

## **Section 2: Site Occupational Health & Safety Committees**

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### **2.1 Introduction**

#### **Purpose:**

The purpose and function of the site Safety Committee is to create and maintain interest in health & safety issues and thereby assist in reducing incidents. While the District is ultimately responsible for the overall Occupational Health & Safety Program, the Committee is responsible for identifying and recommending solutions to problems. The individual employee has a responsibility to first report problems to his/her supervisor and may also, inform a member of the site based health & safety committee.

#### **Scope**

The committee aids and advises both management and employees on matters of health & safety pertaining to the operation of the school or site. The committee performs essential monitoring of activities as well as investigative and educational information.

### **2.2 Site Based Health & Safety Committees:**

#### **Structure:**

We have three different structures for our committees: individual schools, combined schools and one for the operations department. Regardless of which structure is used, the committee shall consist of employees from all job areas (CUPE, BCTF, & Excluded Staff) within the workplace(s). Employee members will be chosen from the employees, by employees. The committee should be co-chaired by a person selected by the employees and one selected by the district.

Names of the site based committee members will be posted on the District Health & Safety website, be posted on the Health & Safety bulletin board and included in the site based orientation for all new employees.

#### **Roles & Responsibilities:**

- a) Advise the employer on proposed changes to the workplace or the work processes that may affect the health or safety of workers;
- b) Carry out any other duties and functions prescribed by regulation;
- c) Consider and expeditiously deal with complaints relating to the health & safety of workers;
- d) Consult with workers and the employer on issues related to occupational health & safety and occupational environment;
- e) Ensure that incident investigations and regular inspections are carried out as required by regulation;
- f) Identify situations that may be unhealthy or unsafe for workers and advise on effective systems for responding to those situations;

- g) Make recommendations to the employer and the workers for the improvement of occupational health & safety educational programs, and policies and to monitor their effectiveness;
- h) Participate in inspections, investigations and inquiries as provided by regulation.
- i) When necessary, request additional information from the employer about:
  - Health & safety experience and work practices and standards in similar or other industries of which the employer has knowledge;
  - Known or reasonably foreseeable health or safety hazards to which workers at the workplace are likely to be exposed.

In addition, Committee Members shall:

- a) Actively participate, promote and evaluate safety and training program(s);
- b) Assist with the implementation of recommended corrective/preventive measures;
- c) Carry out any other duties and functions prescribed by regulation;
- d) Conduct regular inspection of facilities and equipment to detect unsafe conditions and/or practices;
- e) Listen to and solicit suggestions from, employees and make appropriate recommendations;
- f) Promote compliance of health & safety legislation;
- g) Review circumstances and causes of incidents and injuries, and also suggest recommendations for corrective/preventive measures.

### **Meetings:**

Committee meetings shall be held at least monthly except for July and August (schools only). Minutes must be kept for all meetings and copies need to be sent to the administrator or supervisor of the site and the district principal for health & safety. ***A template for the safety minutes can be found on the Health & Safety web site under: "Forms".*** The minutes need to be posted on the on-site safety board &/or can be sent electronically to all employees of that site. ***Copies of the monthly meeting minutes are available on the district health & safety website under: "Minutes".***

Emergency meetings may held as needed for things such as a worker refusing unsafe work or anything that poses an immediate danger.

### **Communication Protocols:**

The District believes that health & safety concerns are best resolved through a meaningful and collaborative problem-solving process that begins at the level where the concern can be addressed. Employees must bring forward concerns to their supervisor and should do so ASAP with the understanding that the School District is committed to identifying and eliminating any workplace conditions that are hazardous to the health & safety of employees.

The following protocol is recommended:

**Informal request:** Employees who are aware of a workplace condition that is hazardous to the health & safety of the workers shall first discuss the problem or concern with the person(s) who have the authority to address the matter. Generally, this discussion would occur with the employee's immediate supervisor. The employee may also inform the worker representative on the site based health & safety committee.

**Formal Request:** If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved by the immediate supervisor, the employee or the worker representative shall raise the matter with the Site Based Health & Safety Committee. The Recommendation to the Employer Form (*found on the Health & Safety website under: "Forms"*) is to be completed at this point.

If the matter is not satisfactorily resolved through the Site Health & Safety Committee, the matter will be raised with Senior Management. Failure to resolve the issue by Senior Management will result in reporting the issue to WorkSafeBC. See the flow chart for "*Employee Communication Protocol for Safety Issues*" on page 4.

