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# Safety committees: Their role in preventing employee accidents in hotels and resorts

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SAFETY COMMITTEES: THEIR ROLE IN PREVENTING EMPLOYEE ACCIDENTS IN  
HOTELS AND RESORTS

by

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The Florida State University  
2010

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## **ABSTRACT**

### **Safety Committees: Their Role in Preventing Employee Accidents in Hotels and Resorts**

By

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Employee accidents have a powerful and negative affect on the bottom line and profitability of a hotel or resort. In this professional paper, a literature review will be used to analyze the frequency and severity of injuries in hotels and resorts. Then, a guideline for a hotel safety committee will be established in an effort to help hotels and resorts decrease the amount, severity, and ultimately the cost associated with employee accidents. This professional paper aims to establish and implement guidelines for hotel and/or resort safety committees in order to increase the percentage of safe work practices on and off the job.

## **Part One**

### **Introduction**

Employee accidents have a powerful and negative affect on the bottom line and profitability of a hotel or resort. Hotels and resorts are constantly searching for ways to decrease costs and increase profitability, especially in the present during a poor economy. In this professional paper, a literature review will be used to analyze the frequency and severity of injuries in hotels and resorts. It will also discuss the concept of safety committees in hotels and resorts and the affect they have on the reduction of employee accidents and injuries in the workplace. Then, a guideline for a hotel safety committee in the state of Hawaii will be established in an effort to help Hawaii hotels and resorts decrease the amount, severity, and ultimately the cost associated with employee accidents.

### **Purpose Statement**

Accidents and workers compensation claims have an expensive and negative affect on the bottom line and profitability of a hotel. The purpose of this professional paper is to establish and implement guidelines of a hotel safety committee in order to reduce frequent, severe, and expensive accidents. In hotels and resorts, back injuries, slips, trips, and falls, as well as other more severe accidents, are common occurrences experienced by staff members. Because they are common, accidents can be very expensive. This professional paper aims to establish and implement guidelines for hotel and/or resort safety committees in order to increase the percentage of safe work practices on and off the job. The intention of the safety committee will be to decrease the frequency, severity, and cost of employee accidents. Implementing safety committees in hotels and resorts will reduce the amount and severity of employee accidents. By preventing employee accidents, safety committees will increase profitability for hotels and resorts in Hawaii by favorably impacting the bottom line.

## **Justification**

Understanding employee accidents in hotels and proactively finding ways to prevent them will lower the cost of this expense line. By decreasing the amount and severity of employee accidents, hotels and resorts in Hawaii will become more profitable. Reducing accidents will also increase employee communication and moral throughout the company.

## **Statement of Objective**

In spite of numerous attempts by hotels and resorts, workers compensation losses still happen. Employee accidents and workers compensation claims are very expensive and have a very negative affect on the profitability of hotels and resorts in Hawaii. The risk of employee injury cannot be eliminated, so the goal is to minimize and control the loss. The problem is how to reduce the frequency, severity, and cost of employee accidents in hotels and resorts in Hawaii. Employee injuries and workers compensation claims need to be reduced in order for the hotels and resorts to remain competitive in the hospitality industry. Accident prevention efforts need to be clearly established and communicated in an effort to reduce loss in this area.

## **Constraints**

All hotels and resorts in Hawaii cannot be analyzed because the amount is too large. Rather, Hawaii workers compensation laws will be studied, the frequency, severity, and cost of employee accidents will be analyzed, and a safety committee guideline will be recommended for Hawaii hotels and resorts as a whole rather than on an individual basis.

## **Part Two**

### **Introduction**

Workplace accidents in hotels and resorts can be costly in the state of Hawaii. Despite vigorous efforts to eliminate employee accidents in the workplace, they will inevitably occur. Does a hotel or resort want to fight every claim? Most likely hotels and resorts would like to identify the most costly or the most frequent types of employee accidents. If these types are identified, the hotel or resort can establish preventative measures such as safety committees (Ellis & Stipanuk, 1999).

### **Workers Compensation**

The concept of workers compensation was created in Germany in 1884. By 1949 it reached the United States. Workers compensation is mandated by all 50 states. Workers compensation provides insurance for employees that are injured in the workplace. All employees are covered by workers compensation insurance and fault is not considered. Because fault is not considered, workers compensation can be extremely costly for employers. However, the trade off to the cost of workers compensation is that injured employees cannot sue employers for their work related injuries. Employers provide workers compensation insurance through insurance companies. All workers compensation claims are handled by the insurance company (Walker & Miller, 2010).

The Hawaii workers compensation law was enacted in 1915 to provide wage loss compensation and medical treatment to employees who suffer from a work related injury. The law requires that the employer provide compensation benefits regardless to the fault of the employer. The law also prohibits employees from filing civil action against the employer for work related accidents or injuries. According to the state of Hawaii Department of Labor and

Industrial Relations, any hotel or resort with one or more employees, full-time or part-time, is required to provide workers' compensation coverage for its employees. Because of the potential cost of workers compensation claims, hotels and resorts purchase insurance from carriers authorized to provide workers compensation insurance in the state of Hawaii.

