Committee Process Toolbox

Action plan - a “to do” list

Use this worksheet to keep track of things to in to your committee work.

Action item	Who’s involved	Target date	Date done

Active Listening - 10 tips to help us do it

Active listening is about listening and avoiding misunderstandings. It requires us to focus on the speaker. At the same time, we must stop thinking about immediate responses to what is said. It's really about letting go of our own thoughts and paying attention to what is said. Follow this up to make sure you understood what the person meant to say. Paraphrase what you thought you heard, asking if you are correct.

What else would help you and others on the committee with active listening?

The idea	What might help me do this?

Agendas - good safety and health committee agendas

Agendas are the topics to be discussed at a meeting. The two co-chairs must prepare the list together. It also is good practice to ask all committee members what topics they want included, their importance, time required for discussion, background information that could be distributed, and hoped-for outcomes or recommendations.

Committee members must get the agenda at least three days before the meeting. It also must be posted on the committee's bulletin board.

Agenda items are presented in the order they will be discussed. Organize the list so that important topics are discussed early on and decisions are made while people are "fresh".

Good agendas for safety and health committee meetings:

- state the date, start and end times, place for the meeting
- list those expected to attend and alternates, if there are any
- identify who's responsible for specific tasks: chair, recorder or minute-taker, timekeeper, etc.
- use "traditional" agenda categories only when necessary
- for each item:
    - indicate the planned start time and time limits for discussion
    - label with a number or letter and title
    - provide background information with attachments, if relevant and possible
    - indicate if someone is especially responsible for it (e.g. if someone is reporting the results of an inspection)
    - specify the desired outcome: what is the committee expected to do about it, or possible recommendations
    - say who suggested the outcome or recommendation
- organize the items by priority (the criteria for this must be agreed by all involved)
- use "consent" for routine approval of items: say accepted as circulated, as long as no one has any objections or amendments

Topics to cover include:

- follow-up about things people were to do
- new issues/problems based on:
    - committee members' concerns and questions (which should include what they are asked by those they represent and work with)
    - inspections
    - investigations
    - reported incidents, first aid and other statistics (not just compensation claims)
    - surveys
    - audits
    - reports done for the employer

(cont'd)

- training topics (e.g. doing inspections, indoor air quality, lock-out procedures, processes such as force field analysis)
- outstanding items - where are they at?
- process issues — how are we doing our work, what do we need to practice, learn more about, etc.
- evaluation of committee activities (e.g. meeting processes, doing inspections, etc.)

Here's a sample agenda:

	Item	Who's responsible	Time	Background information
1.	Approval of agenda (including new topics added at meeting)	Chairperson	5 minutes	Distributed (date), adjust as needed and get final approval
2.	Approval of last meetings' minutes	Chairperson	5 minutes	As distributed, with minutes. Amend as need be.
3.	Follow-up to minutes	Chairperson or designate	15 minutes	Depends on the number of items left unresolved at the last meeting.
4.	Other topics (see list above for suggestions)	Person bringing up the item	Set for each topic	These are items put onto the agenda before the meeting. Try to start with a go-round to find out about issues that individual members want to bring up. Then go to specific topics.
5.	New topics (added at start of meeting)	Person bringing up the item	Agree before discussing	Ask for purpose, background information (on paper, if possible)
6.	Next meeting	Chairperson	5 minutes	Agree on time, place and date before committee adjourns.

Chairing a meeting - tips for effective chairing

General concepts and principles

Manitoba workplace safety and health committees have two co-chairs - one from the employer's representatives and one from the workers' representatives. They must take turns chairing meetings - i.e. they must share power and responsibilities.

The co-chairs need to know and understand the committee's procedural rules and use them impartially. But there's more to running meetings than knowing those rules.

Effective chairs are mostly facilitators. At the same time, it's often assumed that the co-chairs have more authority than others on the committee. What they say may be given more weight than other people's voices. However, when chairs interject too much or express personal views, they often make it difficult for others to participate (e.g. it's intimidating) and reduce the committee's effectiveness.

As a facilitating chair, you can:

- ✓ acknowledge the strength of group interaction and collective contributions (e.g. participatory activities);
- ✓ encourage participation and contributions with techniques such as brainstorming and open questions (see the *Six thinking hats* in CP. 17 and the text about open questions in Part B);
- ✓ share power and promote facilitation and leadership by others; and
- ✓ work to get group ownership of recommendations and decisions.

See Parts B and H of this manual for more details about tools for effective committees.

Before the meeting

1. Work with the other co-chair to prepare the agenda. Review past agendas and minutes, request input from other committee members and check correspondence received since the last meeting. Ask for background information about topics to be discussed.
2. Organize the agenda (for more about this, see CP.3), including background information that is available. Distribute the agenda and relevant documents a week or more before the meeting. (The law requires that it be posted on the committee's bulletin board before the meeting and that committee members receive it at least three days beforehand.) Ask people to RSVP.
3. Encourage members to prepare a case about items they put on the agenda. (When contentious items get on the agenda without notice and members are not prepared for discussion, conflict is more likely.)
4. Encourage committee members to discuss agenda items with others (on and off the committee) so they are prepared to represent views and present relevant information.
5. Remind those who have responsibilities from previous meetings about what they were to do and ask that they be prepared to report their progress or actions.

At the meeting

In general, the chair is responsible for promoting participation, sticking to the agenda, focusing committee members on the topic at hand, and ensuring decisions are made and recorded.

To promote participation:

- ✓ keep track of who is participating, and a speakers' list;
- ✓ use the ground rules (see CP.8) to remind committee members about things like interruptions and encourage others to do the same;
- ✓ use methods such as the *Six Hats*, brainstorming (CP.17), open questions, force field analysis (CP.7) and small group discussions;
- ✓ try to get everyone to contribute without singling them out in an embarrassing way;
- ✓ pay attention to body language (e.g. sitting back, people shaking their head);
- ✓ consider a "go-round" to promote contribution and let people "pass";
- ✓ ask strategic questions (e.g. "What would it take for us to move from situation A to situation B?", "What are the benefits of doing this?");
- ✓ don't get involved in the discussion except to facilitate moving forward;
- ✓ if you want to participate, hand over the chairing to the co-chair or someone else while you do that;
- ✓ deal with conflict as it arises (see CP.9 for some "ground rules"); and
- ✓ have regular evaluations about how the committee is doing things, at meetings and in other activities.

To help the committee stick to the agenda and focus on each topic:

- ✓ review the agenda at the start of the meeting to make sure that important decisions are made early on, while people are "fresh";
- ✓ check with the committee about the time for individual topics before the discussion starts;
- ✓ at the start of each topic, state what outcome is expected (e.g. review a report, make a recommendation) ;
- ✓ manage the time for each item and the meeting in general;
- ✓ encourage long-winded speakers to sum up or focus on key points;
- ✓ when someone strays from the agenda, quickly ask if others want to pursue that topic now or later, and sort out how to do that (e.g. "table" the discussion until later in the meeting, set up a committee to deal with it and report back at the next meeting);
- ✓ use your power and control sensibly to keep participants focused on the issue while allowing reasonable "room" to let people to explore the issue; and
- ✓ keep notes about the arguments and evidence in discussions so that you can summarize and paraphrase positions when the group seems to be stuck or is going around in circles.

To help ensure decisions and recommendations are made:

- ✓ make sure that decisions or recommendations are made;
- ✓ be prepared to summarise discussions and agreements that seem to be there;
- ✓ aim for consensus (i.e. what people can live with);
- ✓ if need be, ask for a motion (i.e. have someone propose the recommendation or agreement as a "mover", and get someone else to "second" their proposal);
- ✓ try to write the agreement or recommendation on a flip chart or project it from a computer, so everyone can see it before giving approval;
- ✓ ensure recommendations and decisions are clear, name who will do what and set time lines;
- ✓ if taking a vote, be sure that those forced to vote 'no' have not been disempowered (e.g. have not been able to have their "say");
- ✓ consider the consequences of using your power to break a tie;
- ✓ if there is a tie or no consensus, ask those concerned to bring more information to the next meeting, see if changing the proposal makes it more acceptable to everyone, consider setting up a subcommittees to report back ASAP, or allow more discussion (see CP.5 for other ideas);

Finally, the chair needs to pay attention to the person taking minutes. Make sure the note-taker has time to record important points of discussions and proposed agreements, decisions or recommendations.

