



Hosting a safety meeting

FAST FACTS

AUGUST 2018



SAFE + SOUND WEEK

Safe + Sound Week is an outreach campaign sponsored by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) that is designed to raise awareness and understanding of the value of safety and health programs and engage employees in improving workplace safety and health. The Office of Compliance is encouraging employing offices in the legislative branch to take this opportunity to focus on safety and health in the workplace. One way to do that is to host a safety meeting. For more ideas on how to participate, visit www.osha.gov/safeandsoundweek

HOSTING A SAFETY MEETING

Hosting a safety meeting does not need to be complex. Employing offices can follow these basic steps when planning the meeting:

1. Select a topic.

If an office has primarily professional or administrative staff, then safety meetings can focus on generalized topics such as common office safety hazards, emergency preparedness and evacuations, pest prevention, or workplace violence prevention. However, if you have staff in specialized fields that are exposed to specific dangers (i.e. heat stress, hazardous chemicals, permit-required confined spaces), safety meetings should address specific hazards and the corresponding OSHA standards that are designed to ensure worker safety. Safety meetings can also be used to discuss new standards or safety protocols.

2. Have a qualified presenter.

Some employing offices have a safety coordinator who is responsible for ensuring compliance with safety and health regulations in the workplace, and who can present to staff on various safety-related topics. If there is no safety coordinator, employers can designate a knowledgeable staff member to coordinate presenting information, either by finding relevant materials or by bringing in technical experts to speak.

The OOC has occupational safety and health specialists who can provide training on OSHA standards.

3. Schedule the meeting.

Consider holding a safety meeting at the beginning of a shift while staff are most alert. Safety meetings should be informative, yet concise. Safety meetings should also be a regular event. The frequency of safety meetings can vary depending on the kinds of hazards in the workplace. For administrative offices, quarterly or biannual meetings may be sufficient. If employees work in more hazardous conditions, a daily safety briefing at the start of the day or a weekly "toolbox talk" may be required.

4. Conduct the meeting.

Build in time to ensure that all key information is covered. Allow time for questions. Consider providing handouts to reinforce the main points of the presentation, and including a brief informal survey or quiz at the end to ensure that employees understand what has been taught.

5. Follow up.

Plan to follow up with employees after the safety meeting, including time to discuss with employees whether information from previous meetings was helpful.

WORKER PARTICIPATION

All employees should be engaged in ensuring the safety and health of the workplace. While holding regular safety meetings is one way to do that, here are some additional ways to partner with employees on making the workplace safer:

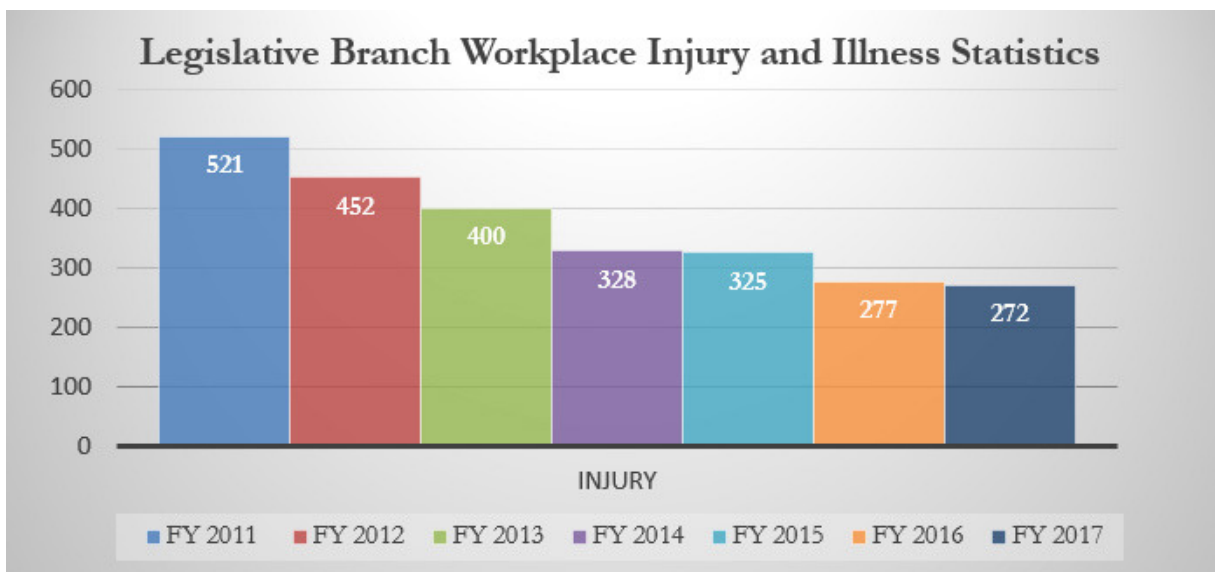
- Establish a safety committee. A safety committee is a team of employees representing a diverse range of positions who are focused on advancing safety and health in the office. They can coordinate topics, agendas, and speakers for safety meetings, among other things.
- Share in goal setting. Employees should be involved in developing annual safety and health goals for the office.
- Include safety expertise on teams. Employees who have safety expertise can offer valuable input to decision-making groups like procurement, human resources, and upper-management.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

www.osha.gov/dte/outreach/construction_generalindustry/general_industrResources
www.compliance.gov/publications/fast-facts/fast-facts
www.compliance.gov/sites/default/files/commonofficehazards.pdf
www.osha.gov/safeandsoundweek/

The Congressional Accountability Act (CAA) applies the Occupational Safety and Health Act of 1970 (OSHAct), requiring legislative branch employing offices to provide a safe and healthful workplace for employees. Under the CAA, legislative branch offices must meet the requirements of the OSHAct “General Duty Clause,” which requires employers to provide employees employment and a place of employment which are free from recognized hazards that are causing or are likely to cause death or serious harm to employees.” Employing offices must also meet safety and health standards established by OSHA under the OSHAct. Although there has been a steady decline in workplace injuries and illnesses in the legislative branch, employers and employees should continue to focus on improving safety and health in the workplace.



Source: www.osha.gov/dep/fap/statistics/fedrprgrms_stats17_final.html