

# Safety committees



Safety committees are often an overlooked but powerful tool that OSEA chapters can use to hold school districts accountable for ensuring safe working environments. An active and engaged safety committee can effectively address the safety of students and staff as well as hazardous conditions in the workplace.

## Purpose of a safety committee

**Oregon Administrative Rule (OAR) 437-001-0765** requires employers to establish and administer a safety committee to communicate and evaluate safety and health issues. The purpose of setting up a safety committee is to bring workers and management together in a nonadversarial, cooperative effort to promote safety and health. School districts fall under this rule.

## Duties of a safety committee

- Work with management to establish accident investigation procedures that will identify hazards and ensure they are corrected.
- Establish a system for employees to report hazards to management and suggest how to correct such hazards.
- Establish a procedure for reviewing inspection reports and making recommendations to management.
- Evaluate all accident and incident investigations and recommend how to prevent them from happening again.
- Make safety committee meeting minutes available for all employees to review.
- Evaluate how management holds employees accountable for working safely and recommend ways to strengthen accountability. Examples include evaluating the effectiveness of safety incentives, disciplinary policies and employee participation in identifying hazards.

## Frequency of meetings

Safety committees meet either monthly or quarterly.

## Makeup of the committee

The safety committee must have an equal number of employer-selected members and employee-elected (or volunteer) members. An employer-selected member can be a manager, supervisor or any other employee management chooses to serve on the committee as its representative. Employees can elect another employee or a supervisor to represent them.

If everyone on the committee agrees, there can be a majority of employee-elected members or  
**(over)**

volunteers, but the safety committee *must not* have a majority of employer-selected members.

## **Safety committee members must:**

Be trained in accident and incident investigation principles and know how to apply them. They must also be trained in hazard identification.

## **Helpful contact information**

Oregon OSHA offers a wide variety of safety and health services:

### **Public Education**

**503-947-7443; 888-292-5247, Option 2; ed.web@oregon.gov**

- Provides workshops and materials covering management of basic safety and health programs, safety committees, accident investigation, technical topics and job safety analysis.

### **Standards and Technical Resources**

**503-378-3272; 800-922-2689; tech.web@oregon.gov**

- Develops, interprets and gives technical advice on Oregon OSHA's safety and health rules.
- Publishes safe-practices guides, pamphlets and other materials for employers and employees.
- Manages the Oregon OSHA Resource Center, which offers safety videos, books, periodicals and research assistance for employers and employees.

### **Oregon OSHA offices**

- **Salem Central Office:** 350 Winter St. NE, third floor, Salem, OR 97301-3882; Phone: 503-378-3272; Toll-free: 800-922-2689; Fax: 503-947-7461; en Español: 800-843-8086.
- **Bend:** 1230 NE Third St., Suite A-115, Bend, OR 97701-4374; Phone: 541-388-6066; Consultation: 541-388-6068.
- **Eugene:** 1500 Valley River Drive, Suite 150, Eugene, OR 97401-4643; Phone: 541-686-7562; Consultation: 541-686-7913.
- **Medford:** 1840 Barnett Road, Suite D, Medford, OR 97504-8293; Phone: 541-776-6030; Consultation: 541-776-6016.
- **Pendleton:** 200 SE Hailey Ave., Suite 306, Pendleton, OR 97801-3072; Phone: 541-276-9175; Consultation: 541-276-2353.
- **Portland:** 16760 SW Upper Boones Ferry Road, Suite 200, Tigard, OR 97224-7696; Phone: 503-229-5910; Consultation: 503-229-6193.
- **Salem:** 1340 Tandem Ave. NE, Suite 160, Salem, OR 97301-8080; Phone: 503-378-3274; Consultation: 503-373-7819.

*For more information, contact Government Relations Specialist Soren Metzger, 971-283-1184, soren@osea.org.*