

JHSCs: Does Your Workplace Have a ?Gold Standard? JHSC?



The JHSC is a key component of a successful OHS program. But in too many workplaces, the JHSC isn't effective, is nearly invisible or doesn't take an active role in improving workplace safety. And many workers don't respect the committee or go to it with their safety concerns. A study by the Centre for Research Expertise in Occupational Disease (CREOD) looked at how JHSCs are viewed and identified some of the characteristics of so-called 'gold standard' committees.

How JHSCs Are Viewed

CREOD researchers looked at how hospital workers, management and healthcare sector stakeholders view JHSCs using 19 focus groups and 30 interviews. The researchers asked about:

- JHSC structure and processes;
- Knowledge of JHSCs and their role;
- Perception of JHSC impact, including its effectiveness and visibility; and
- Ways to measure JHSC effectiveness.

The study found that there are still gaps in awareness and understanding of the internal responsibility system (IRS) as well as who in the organization is responsible for workplace health and safety. Although some participants saw the role of the JHSC as vital, others said the JHSC had low or moderate visibility in their hospitals.

The researchers also looked at way to measure the effectiveness of JHSCs, including:

- Meetings, both their frequency and attendance at them;
- Visibility;
- The number of injuries and incidents in the workplace, inspections by the

JHSC, recommendations and follow-up;

- Actualized mandate and objectives, timelines, education and training;
- The staff's awareness of the JHSC;
- The staff's satisfaction; and
- Use of external standards and benchmarking.

Gold Standard JHSCs

The researchers asked the study participants to identify the characteristics of what they considered to be 'gold standard' JHSCs. They said that such committees:

- Are visible, approachable and communicative;
- Represent the workforce;
- Are well-supported and resourced;
- Have members who are educated and trained;
- Comply with the requirements of the OHS laws;
- Listen to worker concerns;
- Have a clear mandate and objectives;
- Show leadership; and
- Have a person who's focused on workplace safety fulltime.

BOTTOM LINE

Assess your company's JHSC in light of the above attributes 'how many of these characteristics does your committee have' If your company's JHSC doesn't exhibit all or most of these gold standard attributes, it's probably not as effective as it could be. To make your JHSC more effective and a more vital participant in the OHS program, go to the OHS Insider's JHSC Compliance Centre for articles, tools, webinars and other resources, including:

- Answers to 14 FAQs about JHSCs
- 5 tips for more effective JHSC inspections
- Training JHSC members
- A webinar on common JHSC mistakes and
- Identifying the members of your JHSC.