

Self Assessment Guide for Effective Safety Committees

Overview:

An effective safety committee is a key element in a structured safety system, that enables leaders to engage employees into a continuous safety improvement process. An active and successful safety committee is critical to developing and maintaining an effective safety improvement plan.

Co-op leadership should establish a clear purpose for the committee with clearly defined roles and responsibilities that articulate the committee's reason for existence. Membership on the Safety Committee can also be used as a career development tool in order to strengthen and build individual leadership skills.

Some of the ways an effective safety committee can add value to safety improvement is by:

- promoting employee participation and suggestions in an effort to increase involvement
- creating, updating and monitoring a safety improvement plan to ensure progress is being made on the most important safety areas
- supporting the planning, coordination and evaluation of safety meetings
- helping to recognize individual employees as well as specific team contributions to a safer workplace
- conducting or supporting incident investigations in line with co-op procedures and assisting management in identifying root causes and determining follow up action to prevent reoccurrence
- ensuring the thoroughness and quality of investigations
- consistently tracking action items and following up to ensure timely completion or responses to safety issues

Accurate recordkeeping is also essential. Accurate meeting minutes should be kept and are important because they document the committee's accomplishments on an ongoing basis and support a consistent communication process with employees.

At least annually, the committee should meet to review their accomplishments over the previous year and to set new, practical goals for the next 12 months.

Working with Rural Electric Safety Achievement Program ("RESAP") participants, the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association ("NRECA") prepared these materials as a resource for RESAP participants. To help promote and enhance safety, these materials may provide guidelines or suggestions exceeding legal requirements and standards of care. To the extent a guideline or suggestion exceeds a legal requirement or standard of care, the guideline or suggestion is not intended to increase or extend the legal requirement or standard of care. When developing and implementing safety procedures and practices, RESAP participants should: (1) consult other resources, in addition to these materials; (2) consult local legal counsel and local safety professionals; (3) consider local, state, and national legal requirements and standards of care; and (4) consider local, state, and national safety and practices. NRECA does not represent that these materials are complete or exhaustive, and disclaims any liability or responsibility associated with a RESAP participant complying, or not complying, with legal requirements and standards of care.

Evaluation Matrix – Effective Safety Committee		
Evaluation	#	Attributes
	1	Committee has a clearly defined purpose that is aligned with co-op objectives
	2	Co-op employees have a clear understanding of the role of the safety committee and how it functions
	3	Committee members appropriately represent the various cross functional departments in the co-op
	4	An executive sponsor is responsible to guide and support the committee as needed
	5	Committee members actively participate in meetings
	6	Committee members regularly attend meetings and follow-through on assignments
	7	The committee creates, updates and monitors the effective completion of a safety improvement plan
	8	The committee regularly encourages co-workers to get involved by identifying and reporting workplace hazards and improvements
	9	The safety committee tracks safety incidents reported according to pre-defined specifications
	10	Follow up action items are documented and tracked by a responsible person to ensure timely completion
	11	A clearly defined method/procedure exists for employees to report safety incidents and/or safety suggestions (incidents can include near misses, unsafe conditions / behaviors, barriers which hinder safe work and employee suggestions)
	12	Co-op employees understand and participate in the safety incident reporting process on a regular basis without fear of reprisal
	13	The safety committee generates creative ideas for rewards and recognition in line with co-op objectives
	14	Top management encourages and supports safety committee efforts through participation and resource allocation
	15	Safety committee plans, progress and solutions are presented to the board periodically by the committee and/or management
	16	Committee meeting minutes are regularly posted in a timely manner for employees to review and give feedback
	17	Safety committee investigates all accidents/incidents in a timely manner using clearly established procedures
	18	Incident investigations clearly identify root causes and follow up actions to prevent reoccurrence
	19	Committee annually reviews the past year's performance and objectives, and recommends realistic goals for the coming year for leadership approval

5 - Exceeds, 4 - Satisfies All, 3 - Satisfies Most, 2 - Partially Satisfies, 1 - Fails to Satisfy Requirements