For more information about chairing meetings, these resources will help:

1. "Skills, strategies and tools, Some specific activities" (Kit 3) in *The Kit: A guide to the advocacy we choose to do. A resource kit for consumers of mental health services and family carers*. Prepared by SPICE Consulting for the Australian Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services. Available on the web at: http://www.mhca.org.au/Resources/CommunityDevelopment/index.html#TheKit.

2. *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making* (2nd Edition), by Sam Kaner, Lenny Lind, Catherine Toldi, Sarah Fisk, Duane Berger. The paperback version is 368 pages and is published by Jossey-Bass. It can be bought at bookstores or borrowed from libraries; it also is available as an "E-book" and can be downloaded (for a price) at
   http://www.josseybass.com/WileyCDA/WileyTitle/productCd-0787996416.html.

Consensus - a key process

There likely will be differences within the committee about any topic. However, majority consensus can be reached through discussion, paying attention to feedback, action plans and respect for diverse experiences and ideas.

Consensus is the preferred method for reaching agreement – about a decision, a recommendation, etc. It is an agreement that everyone on the committee can support, at least at the moment. It's what everyone can live with, even if it isn't their desired solution. Getting consensus will be easy on some things and very difficult on others.

Here are some guidelines that will help. Also see *Ground rules for committee activities* (CP.8) and *Ground rules for healthy conflict* (CP.9).

But how do you reach this agreement?

1. Start the process with a proposal (tentative decision or recommendation).
2. Clarify the proposal.
3. Check for immediate consensus. Adopt the proposal if it is immediately acceptable to all committee members. If not ...
4. List concerns. Group them, if appropriate.
5. Resolve concerns. Go through each individual or group of concerns, one at a time. Try to reduce the number.
6. If concerns remain unresolved:
    - seek a "third party" solution (modify proposal, if appropriate)
    - re-visit committee purpose and values
    - examine individual motives
    - conduct a "go-round"
    - request a "stand-aside"
7. Continue until consensus is reached.
8. If consensus is not possible:
    - refer to a third party
    - apply legitimate authority (co-chairs)

For more, see resources such as:

"Skills, strategies and tools, Some specific activities" (Kit 3) in *The Kit: A guide to the advocacy we choose to do. A resource kit for consumers of mental health services and family carers*. Prepared by SPICE Consulting for the Australian Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services. Available on the web at: http://www.mhca.org.au/Resources/CommunityDevelopment/index.html#TheKit.

Criteria for decision-making (sample)

	What's important? (Our criteria)	How do we measure success?	Do our recommended solutions match the criteria?
1	How do we (each of us) feel about the solution(s)?	What evidence supports our feeling?	In the absence of evidence, how do we proceed?
2	How many people are affected by the problem? the solution(s)?	Should we set a minimum or maximum?	If one person is affected severely by a hazard, how do we rate its importance?
3	How severe are the consequences of the problem?	What are the acute and chronic effects? How serious are they?	If the consequences are only short-term or only long-term, how appropriate is our solution?
4	How much does the problem cost?	Does the solution cost less, the same or more than the problem? How much?	How are costs considered, compared to severity and consequences?
5	What does the law about this topic? What is "reasonably practicable" to do in terms of time, effort and money?	What absolute requirements must the employer follow? How does this account for "reasonably practicable"?	Is management informed and clear about the health and safety law?
6	What do workplace documents say about this situation?	What guidelines do we already have to help us? What's in our health and safety program? union contract (if there is one)? other policies?	In the absence of policy, do we develop one? If this situation is not covered in our program, what needs to be added?
7	Can the problem be fixed easily and quickly?	What is the effect of fixing something right away?	How do we still go after long-term solutions?
8	How important is the problem to the people involved, especially those affected?	If the committee identifies a hazard that others don't "see", how do we measure its impact?	If the potential consequences are severe, does the committee go ahead when the problem is not apparent? How do we use the prevention principles (including substitution and precaution)?
9	Where does the solution fit on the prevention triangle?	How close are we to the root cause or source of the problem?	If the fix fits in Level 2 or 3, what should we do to find out more about a Level 1 solution?

Criteria for decision-making

	What's important? (Our criteria)	How do we measure success?	Do our recommended solutions match the criteria?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			

Criteria for decision-making - setting priorities about hazards to tackle

Criteria	Hazard # 1	Hazard # 2	Hazard # 3	Hazard # 4	Hazard # 5
How serious a hazard/issue is it?					
How many people are or could be affected?					
How severe are the (potential) consequences (acute and chronic effects)?					
How often is the problem likely to occur (frequency)?					
How much does the problem (hazard) cost?					
What's the law say about this?					
If applicable, what does the collective agreement say about this?					
Could the problem be fixed easily and quickly?					
How important is it to the people involved?					

To complete the chart:

Write the names of five hazards in the empty second row of the chart. If you've got more than five, make a copy of the chart and put everything down.

You can do the questions (in at least) two ways. Whichever way you do it, use a pencil. This way, you can make changes as you go.

1. Write down an answer that will help you evaluate the hazard's priority.

2. Use check marks or Xs where appropriate. If you think it'll help, use several to indicate the seriousness of that particular hazard.

3. If you don't know the answer, put in a question mark and assign someone to do the research.

4. When you're done, look at the results and start to decide which hazards are more important to tackle than others.

Force field analysis

Force field analysis is a method developed by Kurt Lewin in the 1950s. It is a simple but very useful way to analyse situations where you want to change something. Lewin said that there are forces helping change (helping or driving forces) or blocking it (hindering or restraining forces). The tool brings new eyes to weighing pros and cons of a solution or goal.

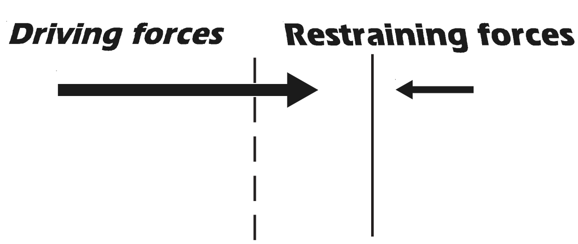
Driving and restraining forces go against each other, creating a dynamic status quo. Change comes because increasing the driving force or decreasing the restraining force leads to a new status quo. Reducing the restraining or hindering factors works best.

To use the form, decide what health and safety situation or hazard you want to change. Develop a clear statement about the goal. For example: We want to get proper ergonomic equipment or furniture for X department in our workplace. Write the question at the top of the page. Then brainstorm about what would help or drive getting the solution. Keep track of each idea; some will be on both sides.

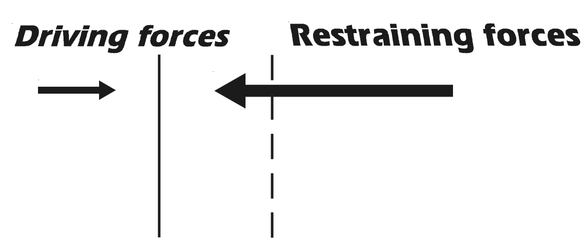
When you think you're done, the facilitator or chairperson should ask:

- What do you see?
- What's missing? (and add the points made)
- What will support our goal? What opportunities can we use?
- What are the key restraining forces? What can we do about each one?

There are a lot of useful references about this tool For a starting point, see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Force_field_analysis.



Increased driving force moves middle line (status quo) to right



Increased restraining force moves middle line (status quo) to left

Force field analysis

Driving forces →	← **Restraining forces**

Ground rules for committee activities

Ground rules are a list that guides how a committee works together. Everyone in the group needs to agree to play by these rules. Ground rules can be changed by consensus, if need be.

They could include:

- arrive and end on time
- everyone has an opportunity to participate
- avoid side conversations
- listen to each other with respect
- criticize/argue about ideas, not people
- vibrate your cell phone if it must be left on
- “confidential” means confidential always!

What would you add?

Ground rules for healthy conflict

Conflict is bound to show up in any group. Within workplace safety and health committees, it likely is structural too. Management and worker representatives come from different positions in the organization. Their health and safety experiences and goals are often different.

