

# **Safety Committees 101**


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# Why are we here?

- Why safety committees are important
- Requirements, roles, and responsibilities
- Keys to success
- Resources





# The Rule (437-001-0765)

## Purpose

This rule requires employers to establish and administer a safety committee, or hold safety meetings, to communicate and evaluate safety and health issues.

The purpose of safety committees and safety meetings is to bring workers and management together in a non-adversarial, cooperative effort to promote safety and health. Safety committees and safety meetings will assist you in making continuous improvement to your safety and health programs.”

**Best Practice:** This is an important and often overlooked responsibility. Procedures should be designed so that the committee can review the program at least every other year and more often if the organization is undergoing great change or has high turnover.



# Why is this important?

- Prevents workplace injuries
- Bridges the gap
  - Employee representation
  - Employee voice
  - Employees contribute ideas
    - Ownership and buy-in
    - Pride and value

# Why is this important?

“We’ve had a safety committee rule for more than **TWO DECADES**. We provide resources and training and yet, it’s still the #1 issue we cite.”

- Michael Wood, OR-OSHA Administrator

# Safety committee or safety meeting?

IF	You can have a safety committee	You can have safety meetings
You have 10 or fewer employees more than half of the year (including seasonal and temporary)	Yes	Yes
More than half of your employees report to construction sites	Yes	Yes
More than half of your employees are mobile or move frequently between sites	Yes	Yes
Most employees do not regularly work outside an office environment	Yes	Yes
You have more than 10 employees at a location, and none of the above applies	Yes	No
You have satellite or auxiliary offices with 10 or fewer employees at each location	Yes	Yes



# The Rule (437-001-0765) Safety Committees

(2) If you have 20 or fewer employees you must have at least 2 members. If you have more than 20 employees, you must have at least 4 members.

**Best Practice:** More members is generally better. A good facilitator can handle a larger group and more ideas are generated. Be careful not to get too large. More than 15 is a real challenge!



# The Rule (437-001-0765) Safety Committees

(3) You must have an equal number of employer-selected members and employee-elected or volunteer members. If both parties agree, the committee may have more employee-elected or volunteer members.

**Best Practice:** Have more employee than employer representatives. It's a great way to jump start a safety and health program or improve on one. It also builds trust in the process.



# Committee membership

## The ideal member:

- Enthusiasm for safety
- Respected by peers
- Good communication skills

## Other members to consider:

“Challenging” individuals who may torpedo efforts if not included



# The Rule (437-001-0765) Safety Committees

(4) Your safety committee members must:

- Have a majority agree on a chairperson
- Serve a minimum of one year, when possible.
- Be compensated at their regular rate of pay.
- Have training in the principles of accident and incident investigations for use in evaluating those events.

**Best Practice:** Elect a new (and different) chair every year. Make sure the chair isn't always from the same department.



# The Rule (437-001-0765) Safety Committees

(4) Your safety committee members must:

- Have training in hazard identification.
- Be provided with meeting minutes.
- Represent major activities of your business.

**Best Practice:** Provide the required training at least every other year even if the members don't change. All new members should have the training as soon as possible. Try not to have too many new employees added to the committee. They are still learning the ropes.




# The Rule (437-001-0765) Safety Committees

(5) Your safety committee must meet on company time as follows:

- Quarterly in situations where employees do mostly office work.
- Monthly for all other situations (except the months when quarterly worksite inspections are performed).

**Best Practice:** Hold 12 meetings and 4 inspections.



# The Rule (437-001-0765) Membership

(6) You must keep written records of each safety committee meeting for three years that include:

- Names of attendees.
- Meeting date.
- All safety and health issues discussed, including tools, equipment, work environment, and work practice hazards.
- Recommendations for corrective action and a reasonable date by which management agrees to respond.
- Person responsible for follow up on any recommended corrective actions.
- All reports, evaluations and recommendations made by the committee.

# Best Practice

## Create an agenda

- Date
- Time
- Location
- Topics

### To Committee:

The next meeting of the

\_\_\_\_\_

Company/Division

Safety Committee will be

\_\_\_\_\_ Date  
\_\_\_\_\_ Time  
\_\_\_\_\_ Location

In addition to normal agenda items, please be prepared to discuss the following:

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\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Safety Committee Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_

Phone

# The Rule (437-001-0765)

## Safety Committees

(7) Your safety committee must establish procedures for conducting workplace safety and health **inspections**. Persons trained in hazard identification must conduct **inspections** as follows:

WHERE	WHO	WHEN
Primary fixed locations	Employer and employee representatives	Quarterly
Office environments	Employer and employee representatives	Quarterly
Auxiliary and satellite locations	Employer and employee representatives or a designated person	Quarterly
Mobile work locations, infrequently visited sites, and sites that do not lend themselves to quarterly inspections	Employer and employee representatives or a designated person	As often as the safety committee determines is necessary

# Safety inspection team

- All committee members
- Some committee members
- Designated individuals in each department
- Specifically designated team





# Traditional inspections

**Focus on physical hazards, such as:**

- Blocked fire extinguisher
- Blocked electrical panels
- Extension cords
- Fire exits



# Advanced inspections

Review injury trends.