In the state of Hawaii benefits for injured employees include all medical treatment including hospitalization and surgery and the employee is allowed to choose the treating physician. The employee is also entitled to wage loss compensation for as long as the treating physician certifies the employee as disabled. If the employee becomes permanently disabled they are entitled to disability benefits payments. If an employee is scarred or disfigured they are entitled to disfigurement payments from the hotel or resort. The state of Hawaii also requires that death payments be paid to a surviving spouse or children in the case of work related death cases. In the case that an employee is permanently unable to return to their usual job duties, the hotel or resort will provide vocation rehabilitation in the form of career counseling, testing, training, and job placement. All workers compensation claims cases usually close when an employer makes final payment ("State of Hawaii," 2007) .

### **Employee Accidents**

An employee accident, or an occupational injury, is defined as any injury resulting from a work-related event or a single spontaneous exposure in the workplace (Walker & Miller, 2010). When employees are injured employers provide them with lost wages and medical treatment with the hope that they will return to work quickly. Employers negotiate with injured employees and insurance companies hoping that the problem will go away quietly and quickly (Spence, 2010).

Predicting high cost workers compensation claims can help a hotel or resort take proactive steps in reducing claims costs. According to the U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics (1993) the most common employee accidents are sprains and strains, bruises and contusions, fractures, cuts and lacerations, and burns. Sprains and strains are the most common type of employee accident and account for 42% of all work related injuries (Walker & Miller, 2010). According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (1993), more than one million workers suffer back injuries each year and back injuries account for one of every five workplace injuries or illnesses. The Bureau of Labor Statistics (1993) also states that one-fourth of all workers compensation claims involve back injuries, costing employers billions of dollars. The United States Department of Labor, Occupational Safety & Health Administration (OSHA, 1993) has been looking for ways to reduce workplace back injuries related to lifting for years. It is suggested by OSHA (1993) that employers train employees to utilize lifting techniques that place minimum stress on the lower back. Physical conditioning for employees is recommended to reduce the risk of muscle strain. Lifting that occurs below the knee or above the shoulder height is more strenuous. By limiting lifting in areas, employees are less likely to suffer from a back injury. Other factors which contribute to workplace back injuries include frequency of lifting, duration of lifting, as well as individual employee variables such as, age, sex, body size, state of health, and general physical fitness (OSHA, 1993). By concentrating on preventing back injuries in the workplace, employers can reduce a significant portion of the cost associated with employee accidents.

In another study about employee accidents in hotels and motels, Klane and Personick (1993) confirmed that the most frequent type of accident in the industry resulted from lifting and otherwise moving heavy or unwieldy objects. It was estimated that back and other portions of

the trunk (the abdomen and shoulders) accounted for two-fifths of the hospitality industry's total accidents. Next in frequency were falls to the floors, walkways, and other surfaces. These types of falls accounted for one-fifth of the industry's total. Accidents resulting from moving objects such as doors and kitchen knives were identified as the third most frequent type of accident, consuming one-eighth of the total industry's accidents. The remaining categories of employee accidents in hotels and motels included events such as striking against furniture and other stationary objects; falling on stairs and from elevations; and slipping, tripping, and other bodily reactions to personal movement (Klane & Personick, 1993).

OSHA (1993) requires that employers keep a public log of all work related injuries related to the following.

- Death;
- Loss of consciousness;
- Days away from work;
- Restricted work activity or job transfer;
- Medical treatment beyond first aid;
- Any work-related injury diagnosed by a physician/health care professional; and
- Any work-related case involving cancer, chronic irreversible disease, a fractured or cracked bone, or a punctured eardrum (OSHA, 1993).

Workplace injuries are divided into two categories, those that involve lost workdays and those that do not. Lost workday cases include both those with days away from work and those with days with restricted or light duty workdays. The most severe cases of employee accidents result in the most lost work days. Ruser (1999) identifies the distribution of days-away-from work cases, by number of days away from work for the period of 1992 to 1996 in Table 1. The

most severe employee accidents result in 30 or more lost work days. As displayed in Table 1 below, 17.9% to 19.7% of accidents resulted in 30 or more lost work days.

Table 1

*Distribution of Days-Away-From-Work Cases, by Number of Days Away From Work, 1992-96*

Number of days away from work	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
	Percentage				
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.1
1	15.7	16.3	16.3	16.9	16.7
2	12.9	13.0	12.9	13.4	13.1
3-5	20.4	20.7	21.0	20.9	20.6
6-10	13.6	13.4	13.3	13.4	13.2
11-20	11.4	11.4	11.2	11.3	11.7
21-30	6.4	6.3	6.4	6.2	6.2
30 or more	19.7	19.0	18.9	17.9	18.5

Ruser (1999) also identified the numbers of lost work days associated with different types of workplace injuries. Table 2 expresses rates in terms of cases per 10,000 full-time equivalent workers. As shown in Table 2, sprains and strains result in the highest amount of lost work days. Sprains and strains, including back injuries, cause more than three times the amount of lost work days than any other type of injury or illness. Bruises and contusions are second on the list of types of injuries resulting in lost work days, while dislocations and punctures result in the least amount of lost work days.

