

S30 – Opening Statement

Worker Participation

Having a good communication route with your employees is an extremely significant factor in the improvement of health and safety performance in your workplace.

The Worker Participation Procedure covers all aspects of consultation, communication and worker participation. It provides detailed information on how to run safety committees and work with union appointed safety representatives and worker safety representatives.

A template for a safety committee agenda is provided as guidance.



S30 – Worker Participation

What is this?

This is a written procedure which covers all aspects of consultation, communication and worker participation, and provides detailed information on how to run safety committees and work with union appointed safety representatives and worker safety representatives.

The person responsible for implementing this procedure is:

What do I need to do?

The responsible manager must ensure that:

- There are good arrangements in place for consultation and communication within the workplace on health and safety matters (this is usually achieved by organising a safety committee);
- Each area/sector of a site has representation at the safety committee meeting. Where a trade union is recognised on the site indicates a desire to appoint a representative under the provision of the Safety Representatives and Safety Committees Regulations 1977. The responsible manager should accept the appointment to the safety committee;

Note: On small sites the whole workforce may be requested to attend the meeting;

- Minutes are taken for every safety committee meeting and to promote the effective discussion of health and safety, the minutes of the previous meeting and the new agenda are displayed on notice boards well in advance of the meetings;
- A competent person chairs the safety committee;
- Each safety committee meets at least once every six months;
- A sufficient number and quality of subordinate Managers and Supervisors are appointed as permanent members of each safety committee;
- Wherever appropriate, specialist advisors such as health and safety advisors, Occupational Health Consultants, etc. are invited to attend the committee;
- Contractors, temporary workers and visitors are made aware of health and safety risks.

The responsible manager must make sure there are good external communications. He must ensure:

- Relevant communication with statutory authorities and external parties are responded to;
- He maintains good relations with the local community where opportunities arise;
- He communicates appropriately with the media following an accident.



What does a safety committee do?

A safety committee plays an active part in the proactive management of health and safety matters affecting employees on site. Regular agenda items should include:

- A review of the previous safety committee minutes;
 - A review of any accidents, incidents and near hits that have occurred during the previous period;
 - The top health and safety issues of all persons attending the safety committee;
 - An examination of current policies and procedures to ensure they remain effective;
 - An overview of any inspections and audits that have been undertaken since the last meeting;
 - A review of any health and safety training that has been provided since the last meeting and what training is planned;
 - Any changes in health and safety legislation;
 - Methods to promote the health and safety message within the workplace.
-

Safety committee minutes

The safety committee minutes should be circulated to every member of the committee, the senior manager, appropriate directors, and should be made available to every employee.

Note: The minutes of a previous meeting should remain 'live' until matters have been resolved in a satisfactory manner.

Communication and consultation

Other ways to communicate and consult with employees:

- The delivery of interactive health and safety training;
- The delivery of specific tool box talks;
- The provision of a suggestion box for employees to highlight potential health and safety improvements;
- When undertaking risk assessments, inspections and audits;
- When formulating a safe system of work;
- After an accident or incident has occurred;
- Asking employees and, if applicable, their families to participate in local, regional and national health and safety initiatives;
- Ensuring that good health and safety practice is acknowledged and communicated back to the workforce;
- Seeking their expertise prior to any physical, mechanical or environmental changes to the workplace.



Legislation

- Health and Safety at Work, etc Act 1974
- Health and Safety (Consultation with Employees) Regulations 1996
- Safety Representative and Safety Committee Regulations 1977
- Quarries Regulations 1999

Note: The QNJAC and HSE actively encourage a 'team approach' to health and safety and have developed a guide to the role of the safety representative.

Associated documentation

- Safety committee agenda template

