

Safety Committee duties



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EL 809, which details the duties and responsibilities of the Local Safety Committee and the Area Safety Committee and highlighted Section V-A (4 and 8).

“The Safety Committee’s duties and responsibilities give safety activists many opportunities to explore and resolve most, if not all, of the hazards in the workplace that need to be addressed.”

This month, I draw your attention to following passages from the duties and responsibilities of local committee members (Section V-A):

2. Create and maintain an interest in safety, health and ergonomics and thereby help to prevent accidents.
3. Review local safety and health rules and assist management with the enforcement of these rules. [This does not mean you do management’s job for them, but rather, that you jointly find solutions to obstacles so that management holds up their end of the bargain.]
5. Determine program areas to receive increased emphasis and make recommendations regarding them.
6. Review employee safety, health and ergonomic suggestions.
7. Review safety and ergonomics training records to determine if all employees are receiving appropriate training.
9. Review PS Forms 1769/301 and statistics from the Na-

tional Accident Reporting System and the injury compensation program reporting system.

10. Discuss all matters relating to employee safety, health and ergonomics, except for individual grievances...and make recommendations for resolution or improvement to the installation head.

11. Assist in making recommendations for ergonomic improvements. Committee members will use ergonomic resources accessible to management representatives including checklists, assessments, and ergonomic task analysis tools.

The above listing of the Safety Committee’s duties and responsibilities gives safety activists many opportunities to explore and resolve most, if not all, of the hazards in the workplace that need to be addressed.

Get familiar with the agenda before a meeting so that you can stay on track. During the meeting, make sure to set timelines and expectations. Following the meetings, make sure that the committee carries out the tasks so that you are on track for the next meeting.

The summer heat is on its way

In the fall of 2014, Judge Ball of the Occupational Safety and Health Review Commission (OSHRC) issued a decision upholding the citation against the USPS for the death of John Watzlawick in July of 2012. On page 32 of her decision, she writes:

In other words, Complainant [OSHA] is not recommending abatement measures that Respondent [USPS] has not already addressed through its own literature or through the distribution of NIOSH-authored documents to its management team. **The obstacle in this case is not feasibility; rather, it is the apparent unwillingness of management to accept that heat impacts performance**, notwithstanding the information and literature available to them. Further, case law suggests when safety precautions are widely recognized and accepted, that is evidence of their economic feasibility. See National Realty and Constr. Co., 489 F.3d at 1266 n.37; Continental Co. v. OSHRC, 630 F.2d 446,449 (6th Cir. 1980).

The USPS has appealed Judge Ball’s decision to the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals, so we will update you further as we go; however, the heat of the summer is on its way and we remind you to educate yourself about working in the heat. It is up to each of you as branch officers, shop stewards and letter carriers on the workroom floor to make sure that you are properly informed of how serious this can be. Go to our safety page at nalc.org/workplace-issues/safety-and-health, locate the Extreme Temperature tab, then scroll down to the information on “What to do when it’s hot outside.”

Keep an eye on each other.