How To Conduct A Good Safety Meeting

ADMINISTRATOR’S

NEFEC
NORTH EAST FLORIDA EDUCATIONAL CONSORTIUM
HANDBOOK
HOW TO CONDUCT A GOOD SAFETY MEETING

Chapter 442.012, Florida Statutes, mandates Safety Committees for all school districts. These statutes require the following for the employer and committee:

**The employer shall:**

1. Determine the total number of committee members, set the tenure for members, and assure that employer representation does not exceed employee representation;
2. Select committee members from a prioritized list;
3. Assure the committee convenes at least quarterly;
4. Compensate each committee member his or her regular hourly wage while performing committee work;
5. Issue a timely written response to written recommendations from the committee;
6. Maintain complete and accurate minutes of committee meetings for at least three years; and
7. Assure the committee meets its duties.

**The committee shall:**

1. Establish and communicate procedures for conducting internal safety inspections;
2. Establish and communicate procedures for investigating all workplace accidents, safety-related incidents, illnesses, occupational diseases and fatalities;
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of and make recommendations to improve the employers safety rules, policies, and procedures;
4. Establish and communicate guidelines for training committee members;
5. Post notices of meetings for all employees to see;
6. Provide minutes of committee meetings in an area where employees normally gather; and
7. Retain original communications between the committee and the employer for not less than three years.

A chief objective of safety meetings is to train employees in ways to prevent injury. You can accomplish this objective if you:

- Select an appropriate subject. (A topic for a safety meeting should be timely and pertinent.)
- Know the material.
- Present topics in an interesting manner.
- Direct the meeting.
- Invite participation.
- Reach a conclusion or agreement on a course of action.
1. Select an Appropriate Subject
   Examples of such subjects might be:
   • Current injury or audit results.
   • Newly developed safety procedures.
   • New equipment – unique features.
   • “Lessons Learned” from recent accidents

2. Know the Material
   Always start preparation early, preferably a month before the meeting:
   • Study the technical aspects and make sure you are comfortable talking about them.
   • Seek out persons who have conducted or are scheduled to conduct meetings on similar subjects. A short conversation or meeting between you and other leaders can be very beneficial in bringing up new ideas.
   • Review and select audiovisual aids to help your presentation.
   • Be prepared to answer questions on correct practices with up-to-date information.

3. Present Topics in an Interesting Manner
   You can make your safety meetings interesting if you:
   • Avoid pure lecture whenever possible and encourage active participation from the audience.
   • Ask for employees’ experiences with the subject presented.
   • Ask how they can apply the information you have given them.
   • Vary your presentation.

4. Direct the Meeting
   • Maintain control and keep to the point. Acknowledge side issues and discuss them briefly or defer them for a future meeting or later individual discussion.
   • Compliment anyone who makes a good contribution.
   • Let employees disagree, but do not let the meeting degenerate into a gripe session.
   • Avoid interruptions, such as telephone calls.

5. Invite Participation
   When preparing a meeting, you can ask an employee or group of employees to:
   • Present the main meeting topic when appropriate. You can rotate this responsibility among your employees.
   • Join you in making a presentation.
   • Debate a prepared topic.
   • Prepare a skit to make a point.
   • Demonstrate the use of tools or other equipment.

You can also form a few committees, such as an Inspection Committee, and discuss a report from each committee on a regular basis.
During the meeting:
- Invite comments.
- Invite discussion after a film. (Never simply show a film without thorough comment.)
- Ask questions that require more than a “yes” or “no” answer. (You can start questions with “what?” “why?” or “how?”.)

6. Reach Conclusion or Agreement
   A safety meeting usually seems more satisfactory if you agree on a course of action. This action can be to improve or correct a situation.

   Make plans to get whatever information is needed to resolve a question. It is critically important that you provide answers to employees’ questions as soon as possible. Even if the answers are unpopular, at least you will have shown that you are interested enough to take the trouble to find them out.

How To Vary Your Presentation
The more varied the ways in which you present information and organize discussion in your safety meetings, the easier it will be to keep your employees’ interest.

Try to avoid lecturing without allowing for discussion. One-way communication is incomplete. You need feedback from your employees.

You need not always do something different in safety meetings. The following are some ways in which you can vary the presentation on occasion.

Panel Discussion
The use of a panel permits several people to discuss different aspects of a subject. You can call on your employees to be on the panel. You should select the panel members for their special background, or they should develop information on the portion of the subject assigned to them. After the panel members have presented their comments, you can invite the audience to direct questions to specific members of the panel.

Debate
You can start a stimulating discussion by holding a debate.
1. Choose a topical, controversial subject.
2. Place a statement about the subject in two envelopes, write on one envelope, “For,” and on the other, “Against,” and give one envelope to each of the two debaters. (Use your employees.)
3. Tell the debaters to speak for or against the statement as indicated on the envelopes regardless of their own feelings about the subject.
4. Write the points the two debaters make on a blackboard after they have given their reasons for them.
5. Ask the group for its opinion on the subject after the debaters have spoken.
6. Let all participants in the meeting have their say.
7. Sum up the “pros and cons.”
8. Ask the group to reach a conclusion.

Quiz
You can use a question and answer approach to review safety rules, area practices, and information that has been previously presented in verbal or written form.

Demonstration
This type of meeting can convey a convincing message when words alone would not suffice. If the piece of equipment or object being demonstrated is not large enough for everyone in the audience to see, you should use enlarged photographs, slides, sketches, or other means to provide a visual representation. Another way to demonstrate small equipment so everyone can see it is to have several employees, located throughout the audience, hold duplicates of the equipment and point to features as you describe or explain them.

