



Safety Culture

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Understand the difference between a safety program and a safety culture
- ✓ Use resources to help you understand the regulations in your area
- ✓ Launch a safety committee

Safety Culture

A Safety Culture

This course takes the approach that safety must be an integral part of your organization. Safety should not be viewed as a single program, a quick fix, or an overnight project. In order for your workplace to be truly safe, safety must be part of your organization's culture and value system.

How Does Safety Apply to Me?

When you think of the need for a safety culture, you probably think of high-risk environments like factories and construction sites. However, regardless of your organization's industry, you do need to be concerned about safety.

How might safety apply in these situations?

Situation	Safety Issues
Insurance office with four people, each in their own cubicle (equipped with computer and telephone)	
Animal rescue facility	
Medical transcriptionists that work from home	

Why is health and safety training important?

Over 200 people are killed each year in accidents at work and over one million people are injured. Over two million suffer illnesses caused by, or made worse by, their work. But did you know that forestry is one of the most dangerous industries, and workers are 6 times more likely to be killed at work than a construction worker? That is not good odds. So, preventing accidents and ill health caused by work should be a key priority for everyone at work. As the owner or manager of a forestry contracting business you know that competent employees are valuable. Your business probably depends on them.

Providing health & safety information and training helps you to:

- Ensure you or your employees are not injured or made ill by the work they do;
- Develop a positive health & safety culture, where safe & healthy working becomes second nature to everyone;

- Find out how you could manage health and safety better;
- Meet your legal duty to protect the health & safety of your employees.

(source <http://www.hse.gov.uk>)

Governing Bodies and Resources

Gathering Resources

Understanding who governs safety in your area is crucial to developing a comprehensive program. Note that although these resources refer to general federal programs, individual regions often have their own regulations. You will want to review the appropriate regulations thoroughly and regularly.

Governing Agencies

Here is a brief list of some governing agencies.

Area	Organization(s)	Website
Great Britain	Health and Safety Executive	http://www.hse.gov.uk/
United States of America	Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)	http://www.osha.gov
Canada	Canadian Center for Occupational Health and Safety	http://www.ccohs.ca
Mexico	Secretaría del Trabajo y Previsión Social	http://www.stps.gob.mx
European Union	European Agency for Safety and Health at Work	http://osha.europa.eu/
Asia	Asia Pacific Occupational Safety and Health Organization	http://www.aposho.org/index.jsp

Other Resources

Here is a list of additional workplace safety resources that may be useful.

Organization(s)	Area	Website
CanOSH	Canada	http://www.canoshweb.org

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	United States	http://www.cdc.gov
SafeWork	Global	http://www.ilo.org/safework
Pan American Health Organization	South America	http://www.paho.org/
Maquiladora Health & Safety Support Network	United States and Mexico	http://mhssn.igc.org/
World Health Organization	Global	http://www.who.int
Finnish Institute of Occupational Health	Finland	http://www.ttl.fi/en/
National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health	United States	http://www.cdc.gov/niosh

Note: These organizations and links were accurate at the time of printing. We takes no responsibility for the content of these sites, whether by inclusion or omission.

Getting Started

Creating a Safety Committee.

There are several key steps to creating a safety committee. If you already have a safety committee, it's important to make sure that the committee is addressing all of the areas included here.

Have representatives from all areas.

Ensure that all departments and all levels of employees are included in the safety committee. The size of the committee will depend on the size and layout of your organization. One tip: make sure that managers know they need to leave their managerial hats at the door of a safety meeting.

Choose positive people.

Make sure that the people that you choose for the safety committee are already positive, safety-oriented people.

Obtain buy-in and commitment.

Your safety committee should be encouraged to set their goals, mission, area of responsibility, and term limits themselves, with some input from executives. They should also name the committee.

Provide resources.

Make the safety committee's job as easy as possible. Provide them with whatever resources they need to start developing a safety culture in organization. This may include training, resource materials, or perhaps just a comfortable place to meet.

Be clear on what you want.

Before the safety committee's first meeting, the company's executives need to decide what issues they will address. Do not hand them the safety manual and walk away. There will undoubtedly be many issues that the committee will need to address, but the issues must be manageable or the committee will get lost in the details. Of course, once a particular issue has been resolved, the committee will want to shift its focus.

Some examples of possible tasks:

- Assist in developing a safety training program
- Identify ways to reduce warehouse accidents
- Develop a policy for reviewing safety procedures

Consider a steering committee.

A steering committee should be made up mostly of executives and managers. There should be a liaison member on both the safety committee and the steering committee. The steering committee can act as a mentor for the safety committee, providing guidance and resources. The steering committee may also have more executive power, enabling the safety committee to do more.

The Safety Committee's First Meeting

The first meeting of the safety committee should be led by one or more executives. An agenda should be circulated beforehand and presented at the beginning of the meeting. The meeting should also start on time to set a good precedent for future meetings.

The agenda might look like this.

9:00-9:10	Introductions
9:10-9:30	Briefing by Tammy Smith, CEO (To discuss the desired scope and mission of the safety committee)
9:30-9:45	Setting of team norms, facilitated by CEO or outside person (These are ground rules that the team will agree to conduct meetings by, such as "Managers will leave their manager hat at the door," or, "We will listen to each other's opinions.")

9:45-10:00	Team name and mission; election of chairperson and minute taker
10:00-10:30	Identification of tasks and actions to be taken
10:45-11:00	Time, place, and agenda for future meetings

Further Reading:

- ✓ *Safety Culture: An Innovative Leadership Approach, By Nathan Crutchfield, James Roughton, (2013)*
- ✓ *Safety Culture: Assessing and Changing the Behaviour of Organisations, By Dr John Bernard Taylor, (2012)*