



Your Workplace Safety & Health Committee's Annual Check-up

It's always a good idea to conduct an annual evaluation of a critical system which you depend upon, whether it be your own annual health physical or a quality review of your workplace safety & health committee. Here are some things to check. Be sure to make recommendations for improvement.

- Check the heart & blood pressure....** Do you have management commitment and employee involvement? Are all major departments represented and are their representatives regularly attending? Does the committee have a "behind-the-scenes facilitator" and are the positions of the committee "leaders" rotated regularly among the members? Has management developed policy, procedures, and participant's guidelines to help promote the work of the committee?

- Check lungs & respiration....** Are meetings regularly scheduled at a convenient time and place for most participants? Do the meetings start and end on time? Do all others in the workplace know of the good work of the committee?

- Check the central nervous system....** Does the committee understand their mission and intent? Are their activities still supporting problem solving in order to prevent injury and illness of employees and reduce organizational losses - workers' compensation costs, property damage, and good will of the clients served?

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☑ **Check the recent medical history....** Is the committee productive? Are appropriate safety and health problems being brought to the attention of the committee? Are there some recent successes that can be highlighted and advertised? In the past year, have there been any failed projects that can be seen as "lessons learned"?

☑ **Check weight and blood chemistry....** Are efforts being made to make the work of the safety committee pleasant, maybe even fun? Have members been educated and trained to accomplish their committee tasks? Do others want to join when it's time to replace a member?

☑ **Check the documentation....** Is an agenda developed and passed out prior to the meeting? Are simple but accurate notes taken and posted after the meeting? Are the committee's recommendations for change being forwarded to management? Is management responding in a timely fashion? Are all committee records being kept for at least 3 years?



Here are some strategies for successful meetings:

- Start and stop on time.
- Arrange the tables or chairs in a circle or horseshoe shape so everyone can have eye contact.
- Check the agenda at the beginning of the meeting and make last-minute changes.
- Follow the agenda and don't get side-tracked.
- Agree upon how to agree when decisions are needed – will you use Robert's Rules of Order, Majority Rule, or a form of *Consensus*? (We recommend Consensus).
- Have healthy refreshments available.
- Find opportunities to praise, not blame!

Remember - When Federal OSHA visits, they ask about the presence of an active safety and health committee. Even though Federal OSHA and many state-plan programs do not require such committees, they do acknowledge committees as a sign of a safe workplace and a reduction in penalty is sometimes given. Several states do require safety and health committees. For example, see Oregon OSHA at <http://www.cbs.state.or.us/external/osha/>.