Conflict becomes a problem when people personalize it. Personal attacks and statements such as "You don't know what you are talking about..." or "Who are you to be suggesting..." are strong indicators of conflict between people rather than between issues. Conflict also may occur at meetings when contentious items get onto the agenda without notice and members are not properly prepared to discuss the topic.

Although it's difficult to deal with, studies tell us that conflict produces better decisions because all perspectives must be considered.

Healthy conflict is possible. Workplace safety and healthy committee members should:

- criticize ideas, not individuals
- treat people's concerns seriously
- listen to what is said, not what you think is said (active listening)
- allow everyone to have a say
- clarify facts and agree about getting more information if needed
- find out what you can agree on
- clarify any disagreement before trying to develop a solution
- try to understand the reasons for the differences
- see if people will agree to try something before actually disagreeing about its use
- summarize where you're at, after everyone's had a say, and avoid repeating the same argument
- take a break and caucus where necessary, returning with one suggestion about how to proceed

For more ideas, see a reference such as:

"Skills, strategies and tools, Some specific activities" (Kit 3) in *The Kit: A guide to the advocacy we choose to do. A resource kit for consumers of mental health services and family carers*. Prepared by SPICE Consulting for the Australian Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services. Available on the web at: http://www.mhca.org.au/Resources/CommunityDevelopment/index.html#TheKit.

Healthy solutions for workplace hazards

We want to change ... Clearly define the hazard. What is the root cause?		**Healthy solutions?** What will really deal with the hazard? Where does it fit on the *Prevention triangle*?	**What resources can help us?**		
			Paper/research	**People & organizations**	**Money** (from? amount?)
	Short term				
	Long term				

How does our solution benefit ...					**Cautions?** What might stop us getting the solution?		
	Workers?	Employer?	Union?	Community? Others?	**What are they?**	**What can <u>we</u> do about them?**	**How can others help us deal with them?**
Short term							
Long term							

Strategies to get our healthy solutions How do we get the solution? What needs to be done to reach the goal? Who's involved?						We also need to think about ...
	I/we will ...	We'd like these other people or organizations to ...				Review the criteria for decision-making chart (CP.6)
Short term						
Long term						

Incident cost calculator

A tool for making the case for health and safety changes

The *Incident cost calculator* is a form designed by the UK's Health and Safety Executive to help track and assess costs of health and safety incidents at work. One version can be printed and completed by hand. It's on the next page. A second interactive version with help and indicative cost values is available on line.

The website has information and forms about calculating costs in general, injuries and ill health, along with case studies and references. You can find all these things at http://www.hse.gov.uk/costs/costs_overview/costs_overview.asp.

How to complete the Incident Cost Calculator form

For each cost, consider whether it is relevant. If not, ignore it. If it is relevant, you can do one of two things:

- you can enter the total amount for this cost directly onto the form; or
- if you do not know the total cost, but you do know how much time was involved, you can record this instead.

Some times should be recorded in hours, while others should be in days. The form indicates which type to use.

If you record the time spent, you also need to record the hourly or daily rate for the cost. Some of the costs allow you to use an average value from a reference table for these, otherwise you have to put in your own numbers.

In the on-line version, the costs with reference data are shown by View Average values icon on the right hand side of the costs column. Click on the View Average values icon on the form to display the table. You also can preview a copy of the report before printing it.

The Incident Cost Calculator

Date and time of incident ....
Description of incident ....
Name of person involved ....

Dealing with incident (immediate action)

Examples	*Time spent*	*Cost (£)*
First-aid treatment		
Taking injured person to hospital/home		
Making the area safe		
Putting out fires		
Immediate staff downtime (eg work activity stopped)		
Other		

Investigation of incident

Examples	*Time spent*	*Cost (£)*
Staff time to report and investigate incident		
Meetings to discuss incident etc		
Time spent with HSE/local authority inspector		
Consultant's fees to assist company in investigation		
Other		

Getting back to business

Examples	*Time spent*	*Cost (£)*
Assessing/rescheduling work activities		
Recovering work/production (including staff costs)		
Cleaning up site and disposal of waste, equipment, products etc		
Bringing work up to standard (eg product reworking time/costs)		
Repairing any damage/faults		
Hiring or purchasing tools, equipment, plant, services etc		
Other		

Business costs

Examples	*Time spent*	*Cost (£)*
Salary costs of injured person while off work		
Salary costs of replacement workers		
Lost work time (people waiting to resume work, delays, reduced productivity, effects on other people's productivity etc)		
Overtime costs		
Recruitment costs for new staff		
Contract penalties		
Cancelled and/or lost orders		
Other		

Action to safeguard future business

Examples	*Time spent*	*Cost (£)*
Reassuring customers		
Providing alternative sources of supply for customers		
Other		

Sanctions and penalties

Examples	*Time spent*	*Cost (£)*
Compensation claim payments		
Solicitor's fees and legal expenses		
Staff time dealing with legal cases		
Fines and costs imposed due to criminal proceedings		
Increase in insurance premiums		
Other		

Other

Examples	*Time spent*	*Cost (£)*

Total

Interviews and conversations

Key tips for safety and health committee members*

Interviews are a way to collect information about people's knowledge, opinions, ideas, fears and experiences. Interviews can be formal or informal conversations. The information you get can be used on its own, or be combined with information from surveys, monitoring results, inspection reports, etc.

These tips will help you, as will training and practice. See CP.12B for one way to practice "chatting people up".

Starting out

- find a quiet and private place to talk
- greet people warmly, to make them feel comfortable
- use a friendly tone of voice
- explain what you're doing:
  - introduce yourself if the person doesn't know you
  - whether or not you know the person, tell them which "hat" you're wearing for the interview
  - provide a short summary of the project, question, etc., that is the reason you're talking to them
- reassure the person that what they say will be treated confidentially
- explain what you'll do with the information afterwards; if appropriate, tell the person where they can find out more or get a copy of written reports
- tell the person how long you expect the conversation to take
- ask if the person minds you taking notes (and don't if they say "yes", but explain why it helps you "get the story straight")

Things to ask about during the interview

- their name, job, etc.
- the situation they are dealing with (the facts, as best as possible)
- the people who are involved (who?)
- the background or context (facts and understandings/opinions/etc.)
- their ideas for changes, if appropriate
- asking "why" is a good way to understand the reason something happened or was done a particular way (but don't sound like you're accusing the person of some thing or think they're "crazy")

Things to do during the interview

- be respectful and sensitive to the person and what they say
- listen actively - commit yourself to hearing/receiving accurately the person's ideas, facts and opinions
- listen without interrupting or giving your opinions, even if you disagree strongly with something
- don't let disapproval or impatience show
- use positive body language like sitting forward or upright

Clarifying, understanding, etc.

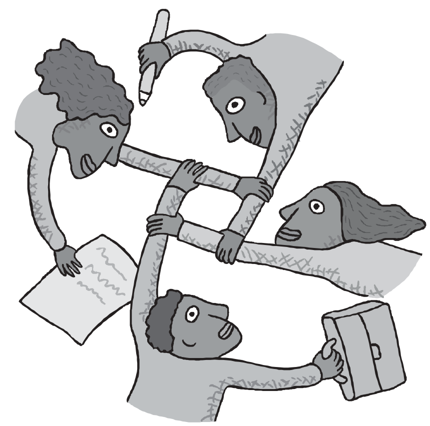
- closed questions (e.g. Were you trained about using that product?) get mostly "yes" or "no" answers
- open questions give people a chance to tell their story (e.g. What kind of training did you have about using that product? Tell me more about how you use that product.)
- if someone's very talkative, keep them on track by saying "thanks for the very complete answer" and move on to the next question
- if someone doesn't answer the question, try asking it another way
- ask the person to clarify anything you don't understand or think may be a different interpretation of particular words or phrases than you intended
- "What are your questions?" is a useful way to wrap up interviews

At the end of the interview…

- check the main points said with the person:
  - use people's own words as best as possible to report what was said
  - when you use your own interpretation, make it clear you want to be sure you understood (e.g. "I thought I could pick it up" could mean someone told the person they should be able to pick it up or that, given their experience, they expected they could pick up the object)
- thank the person warmly
- remind them about where they can find out more or get a copy of your report
- give them your name again and a way to reach you, in case they remember any thing else they want to tell you
- ask the person if there is anything they want or need to know

