

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

Handbook EL-809

August 2025
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 Service facilities directly involved in implementing and/or enforcing the policies and procedures described in this handbook.
 2. **Additional Copies.** Order additional copies from the Material Distribution Center using PS Form 7380, *MDC Supply Requisition*.
- C. **Comments.**
1. Submit in writing any comments and questions about the content of this document to:

OCCUPATIONAL SAFETY & HEALTH
US POSTAL SERVICE
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WASHINGTON DC 20260-4231
 2. Submit in writing any comments and questions about the organization or editing of this document to:

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



Douglas Tulino
Deputy Postmaster General
Chief Human Resources Officer

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 their responsibilities as a committee member.

Safety and health committee members must be personally committed to making accident prevention a part of their daily work. They can demonstrate their commitment through leadership and setting a personal example by working safely and observing safe practices.

Safety must become the member's 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. Safety and health committee members play a major role in making their workplace safe for all employees.

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1 Safety Philosophy of the United States Postal Service

- a. This is the safety philosophy of the Postal Service:
 - (1) All injuries can be prevented.
 - (2) Management, which includes all levels through the initial-level supervisor, has the responsibility of preventing injuries.
 - (3) It is possible to safeguard against all operating exposures that may result in injuries.
 - (4) All employees must be trained 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 that accidents can cause.
 - (5) It is good business, from the standpoint of both efficiency and economy, to prevent personal injuries on and off the job.
- b. 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.

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2 Membership

2-1 Area Safety Committee

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

- a. Representation on the committee must include one person from the union and an appropriate representative appointed by the vice president of the Postal Service area office.
- b. The committee chairperson must be an operations direct report to the vice president, Area Retail & Delivery Operations.
- c. Management will designate the secretary of the committee.
- d. A safety and/or maintenance analyst, manager, specialist, or coordinator on the area staff must serve as a support member of the committee.

2-2 Local Safety Committee

- a. A joint labor-management safety and health committee will be established at each Postal Service installation that has 50 or more employees.
- b. A committee may be established upon the request of the installation head at Postal Service installations having less than 50 employees.
- c. There must be equal representation on the committee between the unions and management.
 - (1) Representation on the committee must include one person from each of the unions at the installation. Appropriate officials assigned by the installation head must represent management.
 - (2) Management will designate the committee chairperson, who must be an operations direct report to the installation head.
 - (3) Management will designate the secretary of the committee.
 - (4) When an installation has a facility safety officer on the staff, that person must be a member of the committee.
 - (5) A maintenance manager, supervisor, or coordinator on the installation staff must be a committee member.

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3 Terms of Membership

With the exception of the chairperson, the secretary, and the safety officer, committee members must serve three-year terms. Unions, at their discretion, may replace their union representative on the committee.

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4 Orientation of Area/Local Committee Members

All committee members will receive formal orientation and training on the following:

- a. Duties and responsibilities of committee members;
- b. Basic elements of the safety and health programs;
- c. Identifying hazards and unsafe conditions; and
- d. Reports and statistics that the committee reviews and analyzes.

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5 Duties and Responsibilities of Committee Members

5-1 Local Safety and Health Committee Members

All members are expected to do the following:

- a. Attend all scheduled meetings.
- b. Create and maintain an interest in safety, health and ergonomics and, thereby, help to prevent accidents.
- c. Review local safety and health rules and help management enforce these rules.
- d. Monitor the progress of accident prevention and health activities, and, when necessary, make recommendations for improvement to the installation head. **Note:** Safety and health committee membership does not entitle members to have access to individual employee medical records that do not include the employee's consent to share.
- e. Analyze data and work tasks to identify accident causes and develop recommendations to increase safety awareness and emphasis to reduce accidents.
- f. Review employee safety and health suggestions.
- g. Review safety-training records to determine if all employees are receiving appropriate training.
- h. Review employee-reported hazards and safety concerns, employee/management responses and recommended corrective actions.
- i. Review accident reports, safety inspection abatements, and employee-injury reports. This excludes individual employee medical records that do not include the employee's consent to share.
- j. Discuss all matters relating to employee safety, health and ergonomics, except for individual grievances (unless permitted by national agreement) and make recommendations for resolution or improvement to the installation head.
- k. Help make recommendations for safety-process improvements. Committee members will use safety, inspection, ergonomic and abatement resources accessible to management representatives, including checklists, assessments, and analysis tools.

- I. Participate in work-task reviews of identified safety concerns or process improvements when the chairperson authorizes. Committee members will be on official time while conducting such reviews.
 - (1) When a district or division manager appoints an investigation team to investigate a fatal or serious industrial noncriminal accident, the appropriate union at the installation will be advised promptly. When the union requests, a representative from the committee will be permitted to accompany the investigation team in its investigation.
 - (2) Any union representative on the committee may participate in the facility inspection conducted by safety personnel in the main facility of each district or division and bulk mail center (BMC), provided that the representative's union represents employees at that facility.
 - (3) A union representative from the committee may participate in inspecting any facility, Post Office, BMC, station, branch, or other installation that has 100 or more man-years of employment in the regular workforce, provided that the representative's union represents employees at that facility and that the representative's duty station is at that facility.
 - (4) Selected on a rotating basis by the unions, one union representative from the committee may participate in the annual inspection of each installation with less than 100 man-years of employment in the regular workforce, where such a committee exists in the installation being inspected.

