

## **SAFETY COMMITTEES AND SAFETY MEETINGS: Options for Employers**

Virtually all Oregon employers are required to either have safety committees or hold safety meetings.

### **1. Employers with more than 10 employees:**

While all businesses with more than ten employees were required to have safety committees under existing rules, some of these businesses are now eligible for safety meetings instead. These employers should be sure their current practices comply with the new regulations and consider whether they are eligible and wish to convert to safety meetings.

### **2. Employers with 10 or fewer employees:**

Employers with ten or fewer employees, which previously were not required to have safety committees or meetings at all, now have until September 19, 2009, to comply with the new rules.

Use this chart to determine which options apply to your business:

<b>If you have:</b>	<b>You can have a safety committee</b>	<b>You can have safety meetings</b>
10 or fewer employees for more than half of the year	Yes	Yes
Multiple offices with 10 or fewer employees at each location	Yes	Yes
More than 10 employees but over half report to construction sites	Yes	Yes
More than 10 employees but over half are mobile or move frequently between sites	Yes	Yes
More than 10 employees but most do not regularly work outside an office environment	Yes	Yes
More than 10 employees and none of the above applies	Yes	No

Although the regulations don't define "office environment," OSHA representatives have told us they intend this term to refer to the lowest hazard environments – "paper cut risks," as they put it.

If your business is eligible to choose whether to have a safety committee or hold safety meetings, you'll find the safety meeting requirements significantly less cumbersome. The chart below compares these two options.

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Safety Committee</b>	<b>Safety Meetings</b>
Membership / Attendance	Equal numbers of management and non-management employees. 11-20 employees: minimum 2 members 20+ employees: minimum 4 members Must be paid for their time.	All available employees must attend and be paid at their regular rate.
Meeting Frequency	Quarterly (office only environments) Monthly (all other employers)	Quarterly (office environments) Monthly (all other employers <sup>1</sup> )
Recordkeeping	Names of attendees, meeting date, issues discussed, recommendations and persons responsible, reports and evaluations. Record must be kept for three years.	None required if all employees attend. <sup>2</sup> Otherwise, names of attendees, meeting date, issues discussed. Record must be kept for three years.
Training	Committee members must be trained in hazard identification and accident investigation	None specified
Safety and Health Inspections	Quarterly inspections required for most employers	None required
Duties	Elect chairperson; Establish accident investigation procedures; Develop a system for employees to report hazards/suggestions; Review inspection reports and make recommendations to management; Evaluate accident investigations and recommend improvements; Make safety committee meeting minutes available for all employees; Evaluate management's accountability system for safety and health issues.	Discuss Safety and health issues; Review accident investigations, causes, and suggested corrective measures.

Many employers will appreciate the less onerous documentation requirements of safety meetings. Whichever approach your business chooses, we suggest adopting written policies evidencing your approach to maintaining compliance.

Please contact B. Kevin Burgess for further information.

<sup>1</sup> In addition to monthly meetings, businesses that employ construction workers must hold safety meetings before the start of each new job that will last more than one week.

<sup>2</sup> Employers in construction, utility work, and manufacturing must document these items and make records available to all employees, even if meetings had full attendance.

