

# Statewide Safety Committee Charter

## Revised January 2016

### Mission Statement

**“To promote a safe and healthy work environment for all Nebraska state employees”**

The Workers' Compensation reform Act of 1993 (LB 757) required all employers, including the state of Nebraska, to create safety committees. The Act stipulated that each committee would be created with equal representation from labor and management. The committee established by the state to meet this requirement is called the Statewide Safety Committee.

The committee adopted its mission statement; “To promote a safe and healthy work environment for all Nebraska state employees.” The committee meets bi-monthly. The committee members encourage state employees to make recommendations and suggestions that will assist in accomplishing the group’s mission.

Who has the ultimate responsibility in assuring that you work safely? YOU!!! The Statewide Safety Committee wants your input on how to ensure that state employees work in the safest possible manner. Workplace safety is the responsibility of each individual and each agency. To promote workplace safety, the Statewide Safety Committee needs input from all agencies.

How can you contribute to a safe and healthy workplace? Ask your manager, supervisor, union steward, or agency head about safety procedures in your workplace. Find out who to contact in your agency on issues of workplace safety and health. Contact your agency safety committee or the Statewide Safety Committee with your ideas and suggestions.

### Committee Objectives:

- Assist in reducing human suffering, frequency and severity of occupational accidents.
- Serve as a link between labor and management on safety topics that affect the agency’s operations.
- Gain employee support by including all levels of labor and management in the decision making process.
- Provide an open communication channel to employees for suggesting new safety ideas.
- Improve behaviors and conditions at all levels throughout the state and strive to create an accident-free environment.

An effective committee brings labor and management together in an effort to achieve the common goal of a safe workforce. It is this coordinated effort that provides the key to cultural change. Experience shows that employees are likely to accept and embrace change when they are included in the decision-making process.

The Committee can perform a variety of activities. These activities should focus on stimulating and maintaining state-wide interest in the prevention of accidents. The focus should not be limited to employee safety, but should also embrace other potential areas of loss, such as auto accidents, property damage, environmental protection, general liability, etc. Committees that achieve visible results are likely to gain the support of the entire organization. The Committee can assume a combination of the following responsibilities:

- **Analyze Trends** - Review past accident data, then identify any recurrence of different types of accidents, then

determine prevention plans, especially loss leading accidents (e.g., slip/trip/fall, material handling).

- **Increase Safety Awareness** - Discuss and develop methods for increasing safety awareness (e.g., posters, pamphlets, agency meetings, incentive programs, name recognition).
- **Employee Training** - Identify and coordinate safety training needs.
- **Self-Audits** - Conduct inspections of the property buildings and facilities and assist in developing action plans to reduce hazards.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation** - Track the results of corrective actions and determine the effectiveness of committee activities.
- **Accident Investigations** - Review accidents and/or near misses to determine root causes and eliminate the chance of recurrence.

In establishing a committee related objectives and responsibilities should clearly outline that once these activities are performed, a method of reporting and tracking will be developed to evaluate the effectiveness of the committee's activities. Examples of this are the official meeting minutes and action registers.

## Membership

The appropriate selection of members is a critical function in establishing a successful committee. Members should be truly interested in the welfare of their co-workers. It is important for all levels of the organization to be represented - both labor and management alike. At a minimum, labor representation on the committee will be 50%. This distribution will help to promote the open exchange of ideas and opinions by assuring members that employees have a prominent voice in the forum. From time to time, additional employees may be asked to attend meetings to present information or views on safety problems, issues and solutions.

The Committee shall strive to have members from Code and Constitutional agencies.

Labor representation will come from the hourly employees throughout the Agencies. The major Unions should appoint their representative(s), with the assistance of the Administrative Services Risk Management. Working with the Unions, the Director of Risk Management will maintain the 50% minimum of labor representatives.

## Size of the Committee

Committee membership is representative of the Agencies within the State. The group should be small enough to function smoothly but large enough to foster communication between agencies - 12 to 16 members is recommended. A quorum of members who must be present (including teleconferencing) for valid transaction of committee business. This includes at least one co-Chairperson (labor or management) and 40% of the remaining members. This provided a majority of members to conduct committee business.

## Co-Chairpersons

The co-chairs will be a labor and management representative who shares the responsibility of overseeing the Safety Committee's activities, including coordinating the bi-monthly meetings. The co-chairs should be nominated and confirmed during a monthly committee meeting. It's a good idea to rotate this responsibility among committee members with a term of 24-months.

