



# Worker Participation

## Partner for Safety and Health Planning

### What Is It?

**Worker participation** is meaningfully engaging workers at all levels in establishing, implementing, evaluating, and improving safety and health in the workplace. This means workers understand they are a valuable partner in making their workplace safer and are encouraged and able to communicate with management about hazards on the job. Workers are the experts when it comes to the tasks they do and the tools and equipment they use, which makes them a key resource for knowledge and innovative ideas that can improve safety and health.



### How Do You Do It?

You can engage your workers during Safe + Sound Week by **partnering for safety and health planning**. As safety and health are continuous activities in organizations, Safe + Sound Week can be an opportunity to announce, launch, or convene on strategies that may take longer to implement. The following are a few suggestions and resources to get you started. You can select one of these activities or choose a different [activity to engage workers](#) in your organization.

- Establish a safety committee:** At the beginning of Safe + Sound Week, post a flyer or send an email to all workers inviting them to join your safety committee, or ask workers or labor representatives to nominate individuals. Make sure that as many job functions as possible are represented on the committee. At the end of the week, host a kickoff meeting for the committee to discuss objectives and goals. Consider hosting regularly-scheduled (e.g., bi-weekly, monthly) committee meetings and have the committee host all-hands meetings to report out.
  - National Safety Council's ["Effective safety committees: Are you tapping into workers' knowledge?"](#)
- Share in goal-setting:** Involve workers in your organization's process for setting annual safety and health goals. This could include inviting workers to help research, brainstorm, and decide on the appropriate targets. To help you do this, you could host a meeting with senior management and workers during Safe + Sound Week to discuss and define program objectives and how they will be measured. Recognize workers when goals are met and periodically re-engage with workers to accomplish the remaining ones.
  - Ohio Bureau of Workers' Compensation's [Safety Goals and Measurements](#)
  - California Department of Industrial Relations' [Identifying Measurable Safety Goals](#)
  - Campbell Institute's [Transforming EHS Performance Measurement Through Leading Indicators](#)
- Include safety expertise on teams:** Involve workers with safety and health expertise in existing teams throughout your organization (e.g., product and process design, procurement, executive, business planning, employee recruitment and orientation, evaluation and assessment, risk management, operations, emergency preparedness, wellness, sustainability). This will help ensure that safety has a strong voice and that impacts on workers are considered in business decisions. For example, safety and health representatives on design or procurement teams can assess new tasks, new products, or new equipment for potential health and safety risks before they are put into practice.
- Or, create your own activity!**

## How Do You Make It Effective?

**Make it work:** Schedule meetings during working hours and at times when workers from different departments and levels can participate.

**Be inclusive:** Ensure that workers at all levels of your organization, regardless of skill or education, can participate in planning decisions that involve their safety, including design for ergonomics, equipment procurement, and risk management activities. Provide translation if needed to reach all your workers.

**Go for the goal:** Set realistic goals and check progress on them regularly. If you are successful in meeting or exceeding initial safety goals, set new ones for continuous improvement.

**Partner for progress:** Help workers understand that they are partners in improving safety and health at your organization and treat them as experts when it comes to the tasks they do and the tools and equipment they use.

**Recognize effort:** Recognize teams and individuals for the time and effort they contribute. This can help to reaffirm that safety is a top priority at your organization.

## Show Your Commitment to Safety and Health

Remember to share your commitment to a safe and healthy workplace with all involved in your operations, including workers, contractors, customers, suppliers, and other stakeholders. Here are a few ways to do that:

- List the goals you set or notes from meetings in break rooms, in a binder in a common area, or on your intranet site, and give down time during work shifts to absorb the materials.
- Share what you learned from safety representatives in planning meetings and the actions you plan to take because of their contributions in your next company newsletter or communication to workers.
- Compare notes after trainings, speakers, and other activities to encourage communication and cooperation throughout the organization.
- Include information on your inclusive planning processes in public materials, such as newsletters, websites, brochures, and annual reports.

Visit the Safe + Sound Campaign website to learn more about [worker participation](#).