Table 2

*Incidence of Days-Away-From-Work Cases, by Nature of Injury or Illness, 1992-96*

Rate per 10,000 full-time  
equivalent workers

Nature of Injury or Illness	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
Sprains and strains	133.7	121.6	119.3	107.5	97.8
Bruises and contusions	29.1	26.8	26.2	23.8	20.8
Cuts and lacerations	22.7	21.5	20.4	18.8	15.8
Fractures	18.8	17.3	17.2	15.3	14.3
Heat burns and scalds	5.4	4.8	4.6	4.4	3.5
Carpal tunnel syndrome	4.3	5.2	4.8	3.9	3.6
Dislocations	4.3	4.0	3.5	2.6	2.3
Punctures	4.1	4.1	3.2	3.0	2.8

Liberty Mutual Group (2001) released findings from their first-annual *Liberty Mutual Workplace Safety Index*. The *Safety Index* lists the 10 leading causes of injuries and illness that account for 86% of the \$38.7 billion in wage and medical payments employers made in 1998. Liberty Mutual designed the *Safety Index* to help focus existing safety programs on those areas that have the greatest potential negative impact on employers. As shown in Table 3, Liberty Mutual Group identified the leading causes of workplace injuries and illnesses and the direct cost

related to these injuries using their own claims data as well as findings from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Table 3

*The Leading Causes of Workplace Injuries and Illness that Resulted in Employees Missing Five or More Workdays in 1998, Include:*

Accident Causes	Percent of workers compensation direct cost paid in 1998:	Estimated workers compensation direct cost nationwide:
Overexertion – injuries caused by excessive lifting, pushing, pulling, holding, carrying, or throwing of an object	25.57%	\$9.8 billion
Falls on same level	11.46%	\$4.4 billion
Bodily reaction – injuries resulting from bending, climbing, loss of balance and slipping without falling	9.35%	\$3.6 billion
Falls to lower level, such as falling from a ladder or over a railing	9.33%	\$3.6 billion
Being struck by an object, such as a tool falling on a worker from above	8.94%	\$3.4 billion
Repetitive motion	6.10%	\$2.3 billion
Highway accidents	5.46%	\$2.1 billion
Being struck against an object, such as a carpenter walking into a door frame	4.92%	\$1.9 billion
Becoming caught in or compressed by equipment	4.176%	\$1.6 billion
Contact with temperature extremes that result in such injuries as heat exhaustion, frost bite or burns	.92%	\$.3 billion
All accident causes	100.00%	\$38.7 billion

As shown in Liberty Mutual Group's results in Table 3, injuries caused by excessive lifting, pushing, pulling, holding, carrying, or throwing of an object resulted in \$9.8 billion in direct cost which is 25.57% of direct costs related to workers compensation claims (Michael, R., 2001). Liberty Mutual data also shows that 95% of employers agree that workplace safety programs have a positive impact on the financial success of a company. Of these employers, 61% believe they receive a return of investment of \$3 or more for each \$1 they invest in programs that improve workplace safety. Given the importance of workplace safety, companies should focus their prevention efforts on the accidents causes that have the greatest potential impact on their operations and employees (Michael, R., 2001).

Smithline and Blay (2001) wrote an abstract on the use of artificial intelligence to predict high cost workers compensation claims. The authors and researchers developed a scientific predictive model to be used to reduce the cost of workers compensation claims. The purpose was to identify workers compensation claims that would likely turn into a high cost. The team analyzed 1.5 million claims. A large portion of workers compensation losses lies in the inability of a company to identify potentially high cost claims in advance. The authors and researchers classified all of the 1.5 million cases into four categories; trivial, moderate, serious, and extreme. The trivial category contained approximately 75% of the total claims, while the extreme category contained only 3% of the claims. The moderate category contained 15% of claims and the serious category contained 7% of claims. Although 75% of claims are trivial, the most costly workers compensation claims fall into the serious and extreme categories. By using the artificial intelligence model created by Smithline and Blay (2001), hotels and resorts can use resources to reduce the workers compensation cases that fall into the serious and extreme categories as well as the most frequent categories.

## **Safety Committees**

According to the Workers Compensation Board (WCB, 2009), a safety committee is a group of people that can openly discuss hazardous situations throughout a hotel or resort. The members help identify current risks in order to eliminate them. In effect this creates significant cost savings in the area of risk management. The safety committee's main purpose is to problem-solve. The group identifies problems in order to find a solution. The committee brings issues and problems out into the open in order to have them resolved (WCB, 2009). The safety committee addresses hazardous workplace conditions, employee morale, and quality of work. Not only do safety committees serve as problem solving tool, but they also serve as a great learning tool for employees and managers. They build skills in areas such as team work and communication (Ellis & Stipanuk, 1999). Communication is the key to a successful health and safety committee. The committee provides a link between the people doing the work and the people managing the work. Having employees and managers participate in the safety committee meetings increases the chances of successfully identifying hazardous work conditions or potentially unsafe work practices. The increased communication between employees reduces accidents and increases a sense of teamwork in the work place (WBC, 2009).

According to WBC (2009) an effective safety committee will reduce accidents and improve awareness of health and safety issues in the workplace. Also, involvement from all levels of organization will increase the base of expertise and experience available for solving issues and problems. Safety committees also give employees the chance to express concerns about workplace conditions. WBC (2009) also identifies the role of the safety committee with the following points.