Focus on system issues:

- Inadequate training
- Improper equipment
- Lack of accountability
- Unsafe behaviors





# Injury trend information

- Incident reports
- OSHA 300 Log
- Workers' compensation loss runs
  - Tenure information
  - Nature of injury
  - Body part injured
  - Department or area of injury



# Best Practices

- Rotate your inspection team.
- Provide training for unique hazards.
- Talk with employees during walk-through.
- Observe behaviors and how work is performed.



# The Rule (437-001-0765) Safety Committees

(8) In addition to the above requirements, your safety committee must:

- Work with management to establish, amend or adopt accident investigation procedures that will identify and correct hazards.
- Have a system that allows employees an opportunity to report hazards and safety and health related suggestions.

**Best Practice:** Do not rely on only one way for employees to report hazards.

# The Rule (437-001-0765)

## Safety Committees

(8) In addition to the above requirements, your safety committee must:

- Establish procedures for reviewing inspection reports and for making recommendations to management.
- Evaluate all accident and incident investigations and make recommendations for ways to prevent similar events from occurring.

**Best Practice:** Try developing an accident investigation team that is specially trained. Or, have someone from a different department do the investigation. Don't forget to analyze your near misses too.

# The Rule (437-001-0765)

## Safety Committees

(8) In addition to the above requirements, your safety committee must:

- Make safety meeting minutes available for all employees to review.
- Evaluate management's accountability system for safety and health and recommend improvements. Examples include use of incentives, discipline, and evaluating success in controlling safety and health hazards.

**Best Practice:** If the accountability system is broken, so is the safety and health program. This is a must to tackle!



# Best practices

- Stay focused
- Know your organization's major safety issues
- Past injuries
- Observations from walk-through
- Industry-specific safety concerns

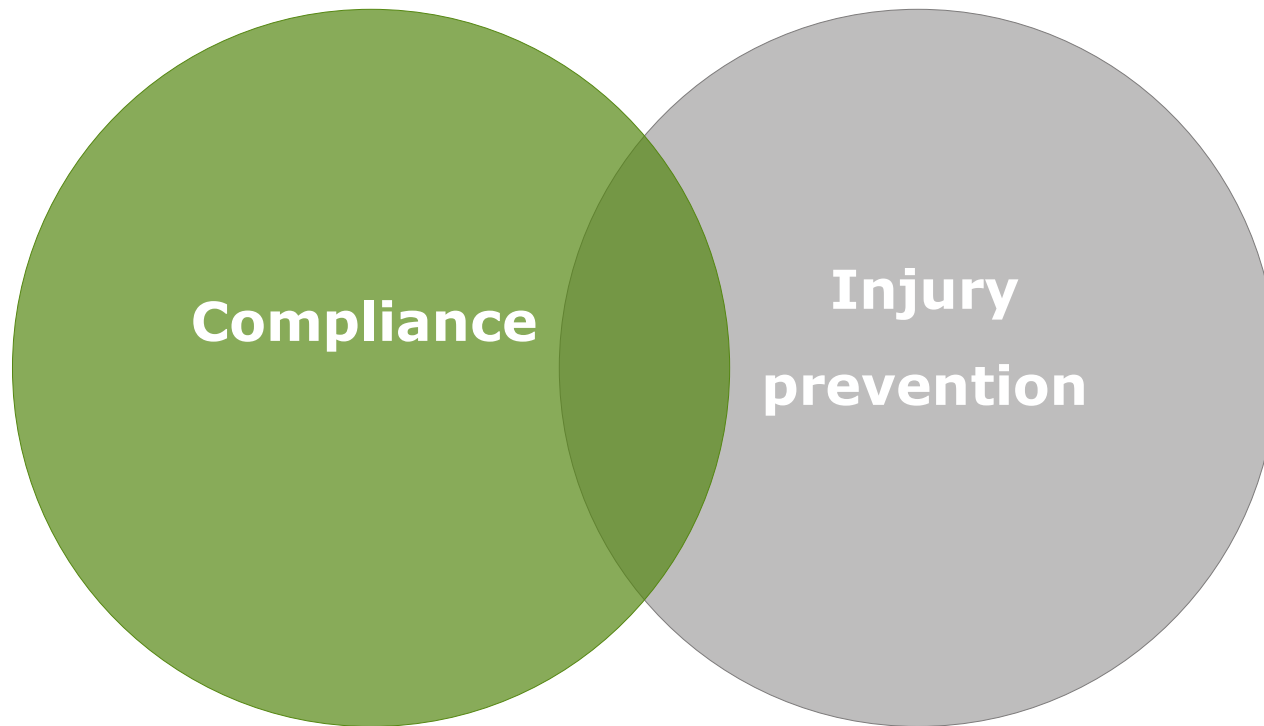




# Potential pitfalls

- Lack of focus
- Time used for complaints or grievances
- Act as the “safety police”
- No leadership participation
- Only do accident analysis or repairs
- Solely responsible for new employee orientation

# **Your goal: Reduce and prevent injuries**



# Resources

- SAIF's webpage: [www.saif.com](http://www.saif.com)
- Oregon OSHA:  
<http://osha.oregon.gov/Pages/index.aspx>

**saif** Work.  
Life.  
Oregon.