

Getting Started & Summary

This is the last bulletin on forming a Safety Advisory Committee, so it is probably a good place to address how to begin the process. Note: to provide value and maintain credibility, once started it is important for the Committee not to be distracted or lose momentum — stick to the regularly scheduled meetings and agendas, and hold itself accountable.

1. The first step is to meet with the top management:
 - As needed, share the information in the bulletins;
 - Obtain his/her buy-in and support for an active safety advisory committee;
 - Emphasize that the committee is an advisory committee that will be reporting to her/him through their minutes;
 - Get direction on how aggressive he/she wants the committee to be in identifying problems, causes and recommending solutions;
 - Get an assurance that his/her direction and commitment will be shared with upper managers;
 - Stress the importance of feedback for the committee so that they can refine their focus in a manner that is consistent with management's needs and expectations.
 - Ask that he/she issue letters of appointment to the members emphasizing the importance that upper management places on a safe workplace.
 - Agree on a goal for the first year's performance measured by a percentage reduction in worker injuries.
2. The second step is to go through a selection and appointment process for Committee members; to meet the communications criteria, and to add credibility, creativity and knowledge, it should be a blend of workers and managers from various departments that want to be there.
3. The third step is to meet, and:
 - Assign Committee duties as needed.
 - Select and schedule a worksite to be inspected before the next meeting.
 - Review half a dozen workplace injuries to develop a comfort with the procedure.
 - Schedule the next meeting for the following month.
 - Report the minutes to upper management.

Three final unrelated comments:

1. A successful safety program is driven from the top down. The Safety Advisory Committee's purpose, in the most basic sense, is to assist upper management in recognizing safety issues, and offering effective responses.
2. These bulletins have presented a template that, depending on size, would obviously not be appropriate for all members. YCPARMIA would welcome the opportunity to work with any member to modify the "best practices" laid out in this series to meet a member's individual needs.
3. Finally, YCPARMIA staff is available to consult and assist the safety committee process when requested, and would welcome the invitation to attend/observe any and all Committee meetings.