- to involve all persons in the workplace in health and safety concerns by responding to and discussing health and safety concerns brought up by co-workers;

- to hold monthly meetings and encourage each member to contribute their own expertise;
- to identify health and safety hazards in the workplace and make recommendations to correct them;
- to receive and investigate complaints about safety. Ensure these are referred to supervisors, reported to the committee and followed up;
- to educate fellow workers about risks and safe procedures;
- to orient new workers to health and safety risks and safe procedures;
- to participate in accident investigations and regularly scheduled inspections as outlined in the rules of procedure drawn up by the committee;
- to advise management on corrections for safety problems and monitor effectiveness;
- to obtain information when necessary and advise on appropriate protective devices, equipment, and clothing;
- to advise on the establishment of appropriate health and safety programs, education and training;
- to maintain records of meetings and activities;
- to attend right to refuse situations; and
- to have a member accompany the Occupational Health and Safety officer on inspections (WCB, 2009).

The role of the safety committee is to increase communication in the area of health and safety.

This allows all workers to have a way to express themselves and have their safety related issues addressed. Safety committees are most effective if they understand their role (WCB, 2009).

According to a guide produced by Ellis and Stipanuk (1999), safety committee meeting should be scheduled regularly and postponements should be avoided in order to increase the effectiveness of the committee. A set agenda and a list of rules should be followed and meeting minutes should be kept in detail. WCB (2009) suggests that the following questions must be established as a guideline for safety committee rules and procedures:

- How often will the committee meet and for how long?

- How many members will the committee have?
- How long will members serve?
- Will there be a chairperson? If so, who?
- How long will the term be for the chairperson?
- How and where will the committee records be kept?
- How will decisions be made? Will the committee operate on a consensus?
- How much and what type of training will members be given?
- How will the committee receive complaints (WCB, 2009)?

A chairperson and secretary should be delegated to lead the committee towards the common goal: reduction of employee accidents. The responsibilities of the chairperson include preparing agendas, scheduling meeting rooms, notifying members of meeting times, and distributing agendas (Ellis & Stipanuk, 1999). The chairperson must start and stop meetings on time. They must also keep the discussion on track. If the discussion gets off track, the chairperson is responsible for assisting members in agreeing on a problem and helping the group reach a consensus. A consensus should be the goal for the chairperson because a consensus is way more effective than a majority rules scenario. The chairperson is responsible for making written recommendations for the employer and must also present the employers response to the safety committee. It is very important that the chairperson allows and ensures that everyone has the chance to share ideas and opinions (WCB, 2009). The chairperson must also have the ability to delegate responsibilities, run the meetings effectively, enforce committee rules, and report on the status of group recommendations (Ellis & Stipanuk, 1999).

The committee recorder is responsible for assisting the chairperson, recording safety committee meeting minutes, distributing and posting the minutes, and assuming the chairperson's duties in his absence (Ellis & Stipanuk, 1999). They must also circulate reports and ensure that meeting minutes are posted. During safety committee meetings the recorder is

responsible for pointing out unresolved issues from previous meetings that require further discussion or follow up by the committee. When necessary it is also important that the safety committee recorder repeat committee decisions in order to eliminate any uncertainty or confusion (WCB, 2009).

While the role of the chairperson and secretary are very important, the role of the safety committee members is crucial to the success of accident prevention. The safety committee members are responsible for representing their specific department. They must gather suggestions and concerns from fellow staff members and report them during the safety committee meetings. They must report back their suggestions to their department. Safety committee member attendance is imperative to the success of the group. Attendance is the first step in gaining employee involvement and increasing employee moral. Without attendance and involvement the presence of a safety committee is nearly useless. A safety committee member should also be well trained on updated safety and health information. They should also be responsible for gathering and analyzing injury and sickness reports, monitoring all departmental safety programs, and setting good examples by practicing a strong sense of workplace safety. They must complete safety inspections within their department in an effort to identify dangerous or unsafe conditions. In addition to safety inspections, members must make recommendations towards a corrective action to solve the problem.

Safety inspections are one of the major responsibilities of the safety committee. The purpose of inspections is to identify safety hazards or unsafe workplace practices. A checklist should be created as a guideline for committee members to follow during safety inspections. The committee must decide how often the safety inspections will occur and whether they will be

announced in advanced or conducted on a random basis. The committee must also determine how follow-up will be conducted for items found to be unsafe or hazardous (WCB, 2009).

Overall, the safety members' main priority is to communicate safety committee information to all staff members in order to increase workplace safety conditions (Ellis & Stipanuk, 1999).

### **Conclusion**

Employee accidents can be a very expensive cost for employers. The first step to reducing this cost is to identify potentially costly claims in advance. Once these accidents are identified, preventative measures such as safety committees must be created to combat employee accidents.

## **Part Three**

### **Introduction**

Eliminating employee accidents and workers compensation claims in hotels and resorts is nearly impossible. However, increasing employee communication and knowledge on workplace safety is a step in the right direction towards a solution for this problem.

