

Effective Safety Committees

Safety Committees are a formal way of involving workers on your site to meet and discuss health and safety issues in an organised and constructive way.

This factsheet should be read in conjunction with the IQ factsheet 'Understanding Regulation 40 – Employee Engagement.'

What are they?

Regulation 40 of The Quarries Regulations 1999 sets out in law the basic responsibilities involved ensuring workers are able to participate in health and safety management on sites.

The first two clauses of Regulation 40 set out the clear duty of the operator for the health and safety of all people working on site and that to assist with this, a committee should be established:

40 (1) It shall be the duty of the operator to make and maintain arrangements which will enable him and those persons who regularly work at the quarry to co-operate effectively in promoting and developing measures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of persons who regularly work at the quarry and in checking the effectiveness of such measures.

(2) For the purposes described in paragraph (1), a committee of persons with suitable practical experience of quarrying operations may be appointed for the quarry –

(a) in a case where there is an association or body representative of a majority of the total number of persons working at the quarry, by that association or body; or

(b) jointly by associations or bodies which are together representative of such a majority.

Safety Committees have a number of important roles within a quarry:

- Helping to communicate important health and safety information

- Providing input from workers on health and safety issues
- Providing feedback on what's working and what's not
- Helping to draw up risk assessments, rules and procedures
- Reviewing health and safety documents such as risk assessments
- Investigating incidents and recommending improvements
- Carrying out inspections and identifying better ways of working
- Keeping an eye on how rules and procedures are implemented in practice and other people's behaviour within the rules
- Helping site management to improve overall performance

Forming Safety Committees

- ✓ Decide upon an appropriate size for the committee, based on how many people are on site and the structure of the site in terms of work areas
- ✓ Ensure that and established trade union safety representatives are included
- ✓ Make sure that participants can be properly supported to participate do shift patterns or work responsibilities allow them to do so?
- ✓ Give the Safety Committee proper management recognition and support
- ✓ Ensure people are inducted into the role and purpose of the Committee and the part that they are expected to play
- ✓ Pay close attention to recommendations, reports and other outputs from the committee. Not only will these be valuable, but management attention is crucial to the success and sustainability of the Committee
- ✓ Ensure that proper meeting facilities and support are available to the committee. Help to encourage wider participation and in recruiting new Committee members from time to time
- ✓ Help the Committee to ensure that the wider workforce is involved – particularly contractors, temporary workers and other visitors to the site

Running Safety Committee Meetings

- ✓ Meetings should be properly supported by management
- ✓ Ensure that good facilities and adequate time are provided for meetings to take place
- ✓ Train people to fulfil roles – particularly those involved in chairing meetings
- ✓ Ensure that a proper agenda is used and is properly communicated.

- ✓ Make sure that meetings are properly recorded and that minutes are shared with management and the wider workforce
- ✓ Ensure that there are means in place to ensure actions are fulfilled and progress monitored
- ✓ Help the Committee to maintain its importance by monitoring attendance and participation and taking action where needed

Here is a sample agenda:

- Welcome and apologies for absence
- Review minutes of the last meeting
- Matters arising and summary of progress on action points
- Accident and incident reports
- Site inspection reports
- Review of Risk Assessments and Safe Systems of Work
- Forthcoming projects or changes to the workplace
- Training and Committee Support
- Any other business

Site Inspections

- ✓ Encourage representatives of the Safety Committee to undertake workplace inspections
- ✓ Use checklists to ensure that inspections are thorough and are recorded
- ✓ Make sure that the whole site can be inspected
- ✓ Ensure that the outcomes of inspections are widely communicated and that improvements can be implemented – and seen to be implemented
- ✓ Support inspectors in particular circumstances, such as after an incident has happened. Provide expert input if needed
- ✓ Encourage Committee members and those carrying out inspections to learn and develop their skills by visiting new sites, attending training and shadowing others

Review

- ✓ Remember the powerful role that Safety Committees can play in promoting a positive safety culture and improving your site's overall performance
- ✓ Make sure that your support for the Committee is strong and visible. Keep the effectiveness of the Committee under review and support members in finding ways to improve and encourage wider participation

Why is it important to me?

Safety Committees provide a powerful way of engaging with your team in order to create a strong health and safety culture and reduce workplace incidents. They can also be valuable development tools for members of your team and will help to demonstrate your effective implementation of the Quarries Regulations 1999 and other health and safety legislation.

IQ believes that running effective safety committees is an important skill for professionals working in the quarrying and minerals products industry. It features on our **Skills Wheel** which captures all the key skill and knowledge areas we believe are vital to successful career development in the industry.

Where Next?

QNJAC (Quarries National Joint Advisory Committee) has produced a series of helpful guidance notes for people working in quarries.

Amongst the range of topics covered is a section on leadership and workforce engagement to assist with implementing Regulation 40.

QNJAC guidance can be found at:

www.qnjac.co.uk/qnjac-guidance

Institute of Quarrying

IQ supports professionals working within the quarrying and minerals products industry through membership and training. These factsheets are produced across a range of topics to share ideas and best practice. Further information can be found via the resources section on the IQ website www.quarrying.org.