



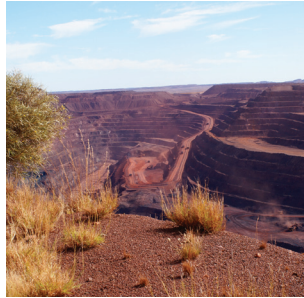
Government of Western Australia
Department of Mines and Petroleum
Resources Safety

MINES SAFETY AND INSPECTION ACT
– WHAT EMPLOYEES AND EMPLOYERS
NEED TO KNOW

How to establish a safety and health committee

Why should we set up a safety and health committee?

Safety and health committees are vital because they provide a valuable forum at mine sites to facilitate consultation and cooperation between management, employers and employees in developing and implementing safety and health measures and monitoring programs.



What does a safety and health committee do?

Safety and health committees:

- enable and assist consultation and cooperation between employer and employees on safety and health matters
- help initiate, develop and implement safety and health measures
- keep informed about safety and health standards in similar workplaces
- make recommendations on safety and health rules, programs, measures and procedures at the workplace
- ensure information on hazards is kept where it is readily accessible
- consider and make recommendations about changes that may affect the safety and health of employees
- consider matters referred to it by safety and health representatives
- carry out any other functions relating to workplace safety and health prescribed in the Act or regulations or given to the committee, with its consent, by the employer.

The committee may also deal with policy development, monitoring programs, emergency procedures, training and supervision, trends in accident and illness reports, and resolution of safety and health issues.

How do we get a safety and health committee?

The employer must establish a safety and health committee if instructed to do so by the State Mining Engineer, or requested by an employee at a mine. Of course, an employer can also establish a safety and health committee at a mine at any time without waiting for a request or instruction.

If the request comes from an employee, the employer must advise the employee and any safety and health representatives at the mine within 21 days that the request has been agreed to, or that the request has been referred to the State Mining Engineer for review.

Generally, the employer must establish the safety and health committee within three months. However, if matters cannot be agreed to meet this timeframe, the State Mining Engineer may grant an extension of time.

Who can be on the committee?

The membership of a safety and health committee is agreed between the employer, any safety and health representatives for the mine, and the employees' delegates.

At least half of the committee must represent the employees and comprise safety and health representatives and/or employee delegates. Other members can include the employer and representatives, or any other members as agreed.

What if there is more than one mine in the group?

With the employer's approval, a safety and health committee can have responsibility for more than one mine, with subcommittees being appointed at each mine site.

If the committee is to exercise its functions for more than one mine, then the safety and health representatives and/or employees selected to represent the employees must be invited to join the consulting parties to agree on whether the committee should cover all the mine sites in the group and, if so, how this will be done.

What if the committee is no longer needed?

Safety and health committees can be varied or abolished if they no longer suit the needs of the workplace. This can occur by written agreement between the employer and members of the committee.

The State Mining Engineer is empowered to arbitrate any matters that cannot be agreed upon, with the option available for review of the State Mining Engineer's decision by the Occupational Safety and Health Tribunal.



Want to know more?

For information on safety and health in the mining industry, look at the Resources Safety website at www.dmp.wa.gov.au/ResourcesSafety

The *Mines Safety and Inspection Act 1994* and Mines Safety and Inspection Regulations 1995 are available from the State Law Publisher's website at www.slp.wa.gov.au

The information in this brochure is intended as a general guide only. The relevant Acts and regulations should be consulted for detailed information, or contact your regional inspectorate.

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