



Guidelines for Area/Local Joint Labor-Management Safety and Health Committees

Handbook EL-809

April 2001
Transmittal Letter

A. Explanation. This issue of Handbook EL-809 obsoletes all previously published versions.

B. Distribution

1. **Initial.** Handbook EL-809 is distributed to all postal facilities directly involved in implementation and/or enforcement of the policies and procedures described in this handbook.
2. **Additional Copies.** Order additional copies from the Material Distribution Center using Form 7380, *Material Distribution Center Supply Requisition*.

C. Comments

1. Comments and questions about the content of this document can be submitted in writing to:

SAFETY PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW RM 9801
WASHINGTON DC 20260-4231

2. Comments and questions about the organization or editing of this document can be submitted in writing to:

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES INFORMATION
US POSTAL SERVICE
475 L'ENFANT PLAZA SW RM 5540
WASHINGTON DC 20260-5540

D. Effective Date. This handbook is effective upon receipt.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Suzanne F. Medvidovich".

Suzanne F. Medvidovich
Senior Vice President
Human Resources

Introduction

This booklet is for all area/local joint labor-management safety and health committee members and is intended to provide guidance and information on your responsibilities as a committee member.

As an individual serving on the safety and health committee, you must have a personal commitment to make accident prevention a part of your daily work. You can demonstrate your commitment through leadership and by setting a personal example by working safely and observing safe practices. Safety must become your way of life, both on and off the job. Safety never just happens. If a workplace is safe, it is because somebody is working to make it safe. As a member of the safety and health committee, you are playing a major role in making your workplace safe for all employees.

Contents

I. Safety Philosophy of the United States Postal Service	1
II. Membership	1
III. Terms of Membership	3
IV. Orientation of Area/Local Committee Members	3
V. Duties and Responsibilities of Committee Members	3
A. All Local Safety and Health Committee Members	3
B. All Area Safety and Health Committee Members	5
C. Area/Local Committee Officers	5
D. Field Federal Safety and Health Councils	6
VI. Area/Local Committee Meetings	6
VII. Order of Business	7
VIII. Suggested Format for Minutes of Meeting	9

I. Safety Philosophy of the United States Postal Service

This is the safety philosophy of the Postal Service:

- All injuries can be prevented.
- Management, which includes all levels through the initial level supervisor, has the responsibility for preventing injuries.
- It is possible to safeguard against all operating exposures that may result in injuries.
- All employees must be trained to work safely and to understand that it is to their advantage, as well as the Postal Service's, to work safely, and that they have a definite responsibility to do so in order to avoid the pain and suffering caused by accidents.
- It is good business from the standpoint of both efficiency and economy to prevent personal injuries on the job and off the job.

The following are excerpts from the 1998 National Agreement Article on Safety and Health:

It is the responsibility of management to provide safe working conditions in all present and future installations and to develop a safe working force. The Unions will cooperate with and assist management to live up to this responsibility.

The Employer and the Unions insist on the observance of safe rules and safe procedures by employees and insist on correction of unsafe conditions.

II. Membership

Area Safety Committee

A joint labor-management safety and health committee will be established at the employer's area level.

- Representation on the committee shall include one person from the union and appropriate representatives from the Postal Service area office.

- The chairperson of the committee will be an operations direct report to the vice president, Area Operations, designated by management.
- The secretary of the committee will be designated by management.
- When an area has safety, maintenance, and/or environmental personnel (analyst, manager, specialist, or coordinator) on the staff, those persons shall be members of the committee.

Local Safety Committee

- A. A joint labor-management safety and health committee will be established at each postal installation that has 50 or more employees.
- B. Such a committee may be established upon the request of the installation head at installations having fewer than 50 employees.
- C. There shall be equal representation on the committee between the unions and management.
 - Representation on the committee shall include one person from each of the unions at the installation. Appropriate officials shall represent management.
 - The chairperson of the committee will be an operations direct report to the installation head designated by management.
 - The secretary of the committee will be designated by management.
 - When an installation has a safety officer (manager, specialist, technician) on the staff, that person shall be a member of the committee.
 - When an installation has maintenance and/or environmental personnel (manager, supervisor, coordinator) on the staff, those persons shall be members of the committee.

III. Terms of Membership

With the exception of the chairperson, the secretary, and the safety officer, committee members shall serve three-year terms. Union representatives will, at the discretion of their unions, be eligible to succeed themselves.

IV. Orientation of Area/Local Committee Members

All committee members will receive formal orientation and training on the duties and responsibilities of committee members, on the basic elements of the safety and health programs, on identification of hazards and unsafe conditions, and on reports and statistics reviewed and analyzed by the committee.

V. Duties and Responsibilities of Committee Members

A. All Local Safety and Health Committee Members:

1. Attend all scheduled meetings.
2. Create and maintain an interest in safety and health and thereby help to prevent accidents.
3. Review local safety and health rules and assist management with the enforcement of these rules.
4. Monitor the progress of accident prevention and health activities, and, when necessary, make recommendations for improvement to the installation head. Membership on a safety and health committee does not entitle the members to have access to individual employee medical records without the employee's consent.
5. Determine program areas to receive increased emphasis and make recommendations regarding them.
6. Review employee safety and health suggestions.
7. Review safety-training records to determine if all employees are receiving appropriate training.