*First prepared for the Winnipeg Regional Health Authority's joint health and safety committee training, 2003, during a project funded by the WCB's Community Initiatives and Research Program. Adapted from the ILO's book, *Barefoot research*, written by Margaret Keith, James Brophy, Peter Kirby and Elen Rosskam in 2002; available on line at: http://www.ilo.org/public/english/protection/ses/info/publ/2barefoot.htm

Interviews and conversations - practice instructions



1. There are three roles here in this ‘fish bowl’ practice for interviewing:
    a. interviewee
    b. interviewer
    c. observer(s)

2. One person volunteers to be interviewed about <u>one</u> health and safety issue or concern. It could be a hazard, symptoms you’re having, a situation, etc. Here are the ground rules for the **interviewee**:

    - decide what the issue is that you’re concerned about
    - be as open as you are comfortable being
    - treat this like a regular conversation, so try not to talk more or less than usual and let the interviewer know when they’re pushing your personal limits
    - don’t deliberately mislead the interviewer

3. One person volunteers to be the **interviewer**. Here are the ground rules for that person:

    - treat this like a regular conversation (try to talk in your usual tone and use your normal vocabulary)
    - respect personal limits
    - your goal is to find out:
        - what is the person’s concern?
        - why?
        - is this a problem for others?
        - what information does the person have?
        - where else could you get information?
    - you also need to decide if this is likely a work-related concern
    - try using the five w’s and their friend “h”

The **observer(s)** do/es two things:

- watch and listen to the conversation for a few minutes, looking for:
  - body language
  - how things are said
  - opportunities taken or missed for getting information
  - other things that are important for an effective interview
- "jump in" to take the place of one of the two people in the interview by saying "stop" and rolling the conversation back to the point where you would start to do or say something differently
- go as far as you need to make your point and then step out

4. Once you decide who has which role, the interviewer and interviewee sit or stand near one another and start the conversation. Have an observer keep track of time; the activity should take about 10 minutes.

5. When the "fish bowl" is done, discuss these questions:

   What worked/made it easy?

   What was difficult?

   What information do you still need?

   How might you get it?

   What would help you take notes when you talk to someone?

Minutes - taking notes and preparing minutes*

1. **What are minutes?**
   Minutes are a summary of the following facts:
   - time and date of a meeting and where it is held
   - names and affiliation (i.e. employer or worker representative, alternate) of everyone present, and apologies for those who are not able to be there
   - all items discussed, whether on the agenda or not
   - all actions agreed upon, and the names of the people responsible for doing them
   - all recommendations, and
   - date for completion of tasks and actions.

2. **Taking notes at a meeting - some starting points**
   This is a very useful skill that can be used in many activities, including committee meetings. But how do you take good notes that can be turned into minutes?

   Basically, intense listening is often better than furious note-taking, which can result in:
   - not being able to read the notes (the writing is illegible)
   - not being able to understand the notes (you got everything the speaker said, but don't know what it means)
   - failure to see the speaker's body language
   - ignoring the voice inflections used to emphasize points, and
   - not getting the deep meaning of what is said.

   To overcome these problems:
   - use active listening - focus on what the speaker is really trying to say
   - ask the person to clarify what you don't quite understand
   - look at the speaker to observe his/her body language
   - take notes about key concepts and ideas
   - note names of people to whom the speaker often refers
   - make notes about the inflections used at certain points
   - take notes in a way that makes sense to you - it doesn't have to make sense to anyone else - and develop your own style
   - some people find diagrams are easier to use than words and use word pictures as memory aids, and
   - don't be concerned if you miss something you think is important as you can ask the speaker for clarification later, if need be.

   A good way to learn to take minutes is to be mentored. Talk with the person who usually takes minutes now. If need be, find someone else in the organisation who does it for other groups. Sit next to the minute-taker at several meetings, so you can observe what they do and work with them. Gradually take over the role as you gain skills and confidence.

   If you are asked to take minutes when you don't feel ready, be assertive. Say you are prepared to take notes, but only after you have learned the skills required.

3. Taking notes - before the meeting

- if taking notes by hand, make sure that you have plenty of paper or a notepad, along with two or three pens
- if using a laptop computer, make sure it's fully charged and that you have an electrical adaptor and extension cord, in case of emergency
- set up your paper or computer file with headings for the basic information you need to record: who's attending, agenda items, next meeting, times for starting and ending the meeting, etc.
- get to the site early so you can sit where you are able to hear everybody clearly, but are not 'in the middle of it all'
- as committee members arrive, record their names under the heading you have for those attending the meeting, and
- discuss with the chairperson the need for her/him to summarise things for you (and other committee members), and give you time to write.

4. Taking notes - during the meeting

- don't try to write a verbatim (word-for-word) record of what people say, as you won't be able to keep up
- focus on writing the **facts or ideas** so that you understand what is said
- don't get involved with the discussion but if you have to say something, be sure someone else is taking notes while you speak
- if you can't hear or understand someone, ask the person to repeat or clarify what they said
- read out decisions and recommendations so that there can be no disagreement later about the accuracy
- if somebody asks that their minority view or concerns be "noted in the minutes", take notes about what they say and read it aloud so that all present can agree that it is what the person is saying
- make sure that anything to be done before the next meeting has deadlines, and that there is no confusion about what is to be done, by whom, and by when, and
- record:
    - the names of everyone at the meeting
    - late arrivals and early departures
    - the names of those proposing and seconding formal motions
    - too much rather than too little
    - what happens, even if it is not in the order listed on the agenda, and
    - record the time the meeting begins and ends (and breaks, if that's relevant).

(continued)

5. Taking notes - after the meeting

- as soon as possible after the meeting, start to write up the minutes
- use the Committee Minute Form (CP. 13-B) or the template your committee has for submitting minutes to the Workplace Safety and Health Division
- fill it in as best you can from your notes
- write up recommendations using the Recommendation Form (CP.15)
- follow-up with those who were to prepare or supply a cover letter and/or background information to support individual recommendations
- get clarification from individuals if necessary
- present the draft minutes and recommendations to the co-chairs
- ask them to review the documents and get back to you within a short agreed-upon time
- make appropriate changes based on the feedback, and get the co-chairs to sign the relevant documents
- if you're responsible for sending out minutes, get a copy to the WSHD and all committee members in no later than 7 days, and post a copy on the committee bulletin board, and
- if someone else is responsible to do this, send them the documents.

* Adapted from *The Kit: A guide to the advocacy we choose to do. A resource kit for consumers of mental health services and family carers*. Prepared by SPICE Consulting for the Australian Commonwealth Department of Health and Family Services. Available on the web at: http://www.mhca.org.au/Resources/CommunityDevelopment/index.html#TheKit.

COMMITTEE MINUTE FORM **PAGE __ OF __**

See instructions
Complete all sections - type or print clearly
Phone (204) 945-3446
FAX (204) 948-2209

Manitoba Labour and Immigration
Workplace Safety and Health Division

CP.13B

Complete Name and Address of Workplace	**Employer Members** (list all)	**Occupation**	**Present**	**Absent**
Phone: **Fax:**				
Which Committee (if more than one): **Meeting date:** **Date of next meeting:**	**Worker Members** (list all)			
Number of employees at the workplace:	**Guests** (list any)			

Date of Origin	**Concern or Problem** (See reverse for completion instructions)	**Recommendation or Action To Be Taken**	**Action By (who & when)**

Other Business:

Co-Chairpersons' Signatures **Please indicate by (X) in the brackets below who chaired this meeting.**

BOTH management and worker co-chairs must sign each page of the minutes when they agree that the minutes are complete and accurate.

If one, or both co-chairs do not agree with the minute record, please attach concerns on a separate page.

In my opinion, the above is an accurate record of this meeting.