## Selecting Members

Members should be enlisted through a volunteer process, appointed by their Agency or Union. This will help ensure that members are interested in achieving results and are dedicated to creating and maintaining a safe workplace. A Safety Committee member should have the following qualities:

- Interest in safety issues
- Being receptive to new ideas
- Familiarity with processes and procedures
- Ability to express his/her thoughts and ideas
- Willingness to participate in projects and meetings
- A high level of respect among peers

The members should be rotated periodically for a 24-month term to assist in promoting fresh ideas and maximizing the scope of involvement. The rotation should be staggered to maintain continuity of the committee so that complete turnover of the committee does not occur at the same time.

## Determine the Schedule

Meetings of the Safety Committee should be held on a bi-monthly basis, on the fourth Tuesday of the month.

The meeting room location will be announced in the Agenda.

## Set Timelines

Time limits should be placed on the meetings. Currently the meeting should be completed in two-hours or less for scheduling purposes. These limits will assist the co-chairs in keeping the meeting focused. Specific timelines should be set for the completion of projects and action items.

## Recording Secretary

The Safety Committee shall have a Recording Secretary to record the official minutes of the meeting, which are confirmed by the committee members.

The official minutes will be typed and include the attachments discussed/presented during the meeting. Electronic format (Microsoft Word .doc or Adobe Acrobat .pdf) is preferred. The co-chairs, together with the Recording Secretary, will maintain the original copy in a file/binder (or in electronic format) at the Office of Risk Management. The official minutes should be distributed to the committee member's before the next committee meeting.

## Prepare an Agenda

The committee co-chairpersons should prepare an agenda for each meeting to provide structure for the committee's discussions. This established agenda should be followed closely so that the chair(s) can maintain control of the meeting and increase the productivity of the group during each session. The agenda should include the following:

- **Call to Order:** The meeting should begin promptly at the specified time.
- **Roll Call:** Record names of those present. Those who are unable to attend should notify the secretary in advance.
- **Introductions:** Introduce any guests to the committee.
- **Review Minutes:** Review the minutes from the last meeting and follow up on any old business.
- **New Business:** Any new safety-related issues should be discussed at this point. Anyone wishing to raise an issue should contact the chairperson in advance so that it can be placed on the agenda. For example, if an employee notices a recurring unsafe act or condition, they may recommend that the committee (Agency member) investigate the exposure. A manager might recommend the initiation of a safety orientation program for all new hires. These ideas become topics for discussion. The committee then develops a plan of action for each.
- **Review of Action Register Items and Safety Committee Functions:** This portion will depend on the extent of the committee's responsibilities. The committee may review recent accident investigations and reports of near misses to determine root causes; conduct inspections of the facility; evaluate recent training activities; and determine action plans to reduce hazards. These action plans should include a focus on continually increasing safety awareness.

- **Education/Training:** Identify areas where specific training is needed. This may mean for the committee (to enhance its ability to achieve objectives), for specific work groups (to address trends or recurrences) or for the entire workforce. Outside speakers can present on topics such as Preventing Material Handling Injuries to educate the committee in specific areas of safety. Determine the tools that are necessary to educate the agency and offer recommendations for training programs.
- **Adjournment:** The meeting should close with a clear understanding of each member's responsibilities and action items for completion prior to the next meeting. Your Agenda can be made as detailed or as simple as the committee wishes.

The Agenda will be sent to Committee Members one week before the meeting date.

## Subcommittees or Task Force

In some instances, the committee may identify issues that need more focused attention. The committee may discover accident trends in the workplace, a recurrence of certain types of vehicle accidents or a rash of claims being made against the State for slips/trips/falls. It is also possible that a problem exists that only affects a small specific part of the operation. In this case, the committee may choose to elect a subcommittee or task force to focus the particular problem at hand. The subcommittee should meet separately and should report its findings and recommendations on a regular basis.

## Communications

One of the primary functions of a Safety Committee is to promote communication on safety issues to the entire State. A summary of the minutes of each committee meeting should be posted on the Division of Administrative Services/Risk Management website ([www.das.nebraska.gov/risk](http://www.das.nebraska.gov/risk)) and the Office of the Risk Manager to inform all employees of the progress of the committee on its safety goals. It is essential to promote the activities of the committee through periodic postings in public venues such as internal newsletters or employee bulletin boards in order to maintain employee enthusiasm for the program. By conveying the results of the committee's activities and future objectives, the committee can earn statewide support for its efforts.

