

## SAFETY COMMITTEE EFFECTIVENESS ASSESSMENT

Frequently safety committees ask themselves, “How do we know if we are doing what we are supposed to be doing?” and “How do we keep the spark in the committee and find new material or activities to keep everyone’s interest. Safety committees should constantly improve and evolve, however it is also necessary to go back to basics and it is critical for any group process to evaluate its performance periodically using objective criteria.

To recharge your committee, try some of these suggestions and assessment questions to gauge the overall performance of your safety committee.

- Does management support the committee’s purpose and mission?
- Does the committee represent both staff and management from various job responsibilities and departments?
- The committee should meet monthly.
- Attendance by members of the committee should be consistent and expected.
- The committee should identify incident trends throughout the organization for at least the last two years, looking for annual trends.
- Investigation reports should be used not only for accidents but incidents that did not result in bodily injury or property damage, but potentially could.
- Does the incident reporting process facilitate input from staff regarding preventative measures for incidents reported?
- After the Committee goes through the process and effort to identify safety problems, make sure they are apprised of the outcome of their work.
- Does the safety committee have any decision-making authority?
- The committee may address the following organizational issues in the area of, but not limited to:
  - Life Safety and Inspection of the Physical Plant
  - Transportation and Driver Safety
  - Employee Injuries
  - Trends of Adverse Incidences
  - Training
- Does the committee influence safety related training programs?
- Does the committee coordinate health and safety inspections?
- Caution Safety Committee members to communicate they are interested in knowing about work place hazards that could cause injury to employees, as opposed to a wish list for new furniture or equipment.
- Make sure your inspection checklists and accident investigation forms are still serving their purposes or do they need to be updated?
- The Safety Committee should pay special attention when there is new construction, alterations, subcontractors on premises, new equipment purchased, or when a new OSHA standard is coming out. All these items change the routine procedure of your operation and should be looked at to be sure all safety protocol is being met.
- How does the committee disseminate safety issues and concerns to employees?
- Is there a process that facilitates input from other staff?

- Be creative - some Committees have put a safety message on the outside of the pay envelopes, others have suggestion boxes that have yielded important information from employees who may have been too shy or embarrassed to come forward directly.
- Infuse a safety message in your regular staff training.
- Does the committee have objective and measurable outcome criteria to evaluate its performance?
- Expand the Committees duties to include other areas of exposure i.e. Automobile, Liability, and Property. These areas often interact with Workers Compensation issues.
- Separate claim data by department or job description to identify problem areas. This may help isolate specific functions where you need to concentrate your efforts in retraining. It may also point to areas where you may want to “transfer the risk” such as snow shoveling.
- Keep some experienced members on the Committee for continuity, but also bring in new blood for fresh ideas and enthusiasm. Rotate previous members back on in future years, especially in smaller organizations.
- Make sure membership on the Safety Committee is a reward, not a punishment. The person who reviews the employee’s performance for salary increase should be aware of the employees’ participation in the Safety Committee. The efforts of the Safety Committee go directly to the benefit of the Organizations bottom line, by reducing both direct costs (such as Workers Compensation experience modification) and indirect costs (such as cost of hiring temp staff and retraining).
- Try to provide a treat at the monthly meetings, to show appreciation of their time and commitment. Coffee, bagels, donuts, pizza, or something more healthy like yogurt or a vegetable tray.
- Ask Committee Members to “talk up” safety issues with their coworkers along with setting a good example and maintaining a positive attitude.
- Have a member of the Committee visit injured employees in the hospital or at home along with the employees’ supervisor. The Committee could also volunteer to help the injured employee by doing some grocery shopping or dropping off a covered dish while the employee is recuperating.
- A message from the Executive Director, in the Company Newsletter or Special Bulletin, highlighting the successes of the Safety Committee can go a long way to boost moral.
- Use the Internet for finding numerous safety sites, where you can get safety programs, clip art, OSHA updates, etc.
- Use the Lehr Companies video library and resource material for new safety topics.

These items can be very useful to do a quick assessment of your safety committee.