### **Results**

The literature review discussed employee accidents and workers compensation laws in the state of Hawaii. It also identified back injuries as the number one workplace injury in both frequency and cost. It was also narrowed down that back injuries from lifting items located above the head and below the knees are the most common. Preventing injuries in the workplace will increase morale and decrease the cost of workers compensation claims in hotels and resorts.

Information was also gathered on safety committees and implementation of them in hotels and resorts. The research has shown that the use of safety committees is a good communication tool which proves to inform staff of safe workplace practices. It is a tool that can be used to prevent future accidents. The literature review also provided research on recommended guidelines for safety committee implementation. The expected results that will be achieved by the safety committee guidelines set forth in the future section of this professional paper are reduced employee accidents. The use of the safety committee will increase employee awareness and motivate employees to conduct safe workplace practices. It has been proven by earlier research that safety committees in hotels and resorts increase communication about workplace safety. They help employees focus on a goal and the guidelines of the safety committee help the employees achieve that goal. A safety committee must be organized, with

meeting minutes and agendas in order to be effective. Employees must be motivated and involved in the committee in order to create a safe work environment and assist in the prevention of future employee accidents.

## **Implementing a Hotel Safety Committee**

### **Choosing Safety Committee Members**

The first step to launching a safety committee in a hotel or resort is to choose the committee members. The hotel or resort management should first post information about the safety committee in common areas where employees will be able to read the information. Management should post information in the form of flyers and bulletins. Information included on the flyers should be about workplace safety. The flyer should announce that committee members will be elected by employees. A chairperson and secretary must be elected in order to launch the safety committee. Employees interested in running for these positions should be instructed to contact management. Then, management will post the names of the candidates and the election date and time in the form of a flyer on a board in a common area such as the employee cafeteria (See Appendix A). The flyer should be colorful in order to catch the attention of employees. An election date will be posted on the flyers. The election will be conducted in the form of a ballot where the person with the most votes will be elected to each position. Once the chairperson and secretary are elected, they will be responsible for gathering and recruiting the remaining committee members. It is important that the chairperson and secretary recruit from a vast variety of departments. Ideally, every department in the hotel should be represented in the safety committee.

### **Safety Committee Rules and Regulations**

The chairperson and the secretary will be the only committee members to attend the first safety meeting. The first meeting will be limited to establishing the rules, regulations, and goals of the safety committee. A safety committee policy will be established in this first meeting between the chairperson and the secretary (see Appendix B for an example safety committee policy). An introduction about workplace safety should be included in the beginning of the policy. The goal of the safety committee should be to address hazardous conditions in the workplace. The committee should concentrate on increasing employee awareness about safety in order to prevent future employee accidents. Employee involvement in accident prevention is necessary to maintain an effective safety committee. Safety meeting dates and times should be scheduled. For example, the safety committee may want to schedule meetings on the first Tuesday of each month until further notice. The committee should schedule one meeting per month and they must make a commitment to keeping that schedule. They should avoid postponing or cancelling meetings in order to increase effectiveness of the committee. Managers and employees are encouraged to volunteer for the safety committee. Each department in the hotel should be represented in the safety committee. The terms of service for the chairperson and secretary must be decided. Available terms of service for the chairperson and secretary include 12 months, 18 months, and two years. It must be decided how long the remaining committee members will serve. Information about the terms of service must be identified in the safety committee policy. Possibly an incentive for member may be established in order to generate interest. For example, as shown in Appendix B, safety committee membership is considered professional development. It may be added to the participant's performance review or resume. The responsibilities of the safety committee members must be clearly established in the safety committee policy. For example, as shown in Appendix B, attendance is required. The

safety committee will only be effective if its members are passionately involved in the group. Thus, attendance is mandatory to inspire involvement and communications. The safety committee chairperson and secretary must also decide how decisions will be made in future meetings. Will a majority rule, or must the vote be unanimous? The committee will also decide how they will relay the information to the employees. A good form of communication is to post meeting minutes and safety posters throughout the hotel or resort. The committee should also decide how they will receive information from employees outside of the safety committee. Recommendations for this are to establish a safety committee suggestion box where employees can place complaints, identification of safety hazards, and ideas. The suggestion box should be located in a common area such as the employee cafeteria. Pieces of paper will be placed near the box and employees can write down information that relate to their departmental areas of work. For example, employees could identify hazardous conditions and their suggested strategies to fix the problem. The departmental safety committee members must also communicate information to their staff members in the form of brief meetings. The meetings should be short and specific to safety information related to that department. During the short department safety meeting, the safety committee representative should ask for feedback from departmental employees in regards to potentially hazardous conditions.

### **Safety Committee Agenda**

Once the committee members have been chosen a date will be set for the first safety committee meeting. An agenda for future monthly safety committee meetings must be established. The chairperson will lead the discussion while the secretary records meeting minutes (see Appendix C for example meeting minutes). First, attendance should be taken. A brief statistical recap should be discussed about the previous month's safety record. Statistical

information to be discussed should include the number and severity of accidents which happened in the previous month. It should also include the number of lost work days associated with each employee accident. The goal for injury free days for the current month or year should be established. The goal should be reasonable, yet challenging to achieve. Also, a prize should be established if the hotel or resort achieves the goal, such as a special lunch for all staff, or a gift certificate raffle. The committee should conduct an in depth discussion about injuries from the previous month. The chairperson will identify how many injuries there were, the nature and severity of the injuries, and lost work days resulting from the injuries. Each injury will be discussed in depth by committee. They will make suggestions and identify ways in which the injuries could have been prevented. Lastly, the committee should discuss any new business. New business includes “accidents waiting to happen” list which identify hazardous working conditions and establishing a plan to resolve the issue. Each committee member will be responsible for identifying an “accident waiting to happen” or a potential safety hazard in their department. They will then explain how they resolved or plan to resolve the safety issue.

