



How To Boost The Effectiveness Of Your Safety Committee

The core of Nirapon's Safety Management Program is education and training.

This article is part of Nirapon's Learning Resource Center.

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Many of you already have established Safety Committees within your organization. "Safety is no accident" reminds us that everyone must work hard to *maintain* workplace safety. Under the current regulations, some factories are not legally required to have a safety committee. Have you ever considered that maybe looking at it that way is putting your factory at a disadvantage? No one has said you can't have a safety committee.

Are you missing a key part of safety management by not having a safety committee; and do you think telling your business partners that you don't require a safety committee inspires customer confidence and attracts more business?

If you are wondering how to improve or boost the engagement of your safety committee, increase safety awareness, reduce risk and inspire customer confidence, then we would suggest following these simple guidelines.

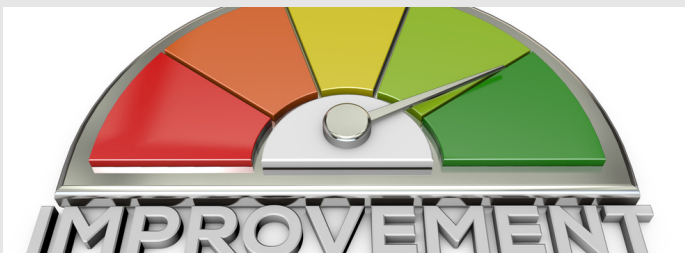
Your safety committee should consist of representatives from management and the workforce. Together this committee works to identify and solve safety concerns *before* injuries occur. Think of it this way, as an employer or manager, do you know all of the details and intricacies of production and how your factory works? As a worker do you understand all of the challenges faced by management or your employer? Of course not, so in order to work towards a safer workplace – you will need to work **together**.

To make the most of everyone's time and commitment to safety, be sure to establish or revisit the committees' **roles and responsibilities** and agree on a standing meeting time and date. To build on the culture of safety in your organization it is important to never cancel or reschedule these meetings, instead you want to convey the importance of these meetings.



Safety Committee Meetings

Someone should always take **meeting minutes** and each meeting should start and finish with a review of **take-aways** and action items. This is important. If you don't learn or no one takes any action to make the changes discussed then you won't achieve anything. However, with a common direction and purpose you will be surprised at how much you can achieve – if you work together.



Now that you have a good foundation for a Safety Committee you want to make sure everyone's time is valued, and that each member feels empowered to evaluate the factory's health and safety and make recommendations for managing safety more effectively. The committee should include representation from both **workers** and **managers**, and you may want to rotate these representatives on a regular basis.

Committee members that represent management should be decision makers and those that can provide resources to solve safety concerns. A lot of safety solutions do not cost money. In fact, they can have the opposite effect and actually be more cost-effective.

Other ideas on how to engage the workers and make sure they feel like they are being heard is not only to give them a way to report safety concerns but also to provide a mechanism to report on resolutions or provide suggestions for improvement.

Just because you are a manager or the employer does not mean that you have all of the ideas; and equally, if you are a worker this does not mean that you don't have some very creative ideas and suggestions.

These suggestions can be made anonymously or can be done in quick 5-minute safety talks on a weekly or monthly basis. They are more likely to be engaged if everyone can see that they are making a difference.



Best Practices

NIRAPON has spent over 18 months evaluating the effectiveness of factories Safety Committees, and we believe sharing some best practices may provide insight and inspire other new ideas:

- Implement a **Safety Checklist** and have the committee complete these before each Safety Committee meeting. The committee can share ideas and discuss how to solve issues.
- **Document** how the committee operates, how often they meet and who is on the committee.
- Review **accident investigation reports** as well as Helpline calls in each meeting.
- **Look for trends**-look at type of injury, cause of injury and results, then look by department or area of factory. Then you may want to drill down further to look at shift and supervisor to get to the root cause before prevention can happen.
- **Eliminate hazards**- frayed cords, unsafe chemical storage, overloaded circuits should all be corrected.
- Promote safety throughout your factory by using signs, posters and making PPE available.
- Make **safety training** available to everyone and talk about safety every day.
- Document meetings, discussion points and resolutions to present in your 90-day Reporting process.

An effective Safety Committee is good for business and has many benefits. When accidents and incidents are prevented, worker turn-over goes down, absenteeism from injuries goes down and worker sentiment increases. Not only will you have a more positive safety culture, but it will only continue to get better!

