

Activity 4: Classroom Safety Committee

Identifying & Solving Problems

- ✓ Identifying Issues
- ✓ Analysis
- ✓ Working Together
- ✓ Identifying Solutions

An integral part of preventing injuries and illnesses is having a way of identifying hazards early and doing something about them.

Many workplaces have joint health and safety committees with trained health and safety representatives elected by workers and representatives of management. Their role is to regularly inspect for hazards and make recommendations to management about how to control them.

Getting started

Step 1 Establish a health and safety committee for the classroom or the school. Have students elect four to six representatives.

You could rotate students through the committee. For example, if there are six students involved, replace two each month with new representatives so that each individual spends about two months on the committee.

Step 2 Ask the health and safety representatives to lead a brainstorming session with the whole class on classroom health and safety rules. Make a list and post it in the classroom. (Some examples are provided on this page.)

Step 3 Ask students to list what the teacher/principal, students, and health and safety representatives can do to make sure hazards are identified early and either eliminated or controlled to a point where it's healthy and safe. Add a statement about commitment to having and keeping a healthy and safe classroom for the year. This can become the classroom health and safety policy. Post it with the health and safety rules.

Step 4 Ask the health and safety representatives to create a classroom/school health and safety checklist. They can use this when they do their health and safety inspection each month.

Alternatively, have students review the sample checklist provided on the next page and add or delete points to make the checklist work for your setting.

Step 5 The committee should inspect the classroom/school once a month and meet to discuss what they find. They should come up with suggestions for the teacher/principal as to how to eliminate hazards or make improvements to the health and safety of the classroom/school.

Teacher's Note

Encourage the other students to tell their representatives about any hazards that they see.

Step 6 Ask the students to research Joint Health and Safety Committees and Health and Safety Representatives to get ideas for things they can do with their committee. [The Ontario Ministry of Labour website](#) has information to get started.

Examples of Classroom Health and Safety Rules

1. No running or horseplay in the classroom.
2. If anyone finds a hazard, such as clutter on the floor, a broken light or a strange odour, they will immediately inform the teacher (if it should be fixed right away) or a member of the Health and Safety Committee who can put it on the agenda for the next meeting.
3. Extension cords and electrical equipment will be used properly.
4. Do not attempt to lift any heavy objects – ask for help.
5. Do not place cables and electrical cords where people could trip on them.
6. Do not overload outlets or extension cords.
7. Wear appropriate safety equipment when doing art projects or science experiments.
8. Practice good housekeeping.
9. Tie back long hair and loose clothing when working in science labs or doing art projects.
10. Use step stools to reach high places – never stand on a chair or other inappropriate objects.
11. ASK QUESTIONS if you are not sure or don't understand!

Committees typically develop a checklist that they use as a prompt when they do their health and safety inspections each month. At their regular meetings, the members discuss how to solve problems found during their inspection so they can make recommendations to management. Learning about the committee approach to health and safety is very useful for students who will very soon enter the workplace at least on a part-time basis.