### **Identifying the Most Costly Accidents**

In order for the safety committee to be effective, they must identify the most frequent, severe, and costly employee accidents in their hotel or resort. There are several tools available to the chairperson and secretary of the committee that can be used to determine such accidents. For example, in collaboration with the Security, Accounting, and Human Resources Department, members of the safety committee can use historical data to determine the most costly accidents. Then, they can determine the cause of the most costly accidents. Once the safety committee has identified the most costly accidents and their cause, they can begin concentrating on preventative measure for that specific category of injury type. For example, back injuries are commonly the

most costly type of employee accidents in hotels and resorts. The safety committee may want to combat this accident by training employees on the proper way to lift heavy items. For example, as shown in Appendix D, the proper lifting techniques should be discussed safety committee meetings. It should be the responsibility of each committee member to take this information and relay it to their specific departments. They may want to display in a common area in the department. Or, they the representative can take 5 minutes during the normal morning briefings to do an exercise that demonstrates the proper lifting techniques as shown in Appendix D. The safety committee must then monitor the success of their preventative measures against back injuries and there are several ways they can do this. They can first look at historical data to determine the past annual amounts of back injuries. Then, after implementation of the safety committee, they can measure the new annual amount of back injuries. The number of back injuries during and after implementation of the safety committee and proper lift technique training should be lower than the amount of back injuries prior to the safety committee implementation. This should be analyzed and discussed during safety committee meetings and a goal for the number of back injuries should be set. Another way to measure the effects of proper lifting technique training is to look at historical data and determine the amount of annual lost work days in association with back injuries. Then, after implementation of the safety committee, they can measure the new annual amount of lost work days associated with back injuries. The number of lost work days should be fewer in comparison to prior years.

### **Analyzing Employee Accidents**

As mentioned previously, recent employee accidents from the previous month should be discussed in all safety meetings. In order to address these items in further detail, the safety committee should request that the Security department uses an *Employee Injury Report and*

*Statement* for all employee accidents (see Appendix E for example Employee Injury Report and Statement form). The form be filled out by the injured employee and should be very detailed to give the safety committee more knowledge in regards to the nature of the injury in order to properly identify possible future preventative measures.

### **Conclusion**

Establishing a strong safety committee is imperative to the successful reduction of employee accidents. Committee members must be dedicated to reducing employee accidents throughout the hotel or resort. They must work as a team to increase workplace safety conditions. By communicating safety information throughout the hotel, the safety committee will successfully increase awareness of safety and decrease the frequency, severity, and cost of employee accidents. By reducing accidents, the safety committee will have a favorable impact on the profitability of a hotel or resort.

## Appendix A

### Safety Committee Chairperson and Secretary Election Flyer

**Cast your vote for your safety committee representatives!**

**When:** Friday, November 12, 2010 from 11am to 2pm

**Where:** Employee Cafeteria

**How:** Fill out your ballot and drop in the lock box

**Votes will be counted and a chairperson and secretary will be announced on Monday, November 15, 2010!**

#### Chairperson Candidates

Shelly Smith

Michael Carney

Stella Freedman

Andrew Rose

#### Secretary Candidates

Anthony Curtis

Daniel Michaels

Susan Tally

Deborah Mills

## Appendix B

### Example Safety Committee Policy

#### **Introduction**

This hotel is committed to accident prevention in order to protect the safety of every hotel employee. Workplace accidents are often unnecessary, costly, and preventable. Employee involvement and support from management is necessary to make this safety committee effective and reduce unsafe and hazardous work conditions.

#### **Purpose/Goal**

The goal of the safety committee is to address hazardous conditions in the workplace. The committee will concentrate on increasing employee awareness about safety in order to prevent future employee accidents. Employee involvement in accident prevention is necessary to maintain an effective safety committee. The ultimate goal of this safety committee is to promote and maintain a safe and healthy workplace for all hotel employees.

#### **Schedule of Meetings**

Safety committee meetings will be scheduled for the first Tuesday of each month until further notice. The meetings will be held at 3pm in the training room located next door to the Human Resources department. Below is the safety committee meeting schedule for the 2011 calendar year:

Tuesday, January 4, 2011  
Tuesday, February 1, 2011  
Tuesday, March 1, 2011  
Tuesday, April 5, 2011  
Tuesday, May 3, 2011  
Tuesday, June 7, 2011  
Tuesday, July 5, 2011  
Tuesday, August 2, 2011  
Tuesday, September 6, 2011  
Tuesday, October 4, 2011  
Tuesday, November 1, 2011  
Tuesday, December 6, 2011

#### **Organization**

There will be a chairperson and a secretary in the safety committee. A representative from each department in the hotel will be selected or encouraged to volunteer in the committee. All employees are encouraged to volunteer for the safety committee.

