Summary

A health and safety committee is a joint worker-management team that assists the employer in creating and maintaining a safe workplace. In most Canadian jurisdictions a health and safety committee is mandatory. Even in workplaces where a committee is not required by the law, the benefits of a joint committee in addressing workplace health and safety needs are widely recognized. As a result, there is a trend toward establishing a committee on a voluntary basis even where one is not mandatory.

The health and safety committee is an advisory committee to ensure a healthy and safe workplace and not as a body responsible for enforcing legislation. The committee recommends actions to management who has the authority to make changes to meet goals and objectives. The following list illustrates some important activities of the committee:

- Hold regular meetings (at least as many meetings as required by the law)
- Identify workplace hazards and recommend remedial action(s)
- Respond to employee concerns regarding health and safety
- Assist management in the development and implementation of safe work practices and emergency procedures
- Participate in the development, implementation and monitoring of health and safety policies and programs
- Participate in workplace inspections
- Participate in accident/incident investigations
- Participate in resolving work refusals
- Promote health and safety education and training

This guide will assist committee members, managers, and health and safety professionals to establish an efficient and effectively functioning committee.
Table of Contents

Section I  Health and Safety Committee Basic Facts
   1. What is a Health and Safety Committee?  . 2
   2. Responsibilities of the Health and Safety Committee ............................................. 3

Section II  Establishing a Health and Safety Committee
   1. Who is Responsible for Establishing a Committee? ................................................... 6
   2. Guidelines for Forming a Health and Safety Committee ........................................ 14

Section III Making the Committee Effective and Efficient
   1. Demonstrating Management Commitment ................................................................. 22
   2. Defining Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures ...................................................... 24
   3. Establishing Procedures and Guidelines for Committee Meetings ............................ 30
   4. Measuring the Effectiveness and Efficiency of a Committee .................................... 38

Section IV Recognizing Workplace Hazards
   1. The Committee’s Responsibilities ......................................................................... 46
   2. Types of Hazards ..................................................................................................... 46
   3. Methods of Hazard Recognition ............................................................................. 60
   4. Hazard Reporting ................................................................................................... 63
   5. Workplace Inspections ......................................................................................... 64

Section V  Accident Investigation
   1. What Types of Accidents are to be Investigated? ...................................................... 90
   2. Purpose of Accident Investigation ......................................................................... 91
   3. The Accident Investigation Process ...................................................................... 93
   4. Determining the Root Cause ................................................................................ 97
   5. Recommendations ............................................................................................... 101
   6. The Written Report ............................................................................................ 102
Section VI  Controlling Workplace Hazards

1. Setting Priorities .............................. 108
2. Hazard Control Strategies .................. 109
3. Hazard Control Practices .................... 111
4. Fire Prevention ................................. 115
5. First Aid ......................................... 116
6. Employee Training .............................. 117
7. Exposure Limits ................................. 119

Section VII  Health and Safety Legislation

1. Canadian OH&S Legislation ................. 128
2. Workplace Hazardous Materials
   Information System (WHMIS) ................. 133
3. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDSs) .... 140
4. US OH&S Legislation ........................... 143

Section VIII  Information Sources

1. Canadian Government Departments
   with Responsibility for Occupational
   Health and Safety ............................... 148
2. US Federal Safety and Health Agencies ... 154

Appendices

A1. OSH Program Checklist ..................... 158
A2. Selecting a Consultant ....................... 163
A3. Abbreviations ................................. 166
## HEALTH & SAFETY COMMITTEE ESTABLISHMENT CRITERIA
(as required by OH&S law)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>WHEN DO I NEED ONE?</th>
<th>COMMITTEE SIZE</th>
<th>REPRESENTATION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Canada: Federal</strong></td>
<td>Mandatory – 20 or more employees</td>
<td>At least 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>British Columbia</strong></td>
<td>Mandatory – when there are 20 or more employees or when “required by order”</td>
<td>Not less than 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Alberta</strong></td>
<td>As directed by the Minister</td>
<td>At least 3 and not more than 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Saskatchewan</strong></td>
<td>Mandatory – when 10 employees or more</td>
<td>At least 2 and not more than 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Manitoba</strong></td>
<td>Mandatory – 20 or more employees or as designated by Lt Governor</td>
<td>At least 4 and not more than 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. Defining Roles, Responsibilities and Procedures

