

5 Common JHSC Flaws



The JHSC is one of the most important components of any company's OHS program. For example, when the JHSC is working effectively, it can help the company proactively identify and address safety hazards before someone gets hurt and resolve workers' safety concerns. But when the committee isn't effective, workplace safety suffers.

In a recent webinar, Dilys Robertson, an OHS consultant with extensive experience working with JHSCs, talked about some of the most common JHSC flaws and what you can do to avoid them. Here's a look at five of the flaws that she addressed. And for five additional common JHSC flaws, watch the recorded webinar by clicking [here](#).

1. JHSC Has Poor Visibility Among Workers

If workers don't know the JHSC exists or understand what its purpose is, then they won't use it as a safety resource. A JHSC may have low visibility if it doesn't publicize its safety initiatives or successes, take steps to ensure workers know who its members are and interact with workers during inspections.

Robertson suggests that you do the following to raise the JHSC's visibility:

- Include the JHSC's role and functions in new worker orientations;
- Introduce new workers to a JHSC member; and
- Have the JHSC hold safety events, such as during safety week.

2. JHSC Has No Goals or Objectives

To be effective, JHSCs can't just react to safety incidents or complaints—they need to be proactive. A good way to get the JHSC to take initiative is to have it set goals and objectives. The committee should spend a meeting just talking about goals for the upcoming year and then create action plans for each goal. Robertson suggests that JHSCs do the following to create goals and objectives:

Step #1: Establish overall goals, such as increasing worker awareness of the JHSC;

Step #2: Identify all OHS issues;

Step #3: Determine the priority issues, such as dust problems in the wood cutting area;

Step #4: Establish objectives and action plans for the identified issues, such as update safe work practices for the wood working shop;

Step #5: Set target dates;

Step #6: Measure performance against objectives; and

Step #7: Report annually on the progress on each action plan.

3. JHSC Meetings Are Long But Achieve Little

No one wants to be trapped in a long meeting, especially if it's unproductive. But too often JHSC meetings drag on and accomplish nothing. Why? The committee chairs may not know how to keep these meetings focused and run them effectively. The chairs may not have prepared an appropriate agenda before the meeting. The JHSC may not have the information it needs to make decisions. And all the members may lack the necessary problem-solving skills.

To address this issue, Robertson suggests the following:

- Training for the chairs on effectively running meetings;
- Pre-meetings in which the chairs plan the agenda; and
- Use of a meeting minutes template that allows for action points for each item on the agenda.

She also advises that the JHSC not waste time trying to make a decision when it doesn't have enough information. Instead, identify the information needed and where to get it and then move on.[box]

Insider Says: Click here for a Model JHSC Meeting Template your JHSC can use to organize its meetings. And click here for information on ensuring that your JHSC complies with the meeting requirements in the OHS laws.[/box]

4. JHSC Focuses on Complaints, Not Solutions

The JHSC should be a place that workers can bring their safety complaints and concerns. Obviously, the committee should discuss those issues but it should focus on coming up with solutions to them. And if the JHSC members aren't equipped to develop the solutions, the committee should bring in appropriate experts, such as engineers or industrial hygienists.

Robertson says training on problem solving is useful to avoid this problem. In addition, setting goals and priorities will help keep the JHSC focused on solutions, as will including action items in the meeting minutes.

5. JHSC Members Get Only Basic Training

All JHSC members should have basic OHS training. But it's a mistake to think that's all the training they need, says Robertson. In fact, the OHS laws in some jurisdictions require JHSC members to get special training.

In addition to the required training, Robertson recommends that JHSC members also get training in:

- Relevant OHS laws;
- Inspections;

- Incident investigations;
- Hazard recognition and control;
- Ergonomics;
- Problem solving;
- Communications; and
- Consensus building.

[box] ***Insider Says:*** Click here for more on JHSC member training requirements.[/box]

INSIDER SOURCE

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JHSC Compliance Center

The OHS Insider's JHSC Compliance Center contains articles and tools to help you ensure that your company's JHSC complies with the OHS laws and maximizes its efficiency.

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