( ) Print name of Employer Co-Chair ________________________ ( ) Print Name of Worker Co-Chair ________________________

Signature ________________________ **Signature** ________________________

Within 7 days, copy to: ❶ Committee members; ❷ Committee files; ❸ Workplace Safety and Health; ❹ Post on S&H Bulletin Board

SAFE WORK

COMMITTEE MINUTE FORM PAGE __ OF __

See instructions

Complete all sections - type or print clearly

Phone (204) 945-3446

FAX (204) 948-2209

Date of Origin	Concern or Problem (See reverse for completion instructions)	Recommendation or Action To Be Taken	Action By (who & when)

Other Business:

SAFETY AND HEALTH COMMITTEE MINUTES

Manitoba Labour and Immigration
Workplace Safety and Health Division

200-401 York Avenue
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3C 0P8
Home page: http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety Click on Committee Minutes to enter your minutes interactively.
Phone: 1-800-282-8069 ext. 3446
FAX: (204) 945-4556
FAX for Committee Minutes: (204) 948-2209

Your committee must meet four or more times per year. Minutes of each meeting of the safety and health committee at your workplace must be faxed, mailed, e-mailed to cominutes@gov.mb.ca, or if you use the interactive form, once you have entered all the information, press "Send Committee Minutes" and they will be sent automatically to the Workplace Safety and Health Division. You can use the Workplace Safety and Health Committee Minute Form or set up your own format containing all the information in our form.

The minute form is intended for your use to record briefly and clearly the safety and health concerns at your workplace and steps taken by the committee or others to resolve them. They are designed to provide everyone at your workplace and the Workplace Safety and Health Division with information on your committee's activities and progress to date.

If you are unable to resolve an issue yourselves, phone or write your Safety and Health Officer for assistance in finding a solution. If you would like assistance with making your committee more effective, call the Safety and Health Committee Coordinator at 945-5718 or 1-800-282-8069 extension 5718.

Instructions For Completion Of Minute Forms

❶ **<u>You must complete all information in top boxes:</u>**

Full Name & Full Address of Workplace - must include Department & Branch, where applicable.

Which Committee - needs to be completed only if you have more than one committee at the same address.

Number of Employees at the Workplace - the number at the workplace, not the number on the committee.

❷ In the first column "**Origin**" indicate the date an issue is first raised at a safety and health committee meeting. Continue to note this date in future minutes until the committee agrees the issue is resolved.

❸ In the second column "**Concern or Problem**" list the details of items discussed. Draw a line across the page to separate each issue.

❹ In the third column "**Recommendation or Action Taken**" indicate what has been done or the steps being taken or the committee's recommendation as to what should be done to resolve the issue.

❺ In the last column "**Action By**" fill in who will be responsible for carrying out each interim step or action and the date it will be completed or, if the issue is resolved, fill in the date it was resolved.

❻ In the bottom section "**Other Business**" record any points not covered such as upcoming elections or date of next meeting.

❼ **Both** management and worker co-chairs must sign each page of the minutes when they are satisfied that the record is complete and accurate. Please indicate by an (X) in the brackets who chaired that particular meeting.

❽ Distribution of copies must be done within one week following the committee meeting:

a) Distribute copies to committee members, alternates, and relevant managers.

b) Keep one copy for permanent committee files.

c) Send one copy to Workplace Safety and Health Division - by mail to the address above, fax minutes to (204) 948-2209, e-mail to the above address **or** electronically.

d) Post one copy on the safety and health committee bulletin board(s).

Revised March 27, 2001

W:\Labwsh\Admin\Forms\CommMinFormRevMar01

SAFE WORK

Orientation

A good orientation is a formal program that deals with people and tasks. "People" aspects include introductions to others on the committee, mentoring, and getting help with specific duties. "Tasks" cover everything from legal responsibilities to health and safety hazard training to the organization's health and safety program.

Every new committee member needs an orientation before attending a meeting or becoming involved in committee work.

The ingredients of a formal orientation pre-meeting package include:

- a copy of the Act and regulations
- a list of committee responsibilities (see L.3 in this manual)
- committee process documents (e.g. terms of reference, decision-making criteria, time allowed for committee activities policy)
- workplace safety and health materials/documents/reports (including the program)
- copies of minutes from the last year
- a conversation with the co-chairs about the committee's role, activities and current topics/issues/plans
- a list of other committee members and how to reach them (personal introductions would be best)
- information about the Workplace Safety and Health Division
- information about upcoming safety and health workshops, and
- time with those who appointed them to find out what's expected of them.

A good orientation program also has ongoing

- check-ins with new members
- mentoring for specific activities
- opportunities for shadowing (e.g. inspections, investigations, "chatting up" people about hazards and symptoms)
- attention to new members at committee meetings (e.g. new members are encouraged to ask questions or take on tasks, with someone else, if possible), and
- evaluation.

Recommendations

Workplace safety and health committees are expected to make recommendations to the employer about changes needed to improve safety and health conditions in the workplace.

When the committee writes a recommendation, it should be clear, logical, straightforward and use action language (not the passive tense).

Recommendations should:

- identify the problem or hazard (e.g. ergonomic hazard of lifting or keyboards that cannot be adjusted for individual needs)
- describe it - where it occurs, how often, who's affected, the effects, etc.
- provide evidence or estimates about what the problem or hazard costs (e.g. training replacements for injured staff)
- provide specific short-term and long-term solutions
- name the benefits, with some cost estimates if possible
- provide background information or leads to other resources
- name someone from the committee who is taking the lead in the committee's activities about the hazard

See the next page (CP.15) for a sample recommendation form.

Workplace safety and health committee

Recommendation form

Meeting date:	Chairperson for meeting:	Date submitted:	Recommendation #:

The hazard or hazardous situation: Describe in detail, including maps, reports, etc. in appendices.

Recommendations:	Specifics	Benefits
Short term #1		
Short term #2		
Short term #3		
Short term #4		
Short term #5		
Long term #1		
Long term #2		
Long term #3		
Long term #4		
Long term #5		

Other information or resources to consider:

Employer co-chair	**Worker co-chair**
Date:	**Date:**
Copy posted on committee bulletin board(s): **Yes** **No**	
Follow-up by:	**Date:**

Root cause analysis and the 5 whys

As a health and safety "detective", you may be trying to connect a symptom to a hazard. Or you may be asking if you have the "real problem" when you see a hazard. For prevention to be effective, the question really is:

"What problem is the committee trying to solve or address?"

Root cause analysis is one way to "get to the bottom" of an issue.

To find the ***root cause(s)***, the 5 whys is an important tool. The technique came from the Japanese "total quality management" approach. Others talk about using "But why?".

Here's how it works. Start with a symptom or hazard. Ask why it occurs; then take the answer and ask why that occurs. Do it up to five times; you may even end up back at the original symptom or hazard. Then you likely have the reasons behind the symptom or hazard - and the problem(s) that the committee needs to tackle. In some cases, the causes may be not all be health and safety issues. If that happens, clearly define the health and safety problem in front of you and figure out how to pass along the cause(s) that someone else needs to address.

For example, more incidents may be reported on the evening shift than on days. That is your symptom or starting point. The chart below shows how asking "Why?" helps get to the root cause or causes. Each "because .." answer becomes the problem" for the next "Why?".

The steps	The "problem"	Why (is this happening)?
Starting point - the symptom or hazard	More incidents occur between 7 and 11 p.m. on the evening shift.	Because ... the shift changes at 3:30 and employees from the day shift train new workers from 4 to 7 p.m.
#2	The shift changes at 3:30 and employees from the day shift train new workers from 4 to 7 p.m.	Because ... the more experienced employees work the day shift, and they do the training.
#3	The more experienced employees work the day shift, and they do the training.	Because ... new workers are hired onto the evening shift.
#4	New workers are hired onto the evening shift.	Because ... workers with more seniority are promoted to day shift.
#5	Workers with more seniority are promoted to day shift.	Because ... there are few experienced employees on the evening shift.

There's a blank form on the next page to use for your own analysis. Print off as many copies as you need.

Root cause analysis and the 5 whys

The steps	The "problem"	Why (is this happening)?
Starting point - the symptom or hazard		Because ...
#2		Because ...
#3		Because ...
#4		Because ...
#5		Because ...

Six thinking hats

A process to help make decisions

Six thinking hats is a technique that allows groups to generate and evaluate ideas. It helps individuals and groups focus on particular aspects of a topic, and look at it from different angles. You can use it to describe how people talk about a topic or to make sure that everyone is on “the same page” as you discuss something in a group.