## Training

The committee may be assigned a wide variety of responsibilities, so it is critical that the members are provided with the necessary tools to achieve their objectives. Occasionally, the committee may need additional training or direction on certain topics (accident investigation, inspections, etc.) in order to be efficient in its work. The committee may also identify areas in which training is needed for specific work groups or for the whole staff. Outside speakers or experts can assist by training employees on these topics. There are also many sources for written safety materials that can be ordered inexpensively or even free of charge. Some entities choose to build a library of these types of safety materials to help with the ongoing objective of maintaining a safe environment.

## Establishing Goals and Objectives

The committee should establish goals and objectives for a specified period of time. The goals should be measurable and have a direct impact on the safety of the employees. Committee objectives should be communicated to the workforce to encourage employee participation in achieving safety goals. Completion of the committee's goals and objectives can provide numerous benefits:

- Reduction in unsafe behaviors
- Fewer accident and lowered costs
- Increased safety awareness among employees
- Increased management support for committee activities
- Motivation for committee members to "keep up the good work"
- Increased committee involvement in safety issues throughout the organization
- Encourage and support other safety committees

- Provide guidance and recommendations in the development of safety plans for State agencies

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Statewide Safety Committee is a representation of the entire workforce. By promoting employee involvement, an organization can delegate many duties to the committee. However, the functions of the committee should not replace management's responsibility to participate in the process of creating and maintaining a safe workplace. A safety committee, as with any other operation, cannot successfully function without the full, visible support of management.

The overall mission of the safety committee must be established and be communicated to the entire workforce. Parameters should be set regarding the committee's involvement in non-safety matters. The group should remain focused on the topics at hand and not diverge into other workplace issues. The discussions should be positive and maintain the goal of the prevention of workplace injuries.

Management participation and commitment are the keys to the program's success. Nothing provides incentive to an employee like recognition by management for a job well done.

## **Reevaluation of the Committee**

Once the Safety Committee has been operational for several months, the members should evaluate their structure and procedures including this document. Self-audits can be used to determine the effectiveness of meetings, members, subcommittees and leadership. These audits will identify areas where improvements can be made to enhance the committee's contribution to the entity and its employees. Following are some questions the committee should consider when evaluating their operations:

- Are projects and action registers being completed on time?
- Are the co-chairpersons providing direction and leadership for the meetings?
- Has there been a reduction in incidents due to committee activities?
- Are messages being communicated to the entire workforce?
- Is there an increased level of awareness throughout the state?
- Are all committee members participating in the process?
- Is there a general acceptance of the committee's activities among employees?
- Has the committee received the appropriate management support?
- Are Members involved in committee activities outside of the state meetings?
- Are the goals and objectives clearly understood by all?

The true objective of the Statewide Safety Committee is to eliminate unsafe behavior at all levels throughout the State and strive to create an accident-free workplace and community. The success of the committee depends upon the understanding and participation of employees in the recommendations made by the group. Communication is important and should always be a two-way street. Include the entire staff in the process by keeping them informed and by consistently encouraging input. When labor and management work together toward a common goal the results can be impressive. With accident prevention as the main objective, everyone can see the benefits of committee activities.

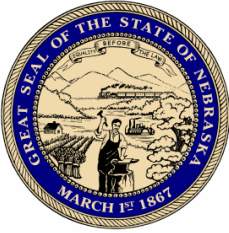
## Committee Agenda and Minutes Suggested Format

### INCLUDE IN THE AGENDA (1-WEEK PRIOR TO THE MEETING VIA EMAIL):

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### COMMITTEE MINUTES INCLUDE (EMAILED TO MEMBERS BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING):

- **Meeting Date and Start Time:**
- **Members and Guests in Attendance:**
- **Review previous Minutes: No/Yes/: By:**
- **Follow-up on Old Business:**
- **New Business:**
- **Action Register Results (see attached Action Register Matrix):**
- **Accident Review (Major WC losses):**
- **Agency Safety Training Activities:**
- **Remarks/Upcoming Events:**
- **Time That Meeting Adjourned:**
- **Date of Next Meeting:**



## Action Register Matrix

Date	Target / Goal	Action Steps/ Recommendations	Responsible Parties	Target Dates	Status
		◇		•	
		◇		•	
		◇		•	
		◇		•	
		◇		•	
		◇		•	
		◇		•	