



SAFETY COMMITTEE COMPASS TOOL

I. What is the Mission Goal of your Safety Committee? Is it aligned with organization goals, and operational goals?

1. *Clarify the Role* of this Safety Committee.
2. Describe what *Safety Performance* is, how it impacts your operations, and what operational factors affect Safety Performance.
3. Ensure that *mission goals are aligned* and be ready to “**Drive the Safety Committee**” in a concerted direction towards organization goals, with an eye towards achieving Safety Performance.
4. Follow your **Written Health & Safety Plan**, and Make Adjustments as Necessary to *keep it accurate, fresh and relevant*. The Safety Committee’s Agenda drives its activities, and thus, spearheads the organization’s safety program and activities on an operational level.

II. Membership of Safety Committee

1. The Chair of the Committee should be from the ranks of top management, the higher the better.
2. The members should be permanently assigned for at least one year.
3. The head of the Committee should not rotate unless absolutely necessary.
4. Membership should comprise of at least 50% front line staff (for Committees/teams at lowest operational levels).
5. Members should be trained on what the Committee does, and how they can contribute, and what role they play and responsibilities they have as members of the Committee.
6. The Safety Committee should meet regularly, monthly or at least quarterly, at the same time and date to facilitate the maximum attendance and ensure the meeting is predictable and people can plan around it far into the future.

III. Formulate Strategy Plan

1. **Identify & Monitor Hazards:** Learn about “*Risk Assessments*”, conduct your own in-house periodic Self-Inspections, Consultant Audits, continually gather as much Employee Feedback as possible.
2. **Develop Intervention/Abatement Methods:** Try different ideas to *remove, or at least minimize* the hazards, risks, and *root causes* of repeated injuries and “*near-misses*”.
3. **Develop a System of Follow-Up:** Follow-up is *key* to determine if your efforts were effective or not in stemming the problem. If so, then give yourselves credit, make it formal for the record, and celebrate. If not, then the Committee needs to reprioritize this item again for action. Otherwise, the problem continues to exist, in a neglected manner even after some attention had been paid.
4. **Identify Benchmarks to Evaluate Effectiveness:** Benchmark safety performance by comparing *workers’ comp claims numbers, OSHA injury and loss time case rates* numbers. Be careful to try to use “rates” which are more accurate, instead of raw numbers that can be misleading. Meanwhile, just

as importantly, if not more so, compare *Safety Committee activities, actions, efforts, and successes* for benchmarking. Also, *Comprehensive Program Audits* is also a good management benchmark tool that reviews the caliber and effectiveness of safety management systems. Monitor, measure and benchmark employee participation rates, numbers of reported near-misses and suggestions or warnings. The proliferation of such reports should be incentivized, not penalized.

IV. Communication Channel

1. ***Have meaningful Top Management Participation, or at the very least, Report to Top Management:*** *How do/would employees know this is for real?*
2. ***Design for & Encourage Feedback & Employee Participation:*** Suggestion Boxes, *consistent solicitation* by Managers, Supervisors, Human Resources, newsletters, postings, etc., tenured employee participation in Safety Committees, systemized solicitation for employee feedback in equipment purchases, workflow design, event planning, etc.
3. ***Provide Timely & Efficient Responses to Employees:*** It is critical to respond to employee feedback immediately, at least with a *“Thank you for responding, we value your feedback very much.”* This should be followed, as soon as possible, with a response about their suggestions, complaints, etc. It should reflect appreciation for their effort, the careful review and evaluation of their submission, and the decision on how to respond (put on priority list, put on next quarter or next year list, declined to act on because of XYZ, etc.). ***Whether it is in agreement, or not with the employee, it is important to respond as quickly as possible.***
4. Publish (whatever information possible without compromising privacy or other matters requiring discretion) and maintain timely *Safety Committee Minutes* that delineate the order of topics discussed, picking up from unfinished business from the last meeting. Ensure that the persons involved, especially those who are *responsible and accountable*, are ***indicated for follow up, what tasks specifically, and deadline*** or timeline. This follow up is critical the Safety Management, empowering the Safety Committee as a safety performance tool to monitor and ensure issues are continually addressed until rectified, or continually monitored for alternative permanent solutions.
5. ***Post Safety Committee Minutes & Other Forms of Communiqué*** as much as possible in employee areas, via emails, website, etc.

V. Initiate, Monitor, and Review Safety Activities Within the Realm of the Safety Committee’s Role & Authority

1. ***Achieving Competency in Self-Review/Inspection:*** Training managers, supervisors and staff to be able to conduct these competently at their appropriate levels, and to report them properly. This includes what should be reported, how, through what channels, within what time frames, etc.
2. ***OSHA & Other Regulatory Compliance Issues:*** Safety Committee is a natural work group to drive, to oversee, or at the very least, to participate in OSHA and related regulatory compliance (NYCFD, NYCECB, etc.) directives.
3. ***Accident & Incident Analysis & Trends Review:*** Become savvy at reviewing, analyzing and understanding the available data, including the financial data, therefore, the financial impact of safety performance on the organization’s fiscal viability, so that the Committee can derive as much value from this as possible to help prioritize, identify trends, discern probability, and identify hazards, conduct long perspective benchmarks and assess risks.