Developed by Edward de Bono, you can find out more about the method and related materials at de Bono’s official site (http://www.edwdebono.com/), Wikipedia and MindTools (http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTED_07.htm.) and various other web sites.

The ground rule is that everyone works on the same hat at the same time.

1. Blue - Process control

Blue is usually the hat to use at the start and end of a session or discussion. Blue says:

What order do we want?

Who will facilitate the process?

What do we do with the output or results?

Who is responsible for putting together the final recommendation, decision and/or document?

Who will follow up?

2. Green - Ideas

Green is the brainstorming hat, usually the second in the six. Given a topic, everyone puts out ideas without censoring or reacting.

What are the “rules” for brainstorming?

- set a time limit for this activity
- separate coming up with ideas from passing judgement about them
- any idea is welcome, however “wild“ it seems
- quantity breeds quality, so the more ideas, the better
- build on others ideas
- don’t criticize or say something like “that wouldn’t work“ or “we can‘t do that“
- record all ideas on a flip chart, post-its or paper
- when time’s up, make sure there aren’t any more “brilliant“ suggestions
- only then do you sort the suggestions, followed by evaluating them

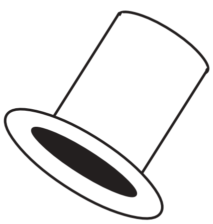
Whatever you decide to do, don't throw out the suggestions. You may be able to use them in another situation or decide to come back to them later. Record each idea so it can be reviewed later. One option (for time and process) is to evaluate similar ideas together.

3. Use the rest of the hats to discuss each idea in different ways

The group then walks through each idea with each of the remaining hats, one at a time, ending with Blue. This keeps the group focused on the task and prevents cross talk.

Usually, general agreement comes out. Depending on the group's purpose (consultative, advisory, decision- making), the results can be for immediate or later use.

The remaining four hats can be used in any order. (The group should decide the order under the first Blue hat.)

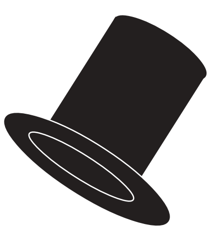


3.1 White - Information

What information does the group need to evaluate the idea? If the information is not "in the room", where can it be found? Who will look for it and bring it back to a later discussion?

3.2 Yellow - Benefits

Review each idea for its benefits. This lets the idea becomes detached from any one person. The only requirement is to brainstorm the advantages and positive aspects of each idea.



3.3 Black - Cautions

Repeat the review process for each idea. Group members can now talk about their concerns about each idea. The emphasis should not be saying the idea "will never work", but on specific cautions, concerns or possible barriers.

3.4 Red - Feelings

The group talks about their "gut" instinct about each idea. How does each person feel about the idea? Again, it is important to detach the idea from the person who proposed it.

4. Blue - Process control

The group process ends with a return to process control.

It's also important to have a follow-up process. This should include hearing back from whomever was to get more information and reviewing ideas (using the same process) with that new information.

Terms of reference

All groups need terms of reference. The terms provide a framework about who's part of the group, what they are supposed to do, how they may do their work, etc. Section 3.6 of the *Workplace Safety and Health Regulation* says the committee must have "written rules of procedure". It also lists things that must be included in the "rules". These are really terms of reference.

Terms of reference should include:

1. The name of the safety and health committee
2. Constituency - scope of representation (e.g. is it for one workplace or is it for a building or department)
3. A statement of the committee's purpose
4. Duties and functions (review *Responsibilities of workplace safety and health committees in Manitoba* - L.3)
5. Meetings - frequency, special meetings, quorum, committee procedures
6. Co-chairs
7. Terms of office
8. Recommendations - guidelines (Review the law.)
9. Assistance in resolving disagreements
10. Amendments

The Triangle model
to analyze racism & discrimination

Racism and discrimination are difficult to deal with. Sometimes they are difficult to recognize, especially if you are not the person affected.

However difficult it is, workplace safety and health committees must recognize that racism and discrimination are health hazards and may affect how health and safety is dealt with in the workplace. They may show up in terms of:

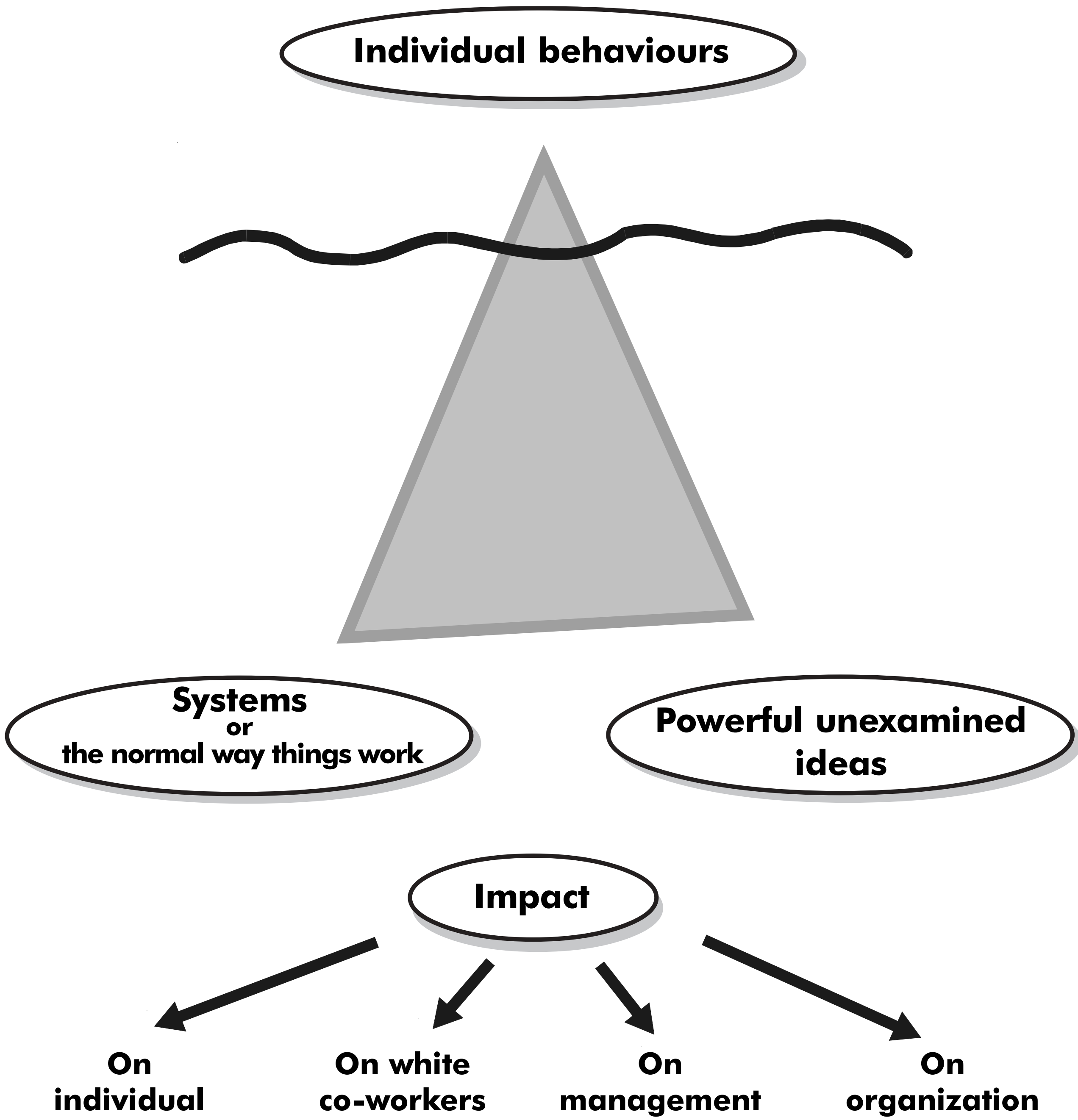
- ❑ who's on the committee
- ❑ who comes forward — or doesn't — to name symptoms or hazards
- ❑ how committee members, supervisors or others respond when racialized people report symptoms, hazards, etc.
- ❑ who does what kind of task in the workplace and the hazards they face (e.g. workers of colour are more likely to face verbal and/or physical violence)
- ❑ how other language and cultural practices are recognised in the workplace
- ❑ harassment of individuals or groups of workers, or
- ❑ conflict about particular health and safety issues.

