

How to Conduct Health & Safety Committee Meetings

The business of the JHSC is conducted through the use of meetings. Meetings are routinely used to share information, debate options, build consensus and ensure transparency of action and quality of results. These should be the areas of focus for all members of the committee; however, it would be unreasonable to expect a seamless transition especially where there are differences in the depth and type of knowledge which members have. To avoid or at least minimise the amounts of frustration and stress for those who are called upon to participate in this process, the following recommendations and rationale are provided:

1. HAVE AN AGENDA SET BY THE CHAIR

Meetings should always have a clear agenda with estimates of time to be spent on each line item. The Chair of the meeting should try to limit meetings to a maximum of 2 hours, as after this length of time people begin to lose focus.

2. MEETINGS SHOULD PROCEED BASED ON PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Meetings should proceed according to good parliamentary procedure where:

- one person speaks at a time
- all comments are addressed to/ referred through the Chairman
- Respect and a professional atmosphere are maintained at all times

Familiarity with *Roberts Rules of Order* would assist with establishing what is appropriate for formal meetings.

3. HAVE A SINGLE CHAIRMAN FOR EACH MEETING

The legislation speaks to having equal numbers of employer and employee representatives, it does not speak to how this arrangement is to be put into operation, in respect of Chairing meetings. There should only be one Chairman of any single meeting so it is left to the individuals to determine how this responsibility is to be discharged. The recommended approach is to have a system of co-chairs, one each from employee and employer delegations, the chairmanship would then alternate either by quarter or by meeting. The co-chair system allows only one chairman of any one meeting and there is an opportunity for an equal number of meetings to be chaired by both management and staff representatives. In any event the Chair needs to be well informed about the provisions of the law and good safety & health management practices.

4. HAVE A WRITTEN COMPANY SAFETY & HEALTH POLICY TO GUIDE THE COMMITTEE.



The Company Safety Policy is another key document which all members of the JHSC should be intimately familiar with. This document should provide guidance to the JHSC as to what the company's goals are and further define the roles and responsibilities of management and staff in seeking to attain the goals established.