***NB. WorkSafeBC Regulations state that an issue may be referred to WorkSafeBC at anytime.***

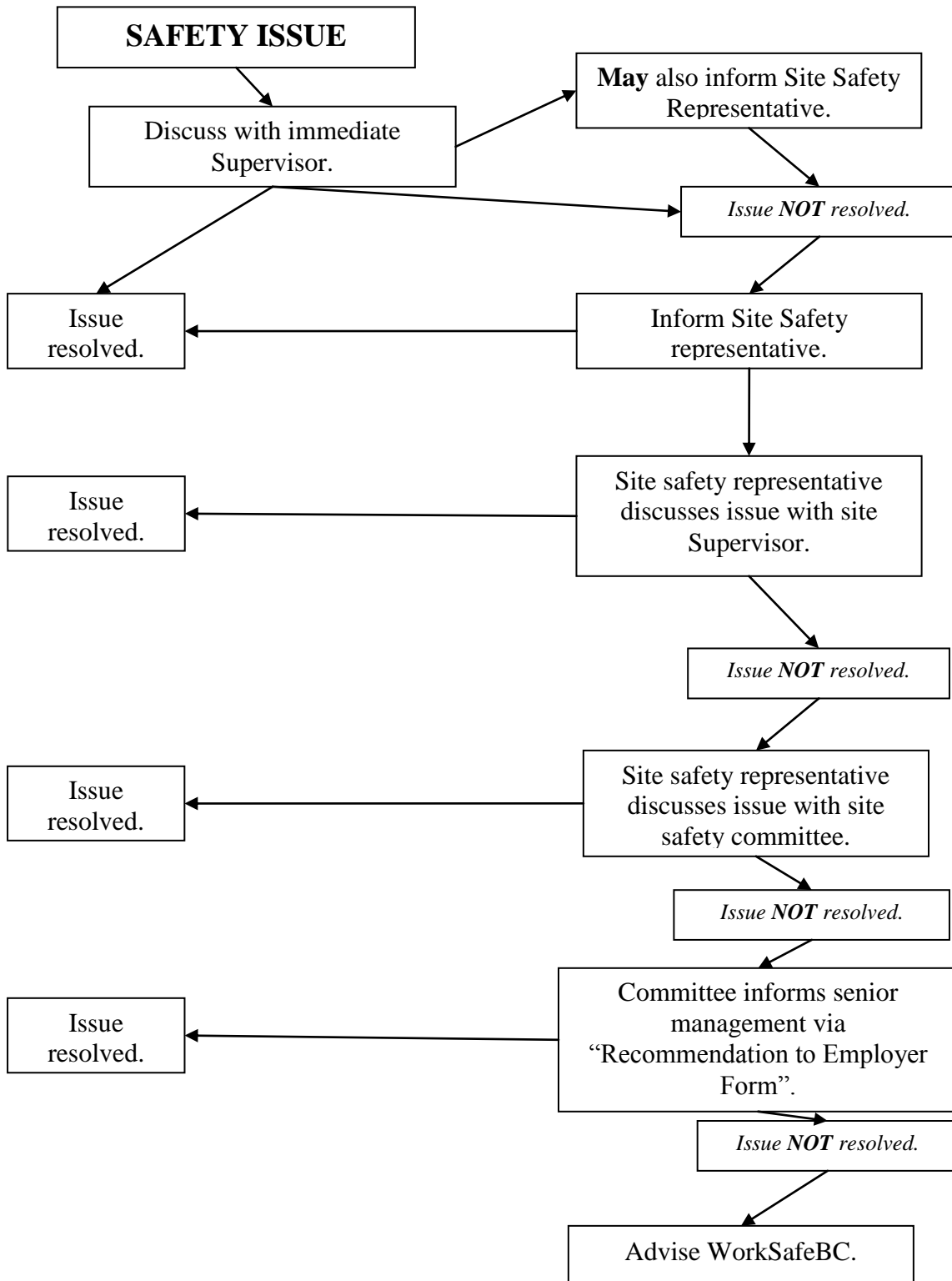
**Site Inspections:**

- a) **Informal** inspections should be done by all employees on a daily basis.
- b) A complete **Formal** inspection of the site/school should be carried out **at least** twice a year.
- c) Use the Health & Safety Inspection Checklist - **Standard** or **Shops**. [*Copies can be found on Health & Safety Website under: "Forms"*].
- d) Inspection reports must be posted on the Health & Safety board &/ or sent electronically to all site employees. Copies must be sent to the principal or supervisor and the district principal for Health & Safety.

**Training:**

Site based committee members are eligible for eight hours (one day) of Health & Safety related training per year at the expense of the employer. *A list of the on line courses available to our members can be found on the Health & Safety website under: "Training/SD#23 Training"*. Other courses may be available upon request to your supervisor.

## Employee Communication Protocol for Safety Issues



*Note: Notwithstanding the above protocols, WorksafeBC Regulations state that an issue may be deferred to WorksafeBC at any time.*

## **2.3 District Health & Safety Committee:**

### **Structure:**

- An employee co-chair from each zone;
- A representative from the Operations Department;
- A Principal Representative;
- The District Principal for Health & Safety;
- The Director of Operations or his/her representative.

### **Roles:**

- Maintain open communication with Site Committees;
- Meet a minimum of 3 times in the school year;
- Monitor system trends and effectiveness;
- Provide input for Health & Safety professional development.