The Triangle model provides a way to identify:

- ❑ individual behaviours — comments, feelings and actions that send a message of discrimination and racism (e.g. "those people always ...)
- ❑ the larger systems at work (e.g. hiring, promotion and supervision practices, what seems "normal"), and
- ❑ unexamined ideas — the "elephant in the room" that we ignore or assumptions don't want to mention (e.g. who's trustworthy or lazy, what "they" can do or not do physically).

The tool is on the next page. See the Committee Activity on page B-17 about one way to use it. For more information, also see *Dancing on live embers: Challenging racism in organizations*; published by Between the Lines in 2005, by Tina Lopes and Barb Thomas.

The Triangle model to analyze racism & discrimination



Based on a graphic from "Dancing on Embers - Challenging Racism in Organizations" by T. Lopes & B. Thomas, Between the Lines - 2006

Visions of a safe and healthy workplace - what would it look like?

After getting a basic list of your goals for a healthy and safe workplace, expand on some of the ingredients. Here are some items and activities you might add to your list.

The safety and health program has policies and procedures that cover:

- reporting all symptoms and hazards, including "near-misses"
- getting information about health and safety, hazards, rights, responsibilities, etc. to all workers
- how to identify symptoms hazards (e.g. surveys, inspections, investigations)
- maintenance schedules and reports
- fixing hazards
    - principles or guidelines for short- and long-term solutions
    - responsibilities (the employer, then supervisors)
    - making sure the solutions or "fixes" work
- training all employees about:
    - responsibilities for all the "players"
    - workers' rights
    - how to do the job properly
    - the hazards of each task
    - symptoms that may occur, and the hazards behind them
    - what is available to prevent harm from the hazard (e.g. ventilation, protective equipment) and how it's supposed to work
    - when and how to use protective equipment, as well as its limits
    - reporting procedures (e.g. for symptoms, hazards, protective equipment that doesn't work)
- who's responsible for what (e.g. all job descriptions include health and safety)
- harassment, discrimination, etc. is not acceptable if people bring up health and safety issues, ask questions or use their rights
- regular evaluation of all health and safety activities, policies and procedures, and requirements to make changes as needed

Supervisors are competent in health and safety because the employer provides:

- training about their health and safety responsibilities
- information about relevant health and safety issues
- practical guidance about dealing with health and safety issues with their staff
- support and time to do these things

The committee or representative:

- is recognized and respected by everyone in the workplace
- knows the health and safety law and what committees/representatives do
- asks about and deals competently with health and safety issues
- monitors what the employer's doing about health and safety
- provide feedback and information to the employer and employees about what the committee/rep is doing (especially about questions, complaints or concerns)
- is effective (see 10 ingredients list on the next page)

(cont'd)

- inspects the workplace regularly
- make solid recommendations to the employer
- has time to do the job
- follows up on inspections, investigations, reports, recommendations, complaints and concerns

From management, committee members or representatives get:

- support (e.g. space for materials and working, help when needed, attention to their needs)
- training for all members (including minimum expected)
- orientation for new members
- time for what committee members or representatives must do (e.g. inspections, prepare for meetings, attend meetings)
- access to information about health and safety activities and statistics
- quick and proper responses to recommendations
- regular conversations with management about what's working and what needs improvement, in terms of the committee

The ingredients of effective joint health and safety committees

Effective joint health and safety committees don't fall from the sky. They need to be built, nurtured and supported. Based on our experience (supplemented by studies and experiences elsewhere), here are 10 necessary ingredients:

1. Commitment, support, participation and respect from all levels of management, especially at "the top".
2. Organizational acceptance that committee activities are real work, not a volunteer activity or add-on; adequate time for committee work, including preparation for activities and meetings, is essential.
3. Competent, trained supervisors with good "people skills".
4. Knowledgeable workers - they are trained, know their rights and participate in health and safety decisions and activities.
5. A comprehensive health and safety program, set in a preventive framework that requires everyone involved to deal with all six hazard categories and look for root causes.
6. All committee members trained and practicing the principles, content and processes required (e.g. they have with skills to run meetings, inspect the workplace, "chat people up", research hazards and solutions and make the case for changes).
7. "New eyes" come into workplaces (e.g. via trained facilitators/trainers, exchanges and discussions).
8. Participatory methods, including visual tools and materials.
9. Short and long-term planning and evaluation of committee activities, integrated into the organisation's activities.
10. Recognition that conflict is inherent in joint worker-management committees; processes set up to deal with it in a respectful and healthy way.

Workplace safety and health committee self-evaluation - A quick check

Yes	No	Don't know	Committee structure
☐	☐	☐	Has written terms of reference.
☐	☐	☐	There are 4 to 12 committee members, at least half representing workers.
☐	☐	☐	Co-chairs share chairing of meetings equally.
☐	☐	☐	Names and work locations of members and alternates are posted on the committee's bulletin board.
☐	☐	☐	Each member has at least two days of training per year.

Yes	No	Don't know	Meetings
☐	☐	☐	Meet at least once every three months or preferably once a month.
☐	☐	☐	Co-chairs prepare and distribute agendas at least three days in advance, to allow members to prepare.
☐	☐	☐	Co-chairs rotate chairing of meetings (i.e. they take turns).
☐	☐	☐	Review minutes to make sure that people have done what they were as signed to do, etc.
☐	☐	☐	Review and discuss inspection reports.
☐	☐	☐	Review and discuss investigation reports.
☐	☐	☐	Provide enough time to complete agenda items, including new issues.
☐	☐	☐	Within one week of the meeting, distribute minutes to committee and send a copy to the Workplace Safety and Health Division.
☐	☐	☐	Post minutes in a "prominent" place within a week and leave them up for at least a month after the next meeting.

Yes	No	Don't know	Duties and functions
☐	☐	☐	Identifies health and safety concerns and recommends action.
☐	☐	☐	Considers worker concerns and acts quickly.
☐	☐	☐	Advises employer about the workplace program and monitors its effectiveness.
☐	☐	☐	Advises employer about education activities and monitors their effectiveness.
☐	☐	☐	Assigns representatives to specific areas of the workplace to inspect.
☐	☐	☐	Assigns representatives to participate in investigations.
☐	☐	☐	Ensures inspections are done regularly and investigations are done when needed.
☐	☐	☐	Asks for and gets information about testing of equipment or hazards, inspections, investigations, and reports about health and safety monitoring or audits.

Yes	No	Don't know	**Committee recommendations**
☐	☐	☐	Committee writes direct, do-able and complete recommendations to the employer, when required.
☐	☐	☐	Committee members know that they may call in the Workplace Safety and Health Division if the committee cannot reach agreement.
☐	☐	☐	Committee members are prepared to call the Workplace Safety and Health Division if the employer rejects recommendations or does not reply within

30 days.

Scoring

Score four points for each Yes.

Less than 36	Immediate action should be taken. The committee is not effective.
37 to 60	Some committee activities exist, but planning and organization is required.
61 to 83	Committee is active but needs some improvement.
84	Committee meets recommended minimum compliance with legal requirements.
85 to 100	Committee meets or exceeds compliance with legal requirements.

Action plan

Use the checklist to create an action plan about what the committee needs to improve. Set target dates and, if appropriate, the committee members responsible. Review it regularly.

For a more detailed evaluation of committee effectiveness, use the form *Workplace Safety and Health Committee self-evaluation - How effective are we?* (CP.20B)

Adapted from the form in the Hospital Employees Union's *Health and safety manual for stewards serving on joint OH&S committees*, published in 2004 (see http://www.heu.org, under for members> special reports). The HEU material is based on a more detailed document prepared by the British Columbia WCB, available in http://www.worksafebc.com/publications/health_and_safety/by_topic/assets/pdf/jointoch.pdf.

Workplace safety and health committee self-evaluation checklist - How effective are we?

Use this checklist to help you evaluate your joint health and safety committee's operations. Place a check in the appropriate column beside each item. Check more than one box per item if you wish. To help you do this, have a copy of a recent agenda and minutes, along with terms of reference, ground rules etc.

