instituting a process for including employees in their department's safety program. This involvement may consist of labor/management health and safety committees, involvement of employees in safety surveys and inspections, operational process review committees, involvement in workplace environmental monitoring, or other practices. Employee involvement methods should provide opportunities for employees to make significant contributions to the department's safety and health program.

## **B. Safety Committees**

### **1. Policy**

Safety committees can play a vital role in a department's safety management effort. Managers and supervisors can gain valuable assistance and insight in their areas of responsibility by a joint effort with their committee members. Employee membership on

a safety committee is on a voluntary basis. All managers, supervisors and employees are to fully support the efforts of the safety committee.

## **2. Goals of the Safety Committee**

Departments must define the scope and purpose of their safety committee(s). Overall goals and objectives should also be established. The following are examples:

- Maintain a safe workplace by raising awareness of unsafe work practices.
- Involve members in safety management to proactively evaluate worksites and operations to reduce exposures to injury and illness.
- Increase employee involvement and participation in safety programs.
- Assist in the development and implementation of safety training.

The safety committee should set specific measurable goals and objectives that are reviewed periodically and revised annually. These goals may pertain to the number of safety surveys or inspections performed, programs reviewed and evaluated, procedures developed or revised, safety and health issues addressed, injury reduction initiatives, etc.

## **3. Safety Committee Formation**

Each safety committee shall be composed of a minimum of two (2) employer representatives and a minimum of two (2) employee representatives. The committee should be large enough to ensure that all major departmental work activities/groups are represented, but have the most efficient number of members to accomplish committee goals. Larger departments may additionally benefit from safety subcommittees at the division level, where the various units and operations within the division are represented.

Each department must evaluate their organizational structure and evaluate job activities to determine appropriate employee representation on the safety committee. Once identification of all work areas to be represented is accomplished, ensure employees who work in those areas are represented. Some departments have multiple divisions, diverse job tasks, and exposure to hazards, which should be represented on the safety committee. For example, the Department of Public Property is comprised of multiple Divisions: Communications, Facilities Management & General Support. Each of these Divisions and some of their subdivisions are represented by employees on the safety committee.

In some cases, a larger department (>300 employees) with high hazard tasks may need to have more than one safety committee. A safety committee can be formed to provide guidance to the entire department with a subcommittee focused on a Division or facility that has significant or unique issues. For example, the Department of Human Services (DHS) has a departmental safety committee with members representing the employees throughout their Divisions. Additionally, DHS has a plan for a safety subcommittee at its juvenile detention center called the Youth Study Center (YSC) to address the hazards and

issues relevant to that employee population. Different groups within YSC may then be represented on that subcommittee, such as resident staff counselors, maintenance, custodial, administration, security, intake unit, etc. The chairperson of the subcommittee would also be a member of DHS's main safety committee or at least report back to that committee.

An equal representation of supervisors/managers and employees should be the goal for safety committee membership. (50% management and 50% labor is ideal). If there is unequal representation, it must be weighted more towards labor. Employee membership on the committee is voluntary and will meet any existing labor agreements. In seeking volunteers from union represented employees, departments need to solicit union involvement via collaboration with relevant union representatives.

Each department is required to submit a proposal for new safety committees to Risk Management for approval. Information provided to Risk Management must include the following:

- The number of safety committees planned to be active within the department.
- Contact information for the chairperson and co-chairperson of each safety committee.
- The structure of the safety committee is to ensure that all divisions and major operations of the department are represented. See attached Safety Committee Structure Form (Appendix 1).
- A current roster of proposed members of the safety committee. See attached Safety Committee Membership Roster (Appendix 2).
- A list of all safety committee subcommittees active within the department; including contact information for the chairperson and co-chairperson.
- Information on selection of safety committee members. Include communication with Union Representatives and solicitation of volunteers from labor and management. (Attach supporting documentation if applicable.)
- The meeting schedule for the safety committee and subcommittees

Existing safety committees must provide Risk Management with information on the current structure of their committee and a complete roster of members for review and approval. Please see attached forms: Safety Committee Structure Form (Appendix 1) / Safety Committee Membership Roster (Appendix 2).

Each safety committee must create committee by-laws or rules for its operating procedures, which outline the committee's role and duties as well as their membership requirements. The committee should determine requirements for rotation of members, percentage of standing members and availability of training for new members. Volunteer committee membership should rotate periodically, but all members must serve at least one year. The purpose of the standing membership is to ensure continuity, lend experience and provide a resource for the committee. Each committee must have a chairperson, but some departments may benefit from one or more co-chairpersons. The committee chairperson and co-chairperson(s) can be elected from the committee

membership or designated by the department's administration. The committee chairperson and co-chairperson(s) will conduct the meetings, develop agendas, and assure that minutes are maintained.

#### **4. Committee Operation**

The safety committee will:

- Meet regularly, at least on a monthly basis for large departments and quarterly at a minimum for smaller departments.
- Utilize the PENNSAFE Workplace Safety Committee Technical Assistance Manual.
- Comply with the Bureau of Workers Compensation Health and Safety requirements.
- Ensure that a quorum of members must attend each meeting.
- Rotate membership based on committee by-laws and policies. Furthermore, it is encouraged that only a percentage be rotated at any one time.
- Develop specific, attainable and measurable goals.
- Discuss accident prevention methods.
- Review previous accident and injury information, including tracking trends.
- Conduct safety inspections of facilities and/or operations; if applicable.
- Review and recommend changes to safety procedures and policies as needed focusing on problem solving.

