



Loss Control Insight

Functions/Duties of Safety Committees

Specific functions of the safety committee are to:

1. Detect hazards;
2. Analyze and solve problems; and
3. Assist in the management of safety.

Detecting hazards requires a routine walk-through of the workplace and discussions with workers, looking for unsafe work practices, hazardous conditions and risky behaviors. The committee will be responsible for establishing appropriate procedures for periodic workplace inspections.

The Workplace Safety Committee should choose members to serve as an inspection team; both management and employees serve on the team. If inspections are used by management as a measurement tool, it will help the first line supervisor ensure that safety inspections are a priority and that the recommendations are properly acted upon.

Inspection Team

- Develop a workplace inspection checklist.
- Before each new inspection, study previous inspection reports and recommendations.
- Inspections should be completed quarterly.
- Inspection team members should always wear required personal protective equipment.
- During the inspection, the team should stay together as a group to avoid disrupting operations.
- Someone on the inspection team should act as the team secretary, taking notes to fill out the inspection report.
- Inspection team members should communicate with workers to show that they care about their safety and work environment.
- Inspection team members should develop good listening skills.
- Inspection team members should promote safety and productivity.
- At the end of an inspection, a detailed report should be compiled for management and the Workplace Safety Committee.
- Once the report is agreed to by the committee members, a copy should be posted for employee observation.
- Items that need attention or correction should be distributed to the appropriate supervisor who will be responsible for making the corrections.

- Management and **ALL** supervisors should receive a copy of the detailed inspection report.
- Establish procedures to make sure corrective actions are taken.

Analyzing and solving problems means reviewing accident records and finding trends in the data that pinpoint hazards. Proper analysis relies on thorough accident investigation and a careful review of incidents resulting in work-related deaths, injuries, illnesses and complaints.

The task of assisting with the management of safety means following through with a corrective action once the cause has been identified. Behaviors can be managed and changed. Leadership, strong communication and motivational skills are required to break old habits and promote new ones.

The specific duties of the safety committee include:

1. Facilitate cooperation between an employer and employees in initiating, developing, carrying out and monitoring measures designed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of employees;
2. Assist in the resolution of occupational health and safety issues at the workplace;
3. Assist in the formulation and dissemination (in appropriate languages) of policies, practices and procedures that promote health and safety at the workplace;
4. Assist with the development of accident and investigative reporting procedures; and
5. Advise the employer on any proposed or actual changes to health and safety policies, practices and procedures at the workplace.

Committees may also carry out additional duties specific to their own organizations.