

How to set Up a Safety Committee Program

a

WSI Employer Safety Incentive Plan

The North Dakota Workplace Safety and Insurance agency states that eliminating injuries in the workplace "...depends on the employer's commitment, involvement and support. Our (WSI) goal is to provide you with the knowledge, tools, and skills that you need to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses and become self-sufficient so you (the employer) can create and maintain a safe workplace."

WSI offers financial incentives to employers to reduce worker's compensation premiums, foster employer's commitment, institute safety management systems, and eliminate/minimize employee accidents/injuries. There are three categories for discounts: (1) Safety Management Program (SMP); (2) Safety Action Menu (SAM); and (3) Ergonomic Initiative Grant Program.

The following is a brief overview of these programs and how they can enhance workplace safety for North Dakota businesses.

SAM program includes the following incentive initiatives:

- A. Safety Committee Program**
- B. Return-to-Work/Designated Medical Provider Program
- C. Safe Lift Program
- D. Drug-Free Workplace Program
- E. Certified Safety Management Systems
- F. Learning Management System
- G. Safe Driver Program
- H. Safety Orientation System

Each initiative in the Safety Action Menu is eligible for a 5% discount (with a maximum of a 15% premium discount) off their workers' compensation premiums. The 15% percent is any 3 of the core incentive programs in the SAM incentive programs.

One incentive initiative in the SAM program is to develop a Safety Committee Program. Below is more information on the different features of these programs:

A) Safety Committee Program Requirements

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- 1) Committee Members are a mixture of employees and management. Management cannot reach more than 50% of membership.
- 2) The committee meets monthly.
- 3) Decisions are made by majority vote.
- 4) Develop and provide an agenda prior to the meeting.
- 5) Keep and provide minutes of what was discussed and agreed/voted on by the group.



B) Members:

- 1) Are allowed to conduct reasonable safety committee business with pay (which means that their pay cannot be docked).
- 2) Serve for a minimum of one year (can be longer).
- 3) Represent a significant department(s) where the work is done.

C) The Employer Will:

- 1) Train the committee members on general and specific safety information on accident and illness prevention that reflects the business. (A millwork company should not be training on excavation hazards but on wood working equipment with related hazards).
- 2) Establish a written Safety Committee Charter signed by “top management” and the Safety Committee chair that includes:
 - a) Purpose,
 - b) Responsibilities,
 - c) Membership
 - d) Duties
 - e) Operating rules for the committee



Note: First time employers who select the Safety Committee Program for the 5% discount need to take an online course (through WSI Learning Management System) within the first 90 days from the initial policy date. The attendees would include the designated Safety Coordinator, Safety Committee Chair and anyone else involved in the implementation of the safety committee program, i.e. manager, supervisor or other safety committee members.

See example of a Safety Committee Program.

Safety Committee Program

- A) **Safety Committee Advisory Group.** The safety committee is an organizational structure where members represent a group of employees (departments). This provides a voice to various departments throughout the company. For example, 5 production employees and 3 supervisors. This size provides an effective group of participants.
- B) **Membership term.** The safety committee chair will be appointed by management; there are no self-imposed term limits. Employees can recommend fellow department employees for one-year term membership. The recommended safety committee members will be voted on by department employees. A department that does not recommend an employee to be a safety committee member. Management will invite a department employee to be a member however; there will be no department vote to accept the person as a safety committee member. The term of employee-elected members is one year; there is no limit to the number of terms a representative can serve. The company has the option in providing a tiered membership term such as one and two year terms.
- C) **Vacancies.** If there is an employee-elected member vacancy, a new member will be elected before the next scheduled meeting. See membership terms to term limits.
- D) **Safe Lift Program:** The committee will assist to establish and implement a Safe Lift Program. This committee will meet monthly to help implement the program under the requirements of the Safe Lift Program.
- E) **Committee Meetings**
- 1) Safety committee meetings are held the same time and day each month, example, the 3rd Monday of each month at 1:00PM for a maximum length of one hour. The committee members will be released from their work duties to attend the safety committee meeting.



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If the committee does not finish reviewing the agenda within the allotted one hour, the committee may stop and members released. The minutes will reflect what was not discussed by identifying that line item with the description "Not discussed due to time". Items not addressed will carry over to the next month.