Structure

D/K = Don't Know N/I= Needs Improvement N/A = Not Applicable

Item	Yes	No	D/K	N/I	N/A	Specifics to follow up or inform discussion
1. Does the committee have agreed terms of reference?						
2. Are committee roles and responsibilities clearly defined? (See L.3)						
3. Is the committee the right size?						
4. Are there at least as many worker representatives as employer representatives on the committee?						
5. Does the union select their representatives?						
6. Are all sectors, departments, and all workers adequately represented on the committee?						
7. Does the committee always use a clear, written agenda? (See CP.3)						
a) Is the agenda set and distributed to individual members at least three days before the meeting?						
b) Does the agenda indicate who is responsible for particular roles within the meetings?						
c) Does the agenda clearly specify the intended purpose of the discussion items?						
d) Does agenda include time limits for each item?						
e) Do the co-chairs set the agenda together?						
8. Does the committee produce clear, action-oriented minutes of every meeting? (See CP.13A)						
a) Do the minutes specify who is responsible for carrying out committee decisions?						
b) Do minutes specify deadlines for completion of activities based on committee decisions?						
c) Do the minutes accurately summarize the content of committee discussions?						
d) Are committee meeting notices and minutes posted on designated bulletin board(s)?						
e) Is a copy of the committee minutes given to the employer/prime contractor?						
f) Are copies of minutes sent to committee members and WSHD within 7 days by employer?						
9. Does the committee report to the "right" person representing the employer?						
10. Does the committee receive the necessary support from the employer?						

Process - general (For more about this, see Parts B and H.)

Item	Yes	No	D/K	N/I	N/A	Specifics to follow up or inform discussion
1. Do committee members agree on the basic goals and purposes of the committee?						
2. Does the committee have "ground rules" about the process they use for meetings and other activities?						
3. Do committee members feel free to express themselves honestly and directly during committee meetings?						
4. Are conflicting opinions and points of view treated with respect? (See CP.9)						
5. Do committee members learn from one another?						
6. Does the committee work through problems in a systematic, logical way? (See CP.17)						
a) Do members clearly define the problem and its root causes (what, who, when, where and how) before considering solutions? (See CP.16)						
b) Does the committee usually use techniques like brain storming to generate creative ideas?						
c) Does the committee often use flipcharts or white boards to display key points for everyone to see?						
d) Does the committee look at a variety of possible solutions to problems before selecting the best solution(s)?						
e) Does the committee base selection of priority problems and/or solutions on clearly stated criteria? (See CP.6A)						
7. Do the co-chairs work well together to facilitate discussions? (See CP.4)						
8. Do committee members attend most meetings?						
9. Do committee members have alternates in case they cannot attend a regularly- scheduled meeting?						
10. Does the committee pay enough attention to the social or human relations aspects of group work?						
11. Do all committee members have an opportunity to contribute to the agenda?						
12. Does the committee monitor its own use of time against the agenda during meetings?						
13. Is the whole committee actively involved in all major workplace health and safety activities?						
14. Do committee members have adequate time and resources (e.g. office space, photocopying, clerical support) to carry out their responsibilities?						
15. Are all committee members paid for all the time it takes to carry out their responsibilities, including preparation time?						
16. Does the committee meet at least every 3 months?						
17. Does the committee call special meetings when necessary?						

Process - general

cont'd

Item	Yes	No	D/K	N/I	N/A	Specifics to follow up or inform discussion
18. Does the committee have an orientation session for new members? For new employees? (See CP.14)						
19. Do all committee members get training about their roles, responsibilities and the practicalities of their committee activities?						
20. Do committee members get follow-up training regularly and when new laws or workplace "rules" are introduced?						
21. Does the committee regularly evaluate its work and processes? (with outside help?)						

Process - specific duties

Item	Yes	No	D/K	N/I	N/A	Specifics to follow up or inform discussion
1. Does the committee solicit (e.g. survey), receive and deal with complaints or concerns from employees?						
2. Does the committee protect the anonymity of complainants who request it and the confidentiality of all those whose situations they discuss or review?						
3. Does the committee report back to people who bring issues to the committee about what has been done?						
4. Does the committee participate in identifying all six categories of hazards found in the workplace? (See SH.2)						
5. Does the committee tell all workers when tasks or work are found to be dangerous (unsafe or unhealthy)?						
6. Does the committee develop and promote prevention measures to deal with all types of hazards? (See SH.13 and SH.2)						
7. Does the committee check the effectiveness of all prevention measures?						
8. Does the committee review new equipment, tools, materials, work stations or processes before they are introduced, and make recommendations based on anticipated or known health and safety hazards?						
9. Does the employer work with the committee to develop and review the workplace health and safety program required by the *Act*?						

Process - specific duties cont'd

Item	Yes	No	D/K	N/I	N/A	Specifics to follow up or inform discussion
10. Does the committee develop and promote programs to educate and provide information about health and safety, particularly WHMIS?						
11. Does the committee always make recommendations to the employer, based on their discussions about each issue on their plate? (See CP.15)						
12. Does the committee inspect the workplace regularly? (See SH.3, 4 and 5)						
13. Do committee members participate in all incident and dangerous occurrence investigations? (See SH.11)						
14. Does the worker co-chair or a designated replacement always go with safety and health officers (SHOs/inspectors) who come to do inspections or investigations?						
15. Does the employer co-chair or a designated replacement also go on inspections with SHOs?						
16. Are both co-chairs or their designated representatives present when SHOs present their decisions/ reports?						
17. Do committee members know about their roles in refusals and follow these "rules"? (See L.2)						
18. Does the committee keep records about complaints and how they deal with them, as well as other things they do?						
19. Does the committee regularly use incident, investigation and workplace inspection reports, first aid records and health and safety statistics to inform and support decisions? (See CP.10.)						
20. Does the committee receive monthly, cumulative quarterly and cumulative annual health and safety statistics?						
21. Does the committee review the program, WHMIS training, the inventory, etc. regularly, and at least as often as legally required?						

Results

Item	Yes	No	D/K	N/I	N/A	Specifics to follow up or inform discussion
1. Does the committee inspect for and deal with all types of hazards (See SH.2), specifically: a) safety/mechanical?						
b) chemical and mineral?						
c) physical (from energy sources)?						
d) communicable/biological?						
e) ergonomic design?						
f) stressors/work organization?						
2. Are there effective programs about: a) WHMIS?						
b) ergonomics?						
c) violence prevention?						
d) dealing with all other hazard categories? i) safety/mechanical?						
ii) chemicals and minerals?						
iii) physical?						
iv) communicable/biological?						
v) other stressors/work organization hazards?						
f) toxics use reduction (buying, using and producing fewer and less toxic substances)?						
g) other prevention activities?						
h) return-to-work?						
i) accommodating disabled employees?						
j) tying together all the programs in an overall document and setting out general policy and responsibilities?						
3. What systems are there to: a) collect, analyse and use illness, injury and near-miss data?						
b) collect, analyse and use hazard information?						
c) collect, analyse and use information collected during inspections, investigations, audits, etc.?						
4. Is the committee: a) included in all these tracking and analysing systems?						
b) all involved in worksite inspections, incident investigations and related follow-up?						
c) able to influence the planning of new processes, procedures and health and safety systems?						
d) able to influence the purchase of new equipment, chemicals, tools, and other materials?						
e) successfully identifying and priorizing significant hazards and problems (in all six categories)?						
f) unable to address some issues well?						
g) leaving issues unresolved?						
h) using the provisions of the Act and regulations to aid decisions and recommendations?						

Results cont'd

Item	Yes	No	D/K	N/I	N/A	Specifics to follow up or inform discussion
i) making clear, specific recommendations to address hazards and other health and safety issues?						
j) regularly tracking how their decisions and recommendations are dealt with?						
k) auditing investigations and related activities in which it is not directly involved?						
l) regularly evaluating its work?						
5. Has the employer provided written responses to committee recommendations within the 30-day time limit?						
6. Does the employer consistently implement committee recommendations?						
7. Do employees perceive that the committee is performing a useful function?						
8. Has the number of complaints or concerns coming to the committee decreased?						
9. Has the number of injuries or occupational illnesses or diseases gone down?						

What are three things your committee is doing well?

1.

2.

3.

List the top three (3) improvements your committee should make in the next year.

1.

2.

3.