

3. China: Health and Safety committee

Chinese law regarding Health and Safety committees

The Production Safety Law (November 2002) specifies that factories with more than 300 employees must establish a Health and Safety committee.

Why are Health and Safety committees important?

A Health and Safety committee can help to sustainably improve health and safety conditions in the workplace, reduce health and safety risks and comply with health and safety laws and buyer's codes of conduct.

A Health and Safety committee enables factories to:

- regularly **identify** the health and safety **hazards** in the workplace and resolve them internally
- **investigate and analyse** job-related accidents, injuries and illnesses

so as to agree ways to reduce or eliminate their reoccurrences

- **involve workers**, where possible, so that they can work together with management to help find practical solutions to health and safety problems
- make **continuous improvements** on health and safety, and create a safer environment for workers

If a Health and Safety committee works well, it will result in an improved working environment and fewer accidents and illnesses. This will lead to:

- more satisfied workers, who are likely to stay at the factory for a longer period
- healthy workers who work better, with higher quality and productivity

Who should be involved?

■ Managers

■ Supervisors

■ Worker representatives:

- chosen by the workers
- represent workers in discussions with managers on health and safety

All committee members should:

- receive necessary training on health and safety and on the role of the committee
- raise workers' concerns with the management
- communicate the factory's policies to co-workers
- be a good example to other employees by being aware of safety and by following all safety instructions

Other employees should support the committee by:

- following all health and safety policies and procedures
- reporting any health and safety hazards to supervisors or to a committee member
- giving suggestions to the committee or management, to help make the factory a safer place to work and live



What are the roles and responsibilities of a Health and Safety committee?

The committee should clearly define its roles and responsibilities, which should include:

- carrying out **regular internal inspections**, to assess health and safety risks in the workplace
- investigating injuries and accidents and **analysing accident records**
- **making recommendations** to reduce or eliminate hazards
- implementing health and safety solutions
- **following-up** all corrective actions
- **planning training** programs for workers and other staff

How should a Health and Safety committee run effectively?

- Hold **regular meetings**:
 - to discuss the hazards identified in workplace inspections/risk assessments
 - to discuss the concerns of workers
 - to review progress toward meeting health and safety goals and to plan next steps
 - to discuss injuries, accidents and illnesses, and to suggest preventative measures
 - to agree practical solutions to reduce risks
- to assign responsibilities and timelines for actions
- to follow up the actions agreed in the previous meeting
- Meetings should have an **agenda** which is released prior to the meeting
- Outcomes should be **communicated** to all workers
- **Meeting notes** and all progress made should be **documented**



Health and Safety risk assessments

What is a risk assessment?

A risk assessment is a careful examination of the workplace in which potential hazards are identified and where corrective actions are agreed in order to minimise the hazards.

How to carry out a risk assessment in your workplace

1. **Walk around** each area of the factory with those responsible for health and safety
2. **Identify** areas where there are risks and who might be affected:
 - blocked escape routes
 - hazardous chemicals
 - dangerous machinery
 - dust produced
 - exposed wiring
 - high noise levels
3. **Evaluate** the risks and decide whether the existing precautions are adequate or whether more should be done
4. Agree with managers/supervisors what can be done to **remove or reduce the risks**.
This may include:
 - improved housekeeping
 - ventilation
 - proper use of appropriate PPE
 - improved chemical handling/storage
 - guards on machines
 - training for workers
5. Agree **who** will do the action and **when**
6. Regularly **check actions** have been completed
7. **Document** all issues identified and any progress made
8. **Send** information about progress to your contact at Kingfisher or the relevant customer, electronically where possible