# Health and Safety Committee

## WHAT’S IT ALL ABOUT

Your workplace probably has a committee that discusses safety issues. It’s called a joint health and safety committee because administrators and workers just like you join forces and cooperate.

**DEALING WITH DANGER**

When you’re concerned about unsafe situations, you can turn to health and safety committee members. In order to make needed policies, they learn about hazardous conditions and practices – through reports, inspections, reviews of injury and illness case studies and incidents such as fires or acts of violence against workers.

**EXAMPLES**

Representatives of the safety committee are there to help when you’re concerned about the lack of a guardrail on the mezzanine storage level and you can’t get anyone to install one. When a fire exit is blocked or the dock lights are always burned out and your complaints aren’t going anywhere, they can get help. Safety committee members come up with ideas to reduce hazards ranging from excessive noise to toxic solvents.

## HOW TO PROTECT YOURSELF

Learn who your joint health and safety committee members are. They might be identified by hardhat decals, name tags, special colored safety headgear or other means.

Remember that the health and safety committee is intended to be a cooperative venture, not an “us versus them” arrangement. Labor and personnel issues don’t belong at the meetings. Committee members are not “safety cops,” nor should they take over the

supervisor’s role in maintaining safe working conditions.

Continue reporting safety hazards and problems to the supervisor who is expected to take care of them. Long-term safety issues go to the safety committee for discussion and a recommendation which is communicated to management.

Here’s what else you can do:

- Keep in mind that it’s your job to learn the safety policies and procedures for your workplace and to follow them.
- Actively participate in the safety process. Because you have experience in your area and expertise in the tasks you’re required to perform, you can make valuable suggestions, based on your work experience, to members of the safety committee.
- Become active on the joint health and safety committee so that the way that jobs are done in your workplace can be improved, made safer and more efficient.

## FINAL WORD

Your workplace health and safety committee does such important work you should consider joining. Appointments tend to go to workers who express an interest, so consider volunteering next time there’s an opening.