Take 10... Effective Safety Committee Meetings in about 10 Slides

Topic of the month: Hazard Communication
First things First:

Document Your Meeting Per Your States Requirements

Washington

Meeting documentation - W

Oregon

Meeting documentation - O

Montana

Meeting documentation - M

Alaska & Idaho: There are currently no federal and/or state-specific requirements for safety committees in these states.
Why Hazard Communication Matters...

- **Exposure Risk:** About 32 million workers are potentially exposed to chemical hazards.

- **Profusion of Chemicals:** About 650,000 chemical products exist; hundreds of new ones are introduced annually.

- **Health Effects:** May include heart ailments, central nervous system damage, kidney and lung damage, sterility, cancer, burns, and rashes.

- **Safety Hazards:** Potential to cause fires, explosions, or other serious accidents.

- **It’s Required:** Besides the safety benefits of hazard communication. Employers are required to have a written Hazard Communication Program.

Source: OSHA Training Institute
What is considered a “Hazardous Chemical?”

• A hazardous chemical is any chemical that can do harm to your body.

• Most industrial chemicals can harm you at some level.

• Employees who use chemicals (other than retail packaged products used for their intended purpose) must have access to the SDS and warning labels for products they use at work.
Written Hazard Communication Program Review

What is hazard communication?

Employees who work with Hazardous Chemical have a “Right to Know”:
• what those chemicals are,
• what hazards are associated with those chemicals,
• what they can do to protect themselves,
• how to handle and store products they work with,
• what to do if they have an emergency working with those chemicals.

Committee Discussion: Do we have one? Why do we need one? Do all employees know where to find it? If we have a written program, is it up to date?
What must building material suppliers do to be compliant?

- Companies must have a written HAZCOM Plan.
- Collect an SDS (MSDS if SDS is not available) for each of the chemicals and have available for employees.
- You are required to train your employees on how to read an SDS and Hazard Label.
- Provide proper Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the chemicals your employees use.

Employers who do not produce chemicals only have to focus on:
- establishing a workplace program and
- communicating information to their workers.
Discussion: Do we have any chemicals that need to be addressed in a HazCom program?

Before the Safety Committee dismisses the question, consider this, hazardous chemicals exist in three forms:

- Solids
- Liquids; and
- Gas

If you have a saw where employees can cut materials, chances are you have a hazardous chemical.

Why?
Sawdust is a hazardous chemical: Meaning you need both an SDS for it and to provide employees with proper PPE.

Here is why: Dust or powder can be released into the air by cutting, drilling, grinding, sanding, or sweeping and then inhaled.

Note: You do not need an SDS for every dimension of lumber (i.e. just 1 for all Hem-Fir dimensions) as long as they are not treated or manufactured. These may require multiple SDSs.

Remember: When discussing how to make employees safer, remember hazardous substances can enter the body many ways; ingestion, inhalation, absorption, external skin or eye contact, and injection from the skin being pierced.
The information on labels is becoming more standardized to increase employee comprehension of the potential hazards and precautions.
PROTECTING YOURSELF & OTHER EMPLOYEES

If you have been exposed to a chemical and feel sick:

• Let your supervisor know

• Find out what the chemical was

• Follow the first aid directions in the SDS

• Get medical attention as needed

• Check you have proper PPE before going back to the area
Resources:

OSHA Safety Topics: Hazard Communication

OSHA Quick Card: Safety Data Sheets

OSHA FAQ: Globally Harmonized System

LNI Safety & Health Topics: Hazard Communication

Hazard Communication Training Kit

Chemical Hazards: OSHA HazCom Standard Training Video (16:22)