- 2) Each safety committee meeting will have an agenda with reoccurring topic headings such as New Business, Injuries within the last 30 days, outstanding open items, old business, etc.
- 3) After the safety committee meeting, the safety committee chair will develop the minutes that accurately reflect what was discussed, agreed upon and what actions will be taken for open items. Each open item will be assigned to a point-of-contact (POC) until completion. The POC will often be a safety committee member; however, can be a non-committee member.
- 4) The safety committee chair will post the minutes of each meeting in a conspicuous place available to all employees. All safety committee records will be maintained for 4 years.

F) Operating rules

- 1) The safety committee will operate similar to Roberts Rule of Order.
- 2) The minutes of the previous meeting will be provided to the committee members prior the meeting.
- 3) The safety committee does not have any regulatory enforcement powers. Enforcement of safety, health rules and policies is the responsibility of the supervisors or other designated employer representatives, such as the Safety Coordinator, manager, etc.
- 4) The agenda will be developed by the safety committee chair or another member assigned to the task.
 - Date/Time
 - Member Sign-In
 - Review Minutes from previous meeting
 - Old Business
 - Outstanding Open Items
 - Injuries within the past 30 days
 - New Business
 - Misc.



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- a) A review of the meeting minutes will ensure that the minutes were recorded accurately. Inaccuracies will be corrected and be reflected in the next month's minutes. The safety committee chair will ask for a motion to accept the minutes after the corrections were noted by majority vote. If the committee does not approve the minutes another discussion will ensue as to reasons to be resolved. If the minute's approval is not forthcoming after 20 minutes, the minutes will be placed on "hold" and resolved after the safety committee meeting.
 - b) A review of old business will allow for discussion of any items that may or may not have been completed in the past meeting.
 - c) A review of open ended items allows for an update on where items are at, who is accountable for that item, is item complete, is item still in progress, what is the expected completion date, etc.
 - d) Review injuries for the past 30 days. The safety committee should review accident investigation reports to determine areas of risk or work place hazards that may need review or a job hazard analysis completed. Items to include on the report: personal injury, property damage, near misses, other.
 - e) Discussion for new business allows a safety committee member to bring forward a topic or situation for discussion. Under new business, the facility audit (if one has been conducted) will be included and discussed as to any finds or status of items discussed.
- 5) Meeting Recordkeeping
- a) A record of all meeting minutes will be maintained covering location, date, time, subjects discussed, suggestions, action taken, and attendees.
 - b) Minutes will be kept on a uniform format.
 - c) Minutes will be kept for the time period of four years.

G) Responsibilities

- 1) Manager/Supervisor
 - a) Allows safety committee members to attend and participate in safety committee meetings.
 - b) Ensures and supports that safety committee members are provided the time to accomplish their assigned tasks.
 - c) Informs all employees of their safety committee member representatives.
 - d) Involve safety committee members in safety related issues where appropriate.

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- e) Assign up to 3 supervisors to the safety committee.
- 2) Chair
- a) Management appointed.
 - b) Develops meeting agenda.
 - c) Takes minutes, or record to create the meeting minutes.
 - d) Coordinates and conducts orderly meetings.
 - e) Releases members after the meeting or once the agenda is discussed and completed.
 - f) Establishes necessary deadlines and subcommittee assignments.
 - g) Provides appropriate and timely follow-up on problems and recommendations developed by the safety committee.
 - h) Serves as a communication liaison between management and the safety committee.
 - i) Promotes health and safety by personal example.
 - j) Familiar with the general principles and concepts of health and safety management and applicable OSHA standards and company policies.
 - k) Be visibly enthusiastic about his/her organization's safety program.
- 3) Safety Committee Member
- a) Assists in implementing the Safe Lift program.
 - b) Participates in the monthly safety committee meetings by offering suggestions, recommendation and support in a diplomatic manner.
 - c) Participates in accident investigation upon request. Informs the supervisor of known causes that contributed to the accident as part of the investigation purpose.
 - d) Assists management to evaluate loss control measures used to protect employees from safety and health hazards in the workplace.
 - e) Helps management review and update the workplace safety and health program by evaluating employee injury and accident records, identifying trends and patterns, accident investigation findings, inspection findings, and employee reports of unsafe conditions or work practices.
 - f) Acts as a conduit to accept and address anonymous complaints and suggestions from employees to the supervisor or safety committee.
 - g) Encourages employee to inform the supervisor of loss potential hazards that can cause injury or damage.
 - h) Provides input to formulate corrective measures to prevent recurrence of accidents or hazard that may cause injuries, near-misses, and property/equipment/product damage.
 - i) Promotes safety and health awareness among co-worker to encourage participation through continuous improvements to the workplace safety program.