Skit
A safety skit can be an effective way to make a point. When skits portray normal situations, the members of the audience will project themselves into the situation and remember it more vividly than if you had simply described the situation to them. Sometimes, a skit can be more effective than a demonstration in showing how something should be done. Some skit tips to follow are:

- The skit should portray a situation familiar to the audience.
- The skit should remain simple; too many points will blur the issue.
- Simple props should be used whenever possible.
- The actors should preferably be from the group attending the meeting.
- Memory work on the part of the actors should be kept to a minimum.
- The participants should have an opportunity to go over the skit to help them be at ease when performing.

Visual Presentation
The use of movies, videotapes, 35-mm slides, “safetygraphs,” and chart pads provides variety. However, remember that these materials are meant to aid your presentation, not take its place.
1. You should preview movies and 35-mm slides before use. Prepare appropriate remarks to introduce the material. At the conclusion, either summarize how the information presented applies to the needs of the group or encourage discussion about the points raised.
2. “Safetygraphs” provide a useful device to encourage discussion in meetings of not more than 25 people. A “safetygraph” is a spiral binding collection of large posters that the audience can observe one at a time while you discuss it. Suggested comments for each poster are provided. You can modify the comments to make them pertinent for your group.
3. You can use chart pads to portray to the group the points made during a discussion. You can also use chart pads to summarize the points you have presented.

Using Visual Aids
You can use visual aids to serve several purposes:
1. To remind yourself when giving a presentation of the subject of your next comment; in this way, you may be able to avoid the use of notes.
2. To increase the retention value of the information you present.
3. To promote a better understanding of the subject.
However, visual aids can be a distraction if they:

- Are on display before you are ready to comment on them.
- Remain on display when you are commenting on something else.
- Are too small and cluttered to be seen or understood.

To prevent visual aids being a distraction, you should keep them covered until they are needed. Once your comments are completed, you should place the visual aids where they will no longer be seen. An exception to this arrangement is when you need previous aids on display for reference purposes as you show subsequent ones.

When you intend to use charts or display cards, you should make certain that the lighting on them will be adequate.

When you use a projector in a darkened room, it is better not to keep turning the lights off and on. Overhead projectors are used to project 8-1/2- inch by 11-inch transparencies. When using them, keep the room lights on. You are the sole operator:

- You face the audience as you talk.
- You can write on the transparency with a crayon, thus providing a form of motion for the visual aid.
- By using overlays, you can build up or change a chart as you talk.

Whenever possible, you should look at your audience while showing slides. By checking out of the corner of your eye, you should be sure the correct slide is on. Use duplicate slides when you need to refer to the same slide several different times during the talk. If you intend to make comments between slides, you can place a blank slide between them to make the screen dark during the comment.

**Safety Meeting Checklist**

Asking yourself the following list of questions should help you develop a more effective safety meeting.

- What is the purpose of the meeting?
- What type of meeting will be best for effective presentation?
- What background information should be developed?
- What questions should I ask to draw out the group?
- What responses can I expect?
- How shall I summarize the major points?
- Whom shall I invite other than participants?
- What size room is needed? Are there sufficient chairs? Is the air conditioning, heating, or ventilation adequate?
- What equipment shall I need for using the visual aids?
- Would teaser publicity before the meeting be helpful? Should I give the group information about the subject in advance to make the meeting more effective?
- What kind of follow-up should I make after the meeting?
- How shall I arrange for the meeting material to be distributed to those who are unable to attend?
In-House And Outside Information Sources

Every month, each of the cost centers may give several safety meetings. These programs can be excellent, but the leaders will have to spend time preparing for them. Remember, your fellow employees offer a wealth of information just for the asking.

The topics listed below are representative of safety meeting materials available from outside sources including the North East Florida Educational Consortium (NEFEC).

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<td>Infection Control at Work</td>
<td>Bloodborne Pathogens</td>
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<td>Back Injury Prevention</td>
<td>Hazard Communication</td>
<td>Reading Material Data Sheets</td>
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<td>Hearing Protection</td>
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<td>Epidemic</td>
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In some cases, meetings may actually be conducted by persons from outside the school district. Information on these topics can be obtained by contacting such agencies as:

- Area Medical Centers
- State Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control
- State Department of Highway Safety
- State Department of Alcohol and Drug Control
- Drug Rehabilitation Centers or Clinics
- Public Utility Agencies
- State or Local Safety Councils

Safety Committee Structure:

The school district will send notices of meetings, accompanied by an agenda, to each committee member. There should be sufficient items of business for at least one meeting a month. The statutes only require quarterly meetings. However when the interval between meetings is longer than one month, the members tend to lose interest.

The following is presented as the school district’s standard order of business that has been adopted for safety committee meetings in general:

1. **Call to Order.** The meeting should be called to order promptly at the appointed time by the Committee Chairperson.
2. **Roll Call By the Secretary.** Names of members and others present should be recorded. Members who cannot attend should notify the secretary in advance and the reasons for absence should be noted in the minutes. A substitute should be arranged for in a member’s absence.

3. **Introduction of Visitors.**

4. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** should be reviewed and corrections and or additions made.

5. **Unfinished Business.** All matters on which definite decisions have not been made are brought up for needed action.

6. **Review of Accidents and Statistics.** The cause should be determined for each accident and preventive measures discussed. Minor incidents should be reviewed if time permits.

7. **Adjournment.** Minutes should be taken, prepared, and circulated by the secretary, after approval by the Chairperson. The service of meeting minutes is two fold; they are a means of keeping the committee informed of the group’s work and they are also a good follow-up tool.