8. Review Forms 1767, *Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition, or Practice*, and responses or corrective action taken.
9. Review Forms 1769, *Accident Report*, and statistics from the National Accident Reporting System and the injury compensation program reporting system.
10. Discuss all matters relating to employee safety and health, except for individual grievances (unless permitted by national agreement), and make recommendations for resolution or improvement to the installation head.
11. Participate in on-the-spot inspections of troublesome areas when authorized by the chairperson. Committee members will be on official time while making such inspections.
 - When an investigation board is appointed by a performance cluster manager to investigate a fatal or serious industrial noncriminal accident, the appropriate union at the installation will be advised promptly. When requested by the union, a representative from the committee will be permitted to accompany the board in its investigation.
 - Any union representative on the committee may participate in the semiannual inspections conducted by safety personnel in the main facility of each performance cluster and bulk mail center (BMC), provided their union represents employees at that facility.
 - A union representative from the committee may participate in the inspection of any main facility, Post Office, BMC, station, branch, or other installation that has 100 or more man-years of employment in the regular workforce, provided that his or her union represents employees at that facility and that his or her duty station is at that facility.
 - One union representative from the committee, selected on a rotating basis by the unions, may participate in the annual inspection of each installation with fewer than 100 man-years of employment in the regular workforce,

where such a committee exists in the installation being inspected.

B. All Area Safety and Health Committee Members:

1. Attend all scheduled meetings.
2. Create and maintain an interest in safety and health and thereby help to prevent accidents.
3. Determine program areas to receive increased emphasis and make recommendations regarding them.
4. Review Forms 1769, *Accident Report*, and statistics from the National Accident Reporting System and the injury compensation program reporting system.
5. Discuss all matters relating to employee safety and health, except for individual grievances (unless permitted by national agreement), and make recommendations for resolution or improvement to the installation head.

C. Area/Local Committee Officers:

1. Chairperson:
 - Arranges for meeting place.
 - Sets times and dates for meetings.
 - Notifies members of meetings.
 - Receives agenda items from members.
 - Arranges agenda and program.
 - Arranges for seating for all members.
 - Reviews previous minutes and other materials before meetings.
 - Coordinates gathering of all appropriate management reports, data, and information to be reviewed by the committee.
 - Responds to members' requests for special meetings.

2. Area/Local Secretary:

- Prepares minutes of meetings.
- Distributes minutes.
- Reports on the status of recommendations made by the committee.
- Distributes agenda to members.
- May assume some of the chairperson's duties.

D. Field Federal Safety and Health Councils:

In areas where Field Federal Safety and Health Councils exist, one representative of the unions who is on the local safety and health committee will be permitted to become a member of such a council and attend its meetings. This employee will be excused from regularly assigned duties without loss of pay.

VI. Area/Local Committee Meetings

- A. The committee shall meet at least quarterly. In addition, meetings may be held at any other time at the request of a committee member to discuss important problems or items. Such a request must be approved by the chairperson, but the request cannot be unreasonably denied.
- B. Agenda items must be submitted to the committee's chairperson at least three days before a meeting.
- C. Individual grievances will not be discussed during local committee meetings unless provided for in the national agreements.
- D. Meetings should be conducted according to the generally accepted rules of order, but formality should not be allowed to overwhelm the meeting or to inhibit free discussion.

VII. Order of Business

Local Committee

- A. *Call to order.* The chairperson should call the meeting to order promptly at the designated time.
- B. *Roll call by the secretary.* Names of members and others present should be recorded.
- C. *Introduction of any visitors.*
- D. *Minutes of the previous meeting.* These should be read and any needed corrections made.
- E. *Unfinished business.* All matters on which no definite decisions have been made are brought up for reconsideration.
- F. *New business.*
 - Review of safety accident reports, statistics, and accident reports.
 - Review of Form 1767, *Report of Hazard, Unsafe Condition, or Practice.*
 - Review of employee safety suggestions.
 - Review of safety rules, safety films, and safety training programs, etc.
 - Review of progress of safety and health program, and special campaigns, etc.
 - Discussion and resolution of any other items or problems relating to safety and health.
- G. *Safety education.* This should be made a part of every meeting. A presentation can be made by a committee member, by an outside expert, or by the local safety officer, etc.
- H. *Adjournment.*

Area Committee

- A. *Call to order.* The chairperson should call the meeting to order promptly at the designated time.
- B. *Roll call by the secretary.* Names of members and others present should be recorded.
- C. *Introduction of any visitors.*
- D. *Minutes of the previous meeting.* These should be read and any needed corrections made.
- E. *Unfinished business.* All matters on which no definite decisions have been made are brought up for reconsideration.
- F. *New business.*
 - Review of safety accident reports, statistics, accident reports.
 - Review of safety rules, safety films, safety training programs, etc.
 - Review of progress of safety and health program, special campaigns, etc.
 - Discussion and resolution of any other items or problems relating to safety and health.
- G. *Safety education.* This should be made a part of every meeting. A presentation can be made by a committee member, by an outside expert, or by the local safety officer, etc.
- H. *Adjournment.*

VIII. Suggested Format for Minutes of Meeting

Date: _____

Subject: Safety and Health Committee [Date of Report] Minutes of Meeting

From: Chairperson, Safety and Health Committee (office, state, and ZIP Code)

To: Postmaster (or installation head) (office, state, and ZIP Code)

Meeting convened at:	(time)	(location)
In attendance:	(name)	Chairperson
	(name)	Secretary
	(name)	Title
	(name)	Title
Not in attendance:	(name)	Title
	(name)	Title
Agenda Items:	Unfinished business:	(Subject, action taken, etc.)
	New business:	(Subject, action taken, etc.)
	Problem areas which should receive increased emphasis:	(Brief report and recommendations, if any)
	Special items:	(This will include safety education presentations, results of on-the-spot inspections of troublesome areas with recommendations and action taken.)
	Brief report, if any	
Meeting adjourned at:	(time)	

Signed: _____ **Chairperson**

_____ **Secretary**

Note: Copies of the minutes should be provided to the local president of each union and posted on employee bulletin boards.