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- j) Assists supervisor in monitoring workplace safety education and training to ensure that it is effective,
 - k) Provides safety suggestions/recommendation to the department supervisor and the safety coordinator regarding health and safety issues.
 - l) Discusses with an employee his/her behavior or actions that may contribute to an injury or property/equipment/product damage or a violation of a safety policy or inform the supervisor.
 - m) Upon request, conducts worksite inspections in response to safety or health hazards complaints.
- 4) Employee
- a) Communicates concerns and solutions to their primary supervisor and/or safety committee member representative
 - b) Actively supports safety committee activities.
 - c) Positively responds to safety suggestions

H) Committee Member Training

- 1) The Chair will ensure that safety committee members receive appropriate training to carry out their committee responsibilities.
- 2) Committee members will have access to copies of safety and health laws, regulations, and any company policies that apply to the particular work site and be given verbal instructions regarding their use.
- 3) Committee members will receive basic training on ergonomics, back injury potentials as part of the Safe Lift program.
- 4) All safety committee members will receive training and information regarding:
 - a) Safety committee purpose and operation.
 - b) Basic requirements of workplace safety rules and their application.
 - c) Methods of conducting safety committee meetings.
 - d) Hazard identification in the workplace.
 - e) High point of the principles regarding effective accident and incident investigations.
 - f) Employee and employer rights and responsibilities under applicable state and federal employment and labor laws or rules.
 - g) Committee procedures.

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The Many Benefits of a Safety Committee

A safety committee can be an invaluable resource for management to stay on top of responsibilities, implementing and monitoring the company’s safety program organization, and developing a safety culture in the workplace in which all employees have a voice.

The safety committee is vital to overall workplace safety as it is a vehicle for employees to suggest safe work practices which reduces loss and increases production efficiencies.

Workplace self-inspections catch those hazards that could result in injury or damage. The safety committee can also be used to promote other activities (inside and outside of work) that encourage employees to support the organization’s goals resulting in developing a workplace culture that holistically supports the company and employee’s safety.

A workplace safety program has been proven to directly, and positively impact the company’s bottom line.

North Dakota companies can leverage the WSI Safe Lift program into the safety committee incentive initiative, since the Safe Lift program requires a safety committee to assist in reducing back injury hazard potentials. This is a win/win for an employer participating in the SAM program.

Receive Expert Support from Our Workplace Safety Consultants

OECS can assist you on developing/implementing a safety committee. Our associates have communication skills and techniques to keep the safety committee meeting on task, and will act as a liaison for your safety committee. OECS will partner with your management team to discuss goals for the safety committee. Your associate will guide and coach the safety committee chair as to developing the agenda, recording the minutes and running the safety committee meeting.

If you are looking for a [North Dakota or South Dakota safety consultant](#), contact [Randy Niles](#). For a Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Iowa safety consultant, contact [Tim Peterson](#). All other states contact [Terry Redden](#).

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ABC Company
Safety Committee Program

Policy Statement

ABC Company is committed to provide employees with a safe and healthful workplace. The safety committee is one vehicle where an employee can to report unsafe conditions and work tasks performed considered unsafe. Preventing loss (injury and damage) from occurring is a Company goal and of the safety committee.

Safety Committee Purpose

1. To promote and maintain a safe and healthy work environment.
2. Help provide an environment of awareness to managers, supervisors and employees on safety and health issues that can cause injury or damage.
3. Provide insight on operating procedures to management to enable the work process to be revised to reduce injury and damage loss to positively impact efficiency.
4. Affords a venue for open discussion on health and safety problems and possible solutions.
5. Help reduce the risk of workplace injuries and illnesses by providing support to the company's safety program.
6. Establish a format to inform and educate employees and supervisors on health and safety issues.
7. Make recommendations to improve safety and health conditions.
8. Help to ensure compliance with federal and state health and safety standards.
9. Provide an open forum of communications through direct employee contact and posting of SC minutes to foster positive employee relationships
10. Review incidents involving work-related fatalities, injuries and illnesses, and safety or health complaints by employees.

This program outlines how the safety committee will function and how it applies to all management and employees who are involved in the safety committee.

This policy statement serves to express management's commitment to and involvement in providing our employees a safe and healthful workplace. The safety committee is one of several approaches that will have to be incorporated as a standard of practice for this organization. The safety committee role is to support the company's effort to sustain safety and health effort.

CEO/President

Date

Safety Committee Chair

Date