#### **5. Duties and Responsibilities**

##### *Chairperson/Co-Chairperson(s)*

- Keep Risk Management Division informed of safety committee meetings, activities, procedures, training needs, etc.
- Schedule and lead committee meetings. This includes keeping minutes of meetings, as well as documentation of other committee activities.
- Establish rules of order and appropriate discussion topics with the assistance of all committee members. Keep the focus on safety and health issues and the plan to achieve the goals set forth by the committee.

- Seek suggestions for the agenda items from participants. Review, revise and distribute at or prior to the meetings.
- Report committee activities to appropriate Administration/Management.
- Communicate committee activities to all employees throughout the department.
- The co-chairperson is required to assist the chairperson in these duties.

### ***Safety Committee Members***

Safety committee members will have the following responsibilities:

- Make every attempt to attend each scheduled meeting.
- Evaluate current employer accident and illness prevention programs.
- Establish procedures for conducting and documenting the findings of periodic workplace inspections and make recommendations to correct hazards.
- Review recent accidents/incidents resulting in injuries, illnesses or complaints.
- Conduct follow-up evaluations on the effectiveness of new safety equipment or health and safety procedures.
- Communicate safety committee actions and accomplishments to those within the department.
- Serve on the safety committee for at least one year.

### ***Department Administration***

- Support the safety and health committee(s) program.
- Provide training for the safety and health committee(s).
- Evaluate the focus and effectiveness of the department's safety and health committee(s).

### ***Risk Management***

- Provide training and guidance in the formation and development of departmental safety and health committees.
- Make available incident and injury data to committees through each respective department Safety and Health Officer/Coordinator.
- Develop and have available safety discussion topics.

- Establish minimum requirements for safety and health committees pertaining to:
  - Committee structure and employer/employee participation.
  - Membership training and development.
  - Scope, Purpose, Goals and Objectives.
  - Records retention.

## **6. Records**

The departmental Safety Office shall maintain records of all safety committee meeting minutes, training, surveys, reports and actions for a minimum of five (5) years. Additionally, records of member rotation must be kept for five (5) years.

## **7. Training**

The following training modules are required for all active safety committee members:

- Safety Committee Operations
- Hazard Identification and Control
- Accident/Incident Investigation

The following training is required for all chairpersons, co-chairpersons and Safety Officers:

- Safety Committee Facilitator/Leadership Training

Annual training is required for all safety committee members. Topics will be determined between the Safety Officer/Coordinator, the Risk Management Division and the safety committee.

## **C. Alternative Employee Involvement Methods**

### **1. Policy**

There are a number of alternatives or supplements to safety committee participation. Many of these are normal activities of safety committees while others are not. The alternative methods of employee involvement include (but are not limited to):

- Jobsite risk reviews / safety and health inspections / surveys.
- Operational Process Reviews of new and existing work processes to identify / address / improve safety-related issues.
- Involvement in workplace personnel and environmental sampling/monitoring for hazardous exposures (chemical, biological, radiological, etc.).

- Periodic safety meetings or meetings with safety as a discussion section, which identifies and addresses safety issues.
- Participating in safety and health procedure development/reviewing/revising.
- Developing/receiving/presenting safety and health training.
- Developing/reviewing/revising safe work practices.
- Participating in accident/incident investigation.

## **2. Methods**

Employee involvement methods should provide opportunities for employees to make significant contributions to the department's safety and health program. Each department is responsible for developing and instituting a process for including employees in the department's safety program. The process must clearly define in writing:

- The alternative method for employee involvement that will be used. This includes a full description of the method, including purpose and operation.
- A policy statement for the function of this committee, group, or set of tasks.
- A list of personnel who perform the duties. Include information of how there will be a good representation from all employees and operations of the department.
- How the participants will be selected. Include information on communication with relevant union representatives on selection of employees for involvement in safety and health activities, tasks, etc.
- A rotation schedule for participants in the program.
- A schedule of employee involvement activities.
- Selection of topics, issues, facilities, operations, and equipment.
- A list of goals and objectives to be accomplished by the department. Track goals for progress and completion.

## **3. Duties and Responsibilities**

Development and implementation of alternative employee involvement methods are the responsibility of the department's Safety Officer/Coordinator. Risk Management must be consulted when determining the methods of involvement and provided with quarterly updates. When developing the methods, the Safety Officer must clearly define the following in writing:

- Methods of communication of activities, status of projects and results of tasks to all employees.
- Processes developed to ensure that issues and recommendations are addressed in a timely manner.

- A method for issuing recommendations to department Management.
- The tools, forms, or checklists that will be developed and utilized to perform the tasks/projects.
- What resources will be available to those participants involved.

#### **4. Records**

The departmental Safety Office must maintain records of all employee involvement methods for a period of five (5) years. The types of records required are the following:

- Documentation of tasks including: agendas, meeting minutes, action item lists, work order requests, reports, training records, completed surveys/inspections and checklists.

#### **5. Training**

The department Safety Officer/Coordinator has a responsibility to provide training to those employees involved in the safety and health program. Training must be determined by the method of employee involvement implemented within the department.