5-2 Area Safety and Health Committee Members

All members are expected to do the following:

- a. Attend all scheduled meetings.
- b. Create and maintain an interest in safety, health and ergonomics and, thereby, help to prevent accidents.
- c. Mentor and support local safety committees with accident-trend analysis to provide increased emphasis and make recommendations regarding them.
- d. Review employee-reported hazards and concerns from the national tracking program and the injury compensation program reporting system. This excludes individual employee medical records that do not include the employee's consent to share.
- e. Discuss all matters relating to employee safety, health and ergonomics, except for individual grievances (unless permitted by national agreement), and make recommendations for resolution or improvement to the installation head.
- f. To help make recommendations for ergonomic improvements, use available ergonomic resources.

5-3 Area/Local Committee Officers

5-3.1 Chairperson

- a. Arranges the meeting place.
- b. Sets times and dates for meetings.
- c. Notifies members of meetings.
- d. Receives agenda items from members.
- e. Arranges the agenda and program.
- f. Arranges for seating for all members.
- g. Reviews previous minutes and other materials before meetings.
- h. Coordinates gathering all appropriate management reports, data, and information for the committee's review.
- i. Responds to members' requests for special meetings.

5-3.2 Area/Local Secretary

- a. Prepares meeting minutes.
- b. Distributes minutes.
- c. Reports on the status of implementing the committee's recommendations.
- d. Distributes the agenda to members.
- e. May assume some of the chairperson's duties.

5-4 Field Federal Safety and Health Councils

Where a Field Federal Safety and Health Council exists, one representative will be selected to represent all unions who are on the local safety and health committee and will be permitted to become a member of such a council and attend its meetings. This employee will be excused without loss of pay from regularly assigned duties.

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6 Area/Local Committee Meetings

- a. The committee will 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. The chairperson must approve such a request, but the request must not be unreasonably denied.
- b. Agenda items must be submitted to the committee's chairperson at least three business days before a meeting.
- c. Individual grievances will not be discussed during local committee meetings, unless provided for in the national agreements.
- d. Meetings must be conducted according to the generally accepted rules of order, but formality will not be allowed to overwhelm the meeting or to inhibit free discussion.

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7 Order of Business

7-1 Local Committee

- a. *Call to order.* The chairperson will call the meeting to order promptly at the designated time.
- b. *Roll call by the secretary.* The secretary will record the names of members and others present.
- c. *Introduction of any visitors.*
- d. *Minutes of the previous meeting.* The minutes will be read and any needed corrections made.
- e. *Unfinished business.* All matters with no definite decisions made are brought up for reconsideration.
- f. *New business.*
 - (1) Review safety accident reports and statistics to identify accident causes and trends in order to reduce employee safety hazards.
 - (2) Review employee reports of unsafe conditions and employee suggestions to improve employee safety of working conditions.
 - (3) Using analysis, develop local action-plan suggestions to reduce hazards and improve employee safety.
 - (4) Review safety processes and compliance with safety rules and offer suggestions to improve safety training for employees.
 - (5) Review progress of the safety and health program and special campaigns, etc.
 - (6) Discuss and resolve any other items or problems relating to safety and health.
- g. *Safety education.* This should be part of every meeting. A committee member, outside expert, or local safety officer, etc., may make a presentation.
- h. *Scheduling.* Schedule the next committee meeting date and time.
- i. *Adjournment.*

7-2 Area Committee

- a. *Call to order.* The chairperson will call the meeting to order promptly at the designated time.
- b. *Roll call by the secretary.* The secretary will record the names of all meeting attendees.
- c. *Introduction of any visitors.*
- d. *Minutes of the previous meeting.* The minutes will 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.*
 - (1) Review safety accident reports and statistics.
 - (2) Discuss safety-emphasis needs based on the current injury and accident data.
 - (3) Review progress of the ongoing safety and health program and/or special campaigns, etc.
 - (4) Discuss and resolve any other items or problems relating to safety and health.
- g. *Safety education.* This should be part of every meeting. A committee member, outside expert, or local safety officer, etc., may make a presentation.
- h. *Scheduling.* Schedule the next committee meeting date and time.
- i. *Adjournment.*

8 Suggested Format for Meeting Minutes

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: List all in attendance.	(name)	Chairperson
	(name)	Secretary
	(name)	Title
	(name)	Title
Not in attendance:	(name)	Title
	(name)	Title
Agenda Items:	Update on current committee projects:	(Discussion/Updates on current projects and committee actions.)
	New business:	(Submitted agenda Items.)
	Problem areas which should receive increased emphasis:	(Review of current accident trends or hazards.)
	Special items:	(Includes safety and ergonomics 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 must be made available to the field manager, Safety, and the local president of each union, and posted on employee bulletin boards. No individual personnel or medical data must be included in the minutes.

