

HSS Safety Improvement Task Group
March 12, 2009 9:00am – 2:30pm
20300 Century Blvd., Ste. 105 Germantown, MD

Attendees:

Mark Petts
Candy Sanchez
Mary Haughey
Ken Stein
Sherry Main
Cecelia Kenney
Dave Smith

9:15am meeting started.

Purpose of Task Group

Dave Smith welcomed everyone and mentioned that the HSS survey link is broken—he will try and get it fixed.

First, he wanted to discuss what the report says about the organization and what the task group is being asked to do. National Safety Council (NSC) statisticians think the report will help HSS improve safety. He pointed out that there is a key figure on p. 21 of the survey results report, figure 2 that he wanted everyone to look at. Green, yellow and red (underperforming) blocks.

Look at documents and areas. Good executive summary written. Task group needs to decide on 4-6 important priority areas where we need to focus our attention. Not limited by report terminology. We can group several areas into one main category, i.e. communications.

Each person to go back and communicate info to staff as widely as possible and ask for input. Members will be info gatherers, and will bring info back to the next meeting. Group will review feedback, categorize it and set goals for the next 12 months. Then, the group will pick top 3 out of 5 to focus on and set goals for those. Set milestones and metrics to measure progress against those goals over the next 12 months. After setting goals, etc., task group to monitor and oversee progress toward those goals and advise management.

Comments on report:

Ken: We were compared against other groups and not just office settings.

David: Asked NSC to extract organization office settings = 34 possible groups we were compared against. DOE 08-FIG3A (last link on web page)

Went up in employee participation but down in supervisor participation compared to a like group in office setting, we go to lower score in every area except employee participation.

Germantown building opened in 1954.

Reviewed bullets on FEOSH website and what they contain. OSCAR report provided an opportunity for people to provide written comments. NSC said this organization is willing to change and improve safety based on the number of employee comments. That impressed NSC.

Colleagues = HSS staff mainly. Don't want to exclude someone just because they're not HSS. Everyone's safety is important.

Mary Haughey: comments influenced heavily by the fact that they've moved recently. Sherry agreed. Firewall penetration, complaints about management of Germantown facility. Forrestal building is a sick building as well. A/C in comm. center is regulated by MA across hall, which has to plug in space heaters. Cecelia: We'll need cooperation from the offices for broad-based things. Some quick fixes may be creating other hazards (i.e. putting carpet over vents). If we identify building as a large issue for HSS as a whole, then we go to MA to present it on behalf of entire organization.

Sherry: building blinds at Germantown not regularly cleaned, which may be collecting dust, dirt, etc. Much of building maintenance is out of HSS control.

9:52am – Turn attention to draft charter

Charter Comments:

Mary: as a representative from NTEU, it might be inappropriate to have her as a voting member because union may have to take issue with things later. Didn't want to feel this was a way of not fulfilling bargaining agreements. Would like opportunity to put Don Freeburn (not HSS) as alternate in case she can't attend a meeting. Don is currently following the asbestos issue. Mark: If Mary doesn't vote, that redefines the quorum.

Purpose: Cecelia: bring number of weeks into purpose section. Provide flexibility in timeframe.

It was agreed that we would take the schedule out of the charter and move it into a separate document once that schedule is established.

David Smith is not a task group member, only a facilitator to help guide the group.

Mary Haughey represents NTEU 228 for Germantown, but does not represent NTEU 213 for Forrestal.

Should there be a co-chair from NTC? Mary requests not to be chairperson, given her position as a union representative. Chairperson will coordinate meetings.

11:00 Chairperson and Recording Secretary election

Mary nominated Mark Petts for Recording Secretary position. After some discussion, Mark accepted the nomination. Motion seconded by Cecelia.

Cecelia thinks chair should have some safety background.

Discussed video access for remote members. If we can overcome the technical difficulties, Candy would accept Chairperson role.

Cecelia nominated Candy Sanchez as Chairperson, which Candy accepted. The motion was seconded by Mark. Candy's background: she worked at Germantown for 7 years and has been to Forrestal on occasion, so she's acquainted with the buildings.

After lunch, the plan is to 1.) identify 5 safety and health issues that deserve most priority and 2.) complete a proposed schedule for succeeding week agendas.

Cecelia thinks we should wait till end of meeting to form agenda. We should set goals in an outline.

11:25am Break for lunch

1:10pm Meeting reconvened.

Brainstorm of issues:

- Disenfranchisement of employees
- Education
- Communication
- Resolution—what can we fix? What can mgmt fix? What CAN'T mgmt fix?
- Transparency-make known to employees what the safety issues are and what's the plan to fix them?
- Training- Safety train as much as security train = better-educated workforce
- Employee involvement in safety/committee
- Safety awareness/understanding safety and health requirements & training
- Inspections and walk-downs
- Ergonomic workspace
- Moving issues
- Clutter
- Noise
- HVAC problems
- Electrical safety

- Safety awareness
- General facility safety
- Sidewalks/uneven pavement
- Asbestos- location tracking
- Facility safety – lump asbestos, sidewalk, inspection/ walk-down under one umbrella
- Personal responsibility aspect (spills, de-cluttering offices, etc.) Infrastructure in our systems create a hoarding mentality.

Questions arising from the discussion:

1. How do you know what the guidelines and standards for safety, health and security actually are?
2. What's the process for reporting violations?

Task Group decided on 5 key areas, as listed below. Some are within HSS control, while one is outside of HSS control, requiring cooperation from other organizations to accomplish the goal.

PRIORITIES

1. Education/Training for employees
 - Where to go for information on an issue/ease of access
 - DOE Manual 411 FRAM document written as crosswalk to find safety requirements
2. Safety Evaluation Process
 - Ergonomics (chairs, workstations, etc.)
 - Moving/Work planning/Workspace evaluation
3. Communication
 - Articles on ergonomics/what you can do in your own workspace
 - Lack of communication needs to be addressed
4. Employee involvement
 - Job safety
 - Workers identifying and eliminating hazards in their own workspace
 - Committees
5. Facilities Management
 - Heating
 - Electrical
 - Water
 - Asbestos
 - Clutter

What's next?

Members to ask co-workers to identify key areas under each category.

Come up with list of short term goals and ideas to address comments under the 5 topics and what things we can relay to HSS staff that we'll be addressing as long-term goals.

Bounce emails to each other to identify short-term and long-term goals. Cecelia to work with Candy and feed her info over the next two weeks.

Next meeting to be held Thursday, March 26, 2009 from 9-11am. Location, call in number and agenda to be determined and communicated by Candy.

Meeting adjourned at 2:25pm.