

Scope

The establishment of unit safety committees throughout the university is one of the important elements of the comprehensive Unit Safety Program established in APM 35.32 Part D and is currently being promoted by the University Safety and Loss Control Committee.

Unit safety committees are internal groups established by unit administrators. Although the structure of each unit's safety committee may vary, it should be composed of enough employees and/or management personnel to be a representative forum which can identify and resolve safety concerns and help effectively manage each unit's overall safety program.

An effective unit safety committee solicits ideas, addresses and/or coordinates solutions to safety problems, discusses and helps investigate accidents, audits the progress of safety programs, provides a conduit to distribute relevant information and serves as the liaison with the University Safety and Loss Control Committee and the Environmental Health and Safety Office.

Impact on culture of safety: all members of the university community, students as well as employees, benefit from the increased safety awareness, reduction of workplace hazards and the implementation of safety procedures that a unit safety committee can help provide.

Basic Objectives

In addition to serving as the liaison with the University Safety and Loss Control Committee and the Environmental Health and Safety Office, almost all unit safety committees will share these basic objectives:

- encourage a culture of safety and of questioning for safe practice of daily operations;
- reduce the incidence of injuries and illness in the workplace;
- work as a team to develop and implement ideas that will improve safety in the working environment; and
- act as a tool for communicating safety information to all employees.

Management Commitment

The commitment of upper management to a culture of safety sets the tone for the unit's support of the safety committee and sends a message that safety really is important. Mid-management and supervisor support and involvement are just as critical because those positions serve as an immediate example to their employees and as the front-line enforcers of safety rules.

Getting Started

Decide how many members are needed, who can or should serve on the committee, define *measurable* objectives the committee wishes to accomplish and determine/develop practical tools and methods for achieving them that are in accord with the unit's overall purpose and

mission.

Communications

Since the main goal of a unit safety committee is to help increase safety and support a culture of safety, the committee must make timely and meaningful communications to the rest of the unit. Written communications should be clear, concise, easy to read and without jargon.

Functions

Safety committees typically assume a wide range of responsibilities. Committee functions may include, but are not limited to:

- reviewing and keeping records of committee meetings;
- reviewing accident reports and analyses to determine both the causes of accidents and practical methods for preventing them;
- soliciting, reviewing and keeping records of employee reports of hazardous situations and making related recommendations to management;
- conducting and/or keeping and reviewing records of periodic self-inspections to monitor general safety compliance and identify potential hazards;
- monitoring and discussing regulations, facility equipment/design and work procedures that may impact safety within the unit;
- establishing specific safety objectives and goals and assisting management with the development, updating and dissemination of safety rules, policies and programs;
- issuing annual reports, bulletins and posters to raise awareness of safety issues and creating/administering incentive programs that promote safe work practices;
- monitoring, conducting and/or assisting in safety training; and
- conducting employee surveys to evaluate their attitudes toward safety.

Recommending and Implementing Solutions

To effectively address safety concerns, the unit safety committee should review the results from hazard assessments, evaluate and prioritize hazards, brainstorm for solutions, establish and recommend action plans to upper management for approval and be instrumental in implementing solutions.