

Fact-sheet – How to make a Health & Safety committee efficient?



What is the objective?

Why should the factory have a Health & Safety committee¹?

The purpose of the Health & Safety (H&S) committee is to:

1. **Identify, evaluate and control** the risks related to the organization activities;
2. **Solve** health and safety problems in order to continuously **improve** the workplace and working conditions.

An effective Health & Safety committee will help preventing injuries and accidents in the workplace by implementing **preventive measures**, increase **awareness** among workers and define a clear **Health & Safety strategy**.



How to achieve the objective?

The factory should first have created all the **policies and procedures** on Health & Safety and then should have a **system** to ensure the Health & Safety committee is **effective**.



¹ H&S committee may be addressed by a different name. It may also be referred to as Health and Safety Task Force, Health and Safety Department, etc.

Fact-sheet – How to make a Health & Safety committee efficient?

Step 1

• **Establish the committee membership:** the committee should be composed of an **equal representation** of workers and managers. Each member of the committee should have sufficient **background** to have the authority to take decisions and be **proactive**. A **chairman** can be appointed to be in charge of driving the committee.

Step 2

• **Define the scope of the committee and the topics to be addressed:** as we are talking about Health & Safety committee, topics **including but not limited** to safety of machinery/ equipment; personal protective equipment (PPE); hazardous, flammable and combustible materials and fire safety.

Step 3

• **Schedule regular meetings:** the frequency should be the one required as per law or as per the factory's own policy if there is no requirement or if it is more stringent. It is recommended to conduct at least a **monthly** meeting but this can be done more regularly based on the size of the workforce, the nature of work and the degree of inherent risk.

Step 4

• **Prepare the meeting:** management and worker representatives should prepare the meeting to address the priority topics to be covered (review of the previous minutes and the status of the actions decided, review of workers suggestion, etc). At the end of the preparation, an **agenda** should be sent to each member of the committee before the meeting to ensure members will have sufficient time to review it.

Step 5

• **Meeting and meeting follow up:** after having conducted a productive meeting, **records** of the meeting minutes should be kept and efficiently shared to all workers. The **communication channel** should be defined during the meeting according to the actions taken (for example, if the committee decides to provide a new PPE, all concerned workers will be trained on how to use the PPE). A responsible person should be appointed to **follow up** on decided actions items.

❖ Where should the Health & Safety meeting be held?

The meeting should be formally held in a **room** easily accessible by all members of the committee. The room should be provided with sufficient **material** to ensure the efficiency of the meeting (table, projector, water, etc.). There should be a **mix** between managers and workers when seating to avoid creating two blocks. The person responsible for organizing the meeting can define the place before the meeting.

❖ What are the key points to make a Health & Safety committee effective?

- Provide sufficient training to committee members;
- Get among the health and safety committee proactive, committed and voluntary workers ;
- Involve workers in the preparation of the meeting.

Fact-sheet – How to make a Health & Safety committee efficient?



Common non-compliances

Non-compliance	Comment
The factory is conducting informal meetings	Based on interview with a committee member, the factory is conducting informal committee meetings in production on a monthly basis. With informal meetings, the discussion tends to be haphazard and time is wasted on matters which are irrelevant. Hence, informal meetings do not result in positive decisions.
No record of the Health & Safety committee meeting	Based on interview, the management explained that they have a committee and that they have regular meetings. However there are no records of the meetings. There is no evidence that indeed the committee holds meetings, therefore the factory should ensure to record the minutes of the meetings.
The committee is only composed of managers	Based on interview with the worker representative, workers are not included in the Health & Safety committee. Workers should be included in the committee as they are directly impacted by the Health & Safety issues and decisions should be made to improve the workplace conditions.



Good practices

- ❖ The factory can call upon an external expert on Health & Safety to be part of the Health & Safety committee to be advised on technical health & safety measures.
- ❖ The committee members can attend external Health & Safety trainings to increase their knowledge and to be able to address with accuracy the Health & Safety topics.
- ❖ Evaluate the efficiency of each meeting (Were all topics covered? Were problems resolved? How to improve for future meetings?).