Safety committee members will serve a continuous term of at least six months. The chairperson and secretary will serve a continuous term of 18 months.

Membership in the committee will be considered professional development and may be included in an employees' performance review or and employees' resume.

### **Responsibilities**

Members of the safety committee have the following responsibilities:

- attend all scheduled meetings;
- communicate safety information to all hotel staff;
- identify hazardous condition and unsafe workplace practices; and
- suggest approaches or tactics to eliminate or minimize unsafe conditions and practices.

### **Recommendations**

It is the responsibility of the safety committee to recommend and implement changes in regards to hazardous conditions and unsafe workplace practices. Members of the safety committee must communicate safety information to all hotel staff in an effort to reduce future employee accidents.

### **Decisions**

All decisions made by the safety committee will be made by a majority rules decision. In the case of a tie the safety committee chairperson will hold the deciding vote.

### **Communication**

A safety board will be created and displayed in the staff cafeteria. All safety committee meeting minutes will be posted to the board immediately following each monthly meeting. In addition, a suggestion box will be located in the staff cafeteria where employees can identify potentially hazardous work conditions and suggested strategies to fix the issues. All safety committee members will conduct departmental meetings in their specific department immediately following each safety committee meeting. A short discussion about the most recent meeting will be held and items relating to that specific department will be address. Safety committee representatives will encourage employees to look for potentially hazardous conditions and bring them to the attention of the safety committee representative or utilize the suggestion box.

Appendix C

Example Meeting Minutes – Regular Monthly Meetings

**Hotel Safety Meeting – January 4, 2011**

**Attendance**

<u>Department</u>	<u>Employee</u>
Engineering	Orlando Blum
Restaurant #1	Randy Smith
Restaurant #2	Bryan Talenoa
Restaurant #3	Carly Simon
Bar	Jeremy Conroy
Front Office/Guest Services	Evelina Leon
Housekeeping	Daniel Uhl
Activities/Beach/Fitness Center	Martin Baldeviso
Spa & Salon	Pam Heimlich
Conference Services	Taylor Hanog
Room Service	Caleb Etrata
Kitchen	Elmer Fudd
Security	Michael Tate
Stewarding	Kim Pali
Executive Offices	Wendy Apple
Banquets	Tom Milton
Human Resources	Maili Wilson
Landscaping	Oscar Mills
Accounting	Jennifer Huff

December = **2 Recorded Medical Attention Injuries with 11 Lost Work Days**

December = 2 First Aids

2011 Goal = Less than 30 Injuries and less than 150 lost work days!

**Goal = 30 days Injury Free = Special menu lunch in Cafeteria!**

*Injury Review for October:*

<b>Date</b>	<b>Dept</b>	<b>Injury</b>	<b>Medical</b>	<b>Lost/ # Days</b>	<b>Alter Duties</b>
10/3/2010	Restaurant #1	Employee was taking guest's order and then turned around and stubbed foot on the umbrella stand.  Preventative Measure: Umbrella stand moved to a corner out of the way of traffic. Employees and guests will be less likely to trip over it here.	Yes	10	
10/3/2010	Guest Services	While closing the door of the CAM van, employee closed door on pinky finger causing a cut. Employee received First Aid and returned to work.	No	0	
10/16/2010	Housekeeping	Employee was walking in the tunnel and as she passed another employee carrying a box, felt that something, possibly dust, went into her eye. Employee flushed eye with water.  Preventative Measure: Inform all staff of location and instructions of use for the eyewash station. Possibly post this information on the safety board in the staff cafeteria.	No	0	
10/21/2010	Recreation	Employee stated they have sore foot and heel from wearing hiking boots.	No	0	
10/23/2010	Restaurant #2	While cutting cheese knife slipped and cut employees hand. Employee went to hospital.  Preventative Measure: New proper cheese cutting knife being purchased	Yes	1	Yes