State Purpose and Objectives

The purpose and objectives of the committee should be declared in the company’s safety policy statement. As well, the committee may establish its own mission statement specifying its purpose and goals. It helps to define the committee’s duties and responsibilities more specifically than those which are only broadly stated in the health and safety legislation.

The following are examples of committee objectives:

- **Create** and **maintain** active interest in health and safety, and accident prevention.
- **Recommend** effective action about accident causing conditions.
- **Promote** awareness about health and safety issues.
- **Promote** cooperation between management and employees in dealing with health and safety issues.
- **Help** identify problems, evaluate risks, and recommend control measures.
- **Assist employer** in implementation of control measures and evaluation of their effectiveness.
- **Cooperate** with the employer in formulating policy and procedures.
- **Monitor** and **improve** workplace health and safety.

The committee should have only a limited number of objectives in the policy statement; having too many objectives can lead to members having different priorities and spreading their energy in too many directions.
### JOB SAFETY ANALYSIS (JSA) WORKSHEET

**Industry:** Construction  
**Operation:** Road repair  
**Job:** Pavement repair

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Who does it</th>
<th>Hazards</th>
<th>How to prevent injury/accident</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operating a jack-hammer</td>
<td>Joe Doe</td>
<td>- noise</td>
<td>- ear protectors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- vibration</td>
<td>- vibration-absorbing gloves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Applicable Legislation:** *OH&S Act and Regulations* *(refer to the act and regulations in your jurisdiction)*

---

**Date:**  
**Developed by:**
5. Workplace Inspections

Health and safety committees plan, conduct, report and monitor workplace inspections which are an important part of the overall occupational health and safety program.

Purpose

Inspections allow committee members to:

- hear the concerns of employees and supervisors
- gain further understanding of jobs and tasks
- identify existing and potential hazards
- determine underlying causes of hazards
- monitor hazard controls (personal protective equipment, engineering controls, policies, procedures)
- recommend corrective action

Aspects to Examine

Every inspection must examine the who, what, where, when and how. Pay particular attention to items most likely to develop into unsafe or unhealthy conditions because of stress, wear, impact, vibration, heat, corrosion, chemical reaction, or misuse. Inspect the entire workplace area each time including areas where there is less activity such as parking lots, rest areas, office storage areas, and locker rooms.

Different inspection teams can examine different aspects of the workplace. Teams can divide their areas of responsibility in two ways:

- by location (yard, warehouse, maintenance facility, office, production line), or
- by class of items (tools, buildings, utilities, materials, mobile equipment)

This division results in a separate inspection report from each team based on location or hazard category. Teams should alternate areas of responsibility from month to month.
3. Hazard Control Practices

Ventilation
The purpose of ventilation is to control air contaminants, temperature and humidity in the work environment and provide fresh air. Two kinds of ventilation are used:

Local Exhaust Ventilation
Local exhaust systems trap and remove contaminants near the generating source.

Local ventilation is used when:
- contaminants released are toxic,
- sources of contaminants are localized (released in a small area), and
- direct exposure of employees is possible.

Local exhaust ventilation is typically used for abrasive blasting, grinding, polishing, buffing, spray painting, open solvent baths, and toxic chemical storage areas.

General or Dilution Ventilation
The dilution ventilation removes the contaminated air and brings in outside air to dilute the concentration of airborne contaminants in the work environment.

Dilution ventilation is appropriate when:
- contaminants released are relatively non-toxic,
- quantity of contaminant is not excessive,
- contaminant is released at a substantial distance from the breathing zone of employees, and
- emission sources are widely distributed in the area.