

How to energize your safety committee

Active, engaged safety committees create positive impacts for every workplace. Here are 10 ways to energize your safety committee and achieve outstanding results:

Combine safety and wellness committees.

If you have one committee for safety and one for wellness, think about combining them to work on employee safety and health efforts together. The new committee can be energized by learning more about how safety and health are connected. Learn how at saif.com/twh.

Create a vision statement. Keep it short and inspiring, like: "We want every employee to go home safely every day." You could have employees sign it to show their commitment to safety and post it in a common area so everyone can see it. The vision statement

should be talked about at all your meetings to connect it to the work you do every day. For more information see our Vision handout (saif.com/leadershipvision).

Know your purpose. Write a safety committee charter and bylaws so everyone knows the specific roles and responsibilities of the safety committee members. Emphasize that members can make a difference by preventing injuries, improving profitability, and ensuring legal compliance. Read these sample bylaws (saif.com/safetycommitteebylaws).

Recruit safety champions. Find employees with energy and enthusiasm for workplace safety and ask what they need to stay engaged. Then, build your team.

What happens when you value safety:

- Decreases workplaces hazards
- Increases safe work practices
- Avoids pain and suffering
- Grows morale
- Controls costs



Building your team

- **Pick chairperson first** | Select a leader who inspires others and is passionate about safety.
- **Make it exclusive** | Only safety committee members get a certain t-shirt, for example.
- **Create an application process** | Require employees to apply to be on the safety committee and talk about what they plan to accomplish.
- **Recognize what the safety committee is doing** | This should be included in newsletters, team meetings, everywhere there is a platform.
- **Limit the number of committee members** | That makes it more exclusive. If people can't be on something, they want to be on it.
- **Promote the benefits of being on the safety committee** | Create a list of benefits – learning leadership skills, having a voice in safety decisions, making a difference in the lives of co-workers.
- **Keep a balance of employees and management** | Rotate members on and off to bring in fresh ideas.

Get support from senior management. Ask top management to write and sign a safety policy statement and invite them to attend meetings. Supervisors should be empowered by the executive level to support all safety efforts using both financial and management resources.

Set meaningful goals. Complete an annual assessment to help you see how your safety committee is doing (saif.com/safetyselfassessment). Use the results to set proactive measures to assess future safety performance, such as the number of safety inspections, employees trained, and near misses reported (saif.com/programselfassessment). Focus on successes but look for ways to improve.

Share success stories. Talk about near misses or proactive measures that prevented an injury. Discuss strategies to promote worker health, such as access to walking paths and nutritious food. Encourage open communication and problem solving in the committee with a focus on the solution's positive results.

Become a high-performing safety team. When you do these things well, good things happen.

- **Plan** | Give regular safety committee meetings as much importance as other work activities.
- **Prepare** | Publish your safety committee agenda in advance and post it where it can be seen by all employees. Make it specific, timely, and relevant, and stick to the agenda in meetings.

- **Perform** | Have meaningful discussions, action items, and follow-up at every meeting.
- **Praise** | Make posters, t-shirts, hats, or badges to identify team members so everyone knows who's on the safety committee. Nominate employees who made a positive contribution as "safety stars."

Involve team members in meaningful activities.

The safety committee can do more than just meet to talk about needed repairs and workplace accidents; it can proactively address safety and health issues with some key activities, like these:

- Do a job hazard analysis.
- Conduct an on-site incident analysis.
- Help with annual program review and revision to set future goals.
- Develop safe operating procedures.
- Provide safety orientations.
- Sponsor an ergo team.
- Hold a healthy recipe contest or fitness challenge.
- Create recommendations that promote worker health.

Provide training and enrichment. Invite outside speakers on safety and health topics and invite everyone to attend. Support attendance at OSHA classes and American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) meetings. Encourage fun and creative ways to learn about safety and health; the best ideas come from the employees.