## New Business:

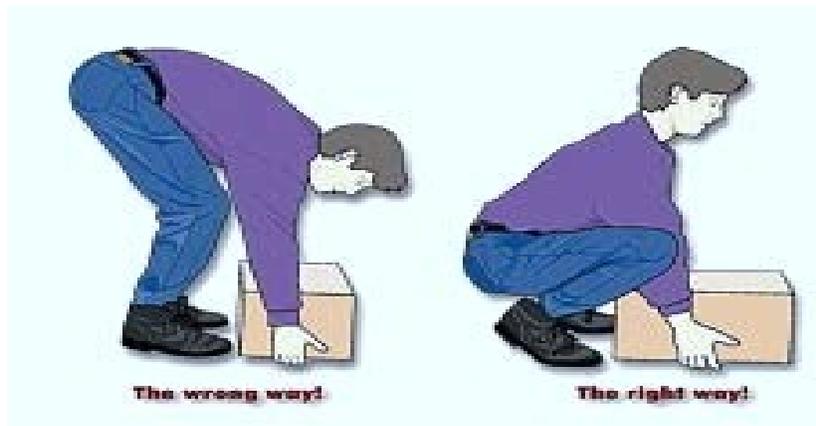
- Each department's 1 "**Accident Waiting to Happen**" they proactively sought out and fixed
  - **Engineering:** Painting deck/porches, adding sand grip to where the grip tape was before.
  - **Housekeeping:** A wing ice machine had burned out light. Light was replaced.
  - **Front Office:** Leaves/seeds were located on the sidewalks by pool which may potentially cause a guest or employee to slip, trip, or fall. Sara cleaned it up.
  - **Food & Beverage:** Slip resistant carpet/mat replaced in front of the Room Service fridge to avoid future slips.
  - **Laundry:** Chemical stand (inside building) is bending. Christian to follow up on replacement part.
  - **Kitchen:** Engineering put wheels on the pasta machine box to avoid potential future back injuries
  - **Front Office:** Clutter and items left in old Front Desk area causing trip hazard, etc...(picture was sent out). Inform staff: Please don't dump stuff in this area!
  - **Kids Center:** Sliding door for TV room still able to be pushed out. Work order in place with engineering to fix.
  - **Housekeeping:** Water from irrigation coming onto walk way, especially near room 2801. Landscaping repaired the irrigation near 2801. Housekeeping will put out Wet Floor signs at 11pm in areas where some of the water from irrigation comes onto the sidewalk.
  - **Human Resources:** Box clutter was a fire hazard, which was cleared immediately.
  - **Front Office:** Emergency cell phone list being updated. Michael will coordinate an updated Emergency Phone list and Call Tree and send out.
  - **Conference Services:** Water puddle sometimes by ice machine in Conference Center kitchen. Engineering needs to look at it. Lighting not working very well (dim) in back side of Conference Center parking area. Walk through scheduled with Security, Engineering, Stewarding, and General Manager.
  - **Room Service:** Wet Floor sign focus at ice machines.
  - **Stewarding:** Kitchen drains backing up so have mop station prepped ahead of time with items readily accessible. Wet floor signs placed to inform staff.
  - **Engineering:** Reminder to all staff to slow down, especially in golf carts both in guest areas and elsewhere.
  - **Landscaping:** Helped a colleague cutting branches to prevent injury.
  - **Kitchen:** Need light on back side of Ocean Grill and all carts and rubbish removed from that area. Food & Beverage and Engineering to follow up.
  - **Restaurant #1:** Carpet in the dining room was peeling up and may potentially cause an employee to trip. Engineering was informed and they glued it back down
  - **Beverage Storeroom:** Cages holding liquor had boxes of banquet wines sitting on top of the cage. Area will be reorganized to move heavy items to lower areas in an effort to avoid future back injuries.

- **Accounting:** Boxes being moved to containers using 2 people to lift boxes onto the hand truck.
- **Food & Beverage:** Every Friday at 2:30pm in the Food and beverage briefing they are doing stretches, everyone is invited.
- **Pool:** Sprinklers sometimes cause water on certain areas, so proactively putting or moving the Wet Floor sign before the wet areas so guests and employees see it clearly.

## Appendix D

### Proper Lifting Techniques

Squat to lift and lower. Do not bend at the waist.
Keep your lower back bowed in while bending over.
Keep the weight as close to you as possible.
Bow your back in and raise up with your head first.
If you must turn, turn with your feet, not your body.
Never jerk or twist!
Put the weight down by keeping your lower back bowed in.
Keep your feet apart, staggered if possible.
Wear shoes with non-slip soles.



### Risk Factors for Back Injury

Lifting with your back bowed out.
Bending and reaching with your back bowed out.
Slouched sitting.
Twisting or jerking movements.
Lack of proper rest.
Obesity and poor nutrition.
Stressful work and living habits
Taking short cuts to try and be quicker.

Appendix E

Employee Injury Report and Statement

*(Please print. Must be completed by employee, in full, within 24 hours of accident/injury or notification of incident).*

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ D.O.B \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ AGE: \_\_\_\_\_ SEX: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE#: \_\_\_\_\_

INJURY DATE: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ INJURY TIME: \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm WORK SHIFT: \_\_\_\_\_

INCIDENT/CASE # \_\_\_\_\_ DEPARTMENT: \_\_\_\_\_ POSITION: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE REPORTED: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_ TIME REPORTED: \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm SUPERVISOR'S NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

What was your exact location at the time of the injury? \_\_\_\_\_

What was the condition of the location? \_\_\_\_\_

What were you doing when the injury occurred? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

How did the injury occur? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

List anyone who was present at the time of your alleged injury: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide the name of your primary care physician: \_\_\_\_\_

What part (or parts) of your body are injured? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever injured this part of your body prior to this accident? \_\_\_\_\_

Have you ever received treatment to this part of your body prior to this accident? \_\_\_\_\_

If you have received treatment, please list the name of your medical providers: \_\_\_\_\_

Did you injure any other body parts as a result of this accident? If so, please list. \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Do you want to seek medical attention for this injury? (Yes or No)? \_\_\_\_\_

*(Please continue on reverse if necessary).*

**Printed Name** \_\_\_\_\_ **Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date Completed:** \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

*I understand that it is unlawful to willfully make a false statement for the purpose of obtaining benefits.*

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