



FEOSH COMMITTEES

COMMITTEE ORGANIZATION

Guidance, information, and suggested procedures for operating safety and health committees at DOE operations are addressed in this Chapter. It also addresses Federal Safety and Health Field Councils.

Field or establishment-level safety and health committees effectively assist management with improving policy, working conditions, and practices. Committees can facilitate management and employee participation and program “buy-in.”

Charter

Committee members, who establish goals, objectives, purpose, and membership expectations, should develop the charter. The charter should be revisited annually, before new members are appointed.

Membership

The membership ratio should have equal numbers of management representatives and employees. Members are full voting associates.

Management representatives should be appointed in writing by the facility manager. They should represent a cross-section of managerial positions and have labor or operational functions. Safety and health manager(s) should be excluded.

Employee and management representatives should be equal in the membership. If employees are represented by a union, the bargaining representative should recommend the membership. If employees are not represented by a bargaining unit, membership should be determined by other methods that will provide effective employee representation.

Employee input should be solicited on how to select members, or members may be appointed. An election should not be held because it may violate the National Labor Relations Act.

Employee membership may be rotated through the organization. Each major organizational unit should be represented. Using volunteers is another approach that may work well, depending on program maturity.

Membership terms are normally 2-year terms. However, when the committee is first formed, certain memberships should be designated as 1-year terms to ensure membership stability when 2-year terms rotate.

A chairperson may be elected by the membership and/or rotated between management and employee representatives. Another option is senior management (e.g., manager, deputy manager) may chair the committee, providing visible top management program support.

Technical advisors (nonvoting) or committee consultants should be safety and health professionals. Meeting notification should be made to members, advisors, and general staff. Interested individuals should be encouraged to attend. Committee meetings are conducted in an open forum.

Meeting minutes document committee proceedings. They should be reviewed and concurred on membership and signed by the committee chairperson. Approved minutes should be made available to the employees by posting or general distribution. Minutes should include a list of members present, previous minutes approval, guest speakers, old business, new business, and summarized actions.

An action log should be appended to the minutes to track assignment of responsibilities for corrective actions, progress made, issues, and final closure.

DOL Notification

Committee activities notification to DOL is not required. However, organizations may want to report their activities in the annual report to DOE.

ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibilities may vary broadly based on committee functions as defined in the charter. At a minimum, the following elements are normally included.

Information

The organization should ensure that the committee receives sufficient information relating to safety and health program issues to permit them to effectively function. Technical advisors can play a major role in ensuring that the committee is kept informed.

Information provided should be commensurate with the committee's duties. Information should include the following:

Reports include internal and external inspections or program evaluation reports, accident/incident investigation reports, injury/illness reports, and injury/illness summaries.

Employee Concerns include complaint(s) relating to workplace hazards, as well as program concerns or allegations of reprisal for participating in the program.

Requirements include draft or revised safety and health statutes, regulations, or policies.

Training

Members should be provided training to familiarize them with the basic program requirements. One way to accomplish this is to have the technical advisor(s) present one element of the program as an agenda item at each meeting.

If the committee members take an active role in the programs, such as participating in inspections, investigations, or program evaluation, then additional training will be required in hazard recognition, accident investigation, document review, interview techniques, and report writing.

Training curriculum should be tailored to their need to know. Overview classes are probably more realistic than detailed professional course curriculum.

COMMITTEE DUTIES

Committee duties are generally the responsibility of the voting membership, and safety and health professionals normally serve only as technical advisors. This helps ensure maximum ownership and participation by manager and employee representatives.

Organization Committees

Committee duties should be determined by local policy and the membership. These duties should be documented in a charter. Generic suggestions are offered.

Monitor Program

- Participate in internal supervisor or safety and health inspections at the work site(s).
- Participate in program evaluations conducted by external entities.
- Track corrective actions to ensure appropriateness and timeliness.
- Monitor program effectiveness and make improvement recommendations.
- Review and recommend revisions for existing or developing additional organizational policy.
- Recommend changing the level of effort in terms of program resources.

Investigate

- employees' concerns, complaints, allegations of reprisal, and suggestions and recommend changes to the program as required.
- reported accidents, incidents, and injury/illnesses trends. Emphasize reducing the frequency and severity of injuries and illnesses.
- unsafe condition trends that may lead to severe injury or illness. Root cause identification is key to long-term abatement of problems.

Recommend

- changes to senior management on program policy, management commitment in terms of resources, and employee involvement programs.

Participate

- in safety and health awareness programs.

Technical Advisors

Advisors will normally consist of safety or health professionals and may include others on an as-required basis (e.g., health physicists, industrial hygienists, ergonomists, or engineering specialists).

Advisors are available to provide required technical advice or training to committee members. Advisors should not serve as committee voting members.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

An example of the DOE Headquarters FEOSH Steering Committee charter may be found at: <http://www.hss.energy.gov/csa/csp/feosh/FEOSHCharter.pdf>

Information on safety committees may also be found on the DOL OSHA Federal Agency Program web site at: <http://www.osha.gov/dep/fap/index.html>

View the DOE FEOSH Program information brochure at:
http://www.hss.energy.gov/csa/csp/feosh/resource/feoshbrochure_2008.pdf

For more information contact:

**David M. Smith, Manager,
Federal Employee Occupational Safety and Health Program
U.S. Department of Energy
Office of Health, Safety, and Security
HS-31-270CC
1000 Independence Ave S.W.
Washington D.C. 20585
301-903-4669
Email: <mailto:David.Smith@hq.doe.gov>**