



48th Annual Conference | Victoria Conference Centre

Beyond Compliance:

Unlocking the Power of Health and Safety Committees

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#BCCPA2025



Beyond Compliance: Unlocking the Power of Health and Safety Committees

BCCPA Annual Conference 2025

Presented by:

Jennifer Derksen, Occupational Health and Safety Manager, SafeCare BC

Christine Shearer, Director, Labour Relations and Occupational Health and Safety, Baptist Housing



SafeCare BC

SUPPORTING WELLNESS THROUGH HEALTHY,
SAFE, AND INJURY-FREE WORKPLACES



Land recognition

Let's start today's session by recognizing that we are gathered on the ancestral and unceded territory of the Ləkʷəŋən peoples, also known as the Songhees and Esquimalt First Nations, who have a long and continuing relationship with the land.

We thank them for being good caretakers of the land and allowing us to visit this shared territory to do good work.

SafeCare BC

We believe everyone should have a safe, healthy, and injury-free workplace.

We empower organizations that provide care to create a culture of safety through evidence-based education, advocacy for safer workplaces, leadership, and collaboration.



Agenda



Joint Occupational Health and Safety (JOHS) Committee Fundamentals

Costs of an Ineffective JOHS Committee

Moving JOHS Committees from Compliance to Champions

Case Study Discussion

Strategies for Stronger JOHS Committees

Call to Action

Show of hands

Who is currently on a Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee?

How familiar are you with their roles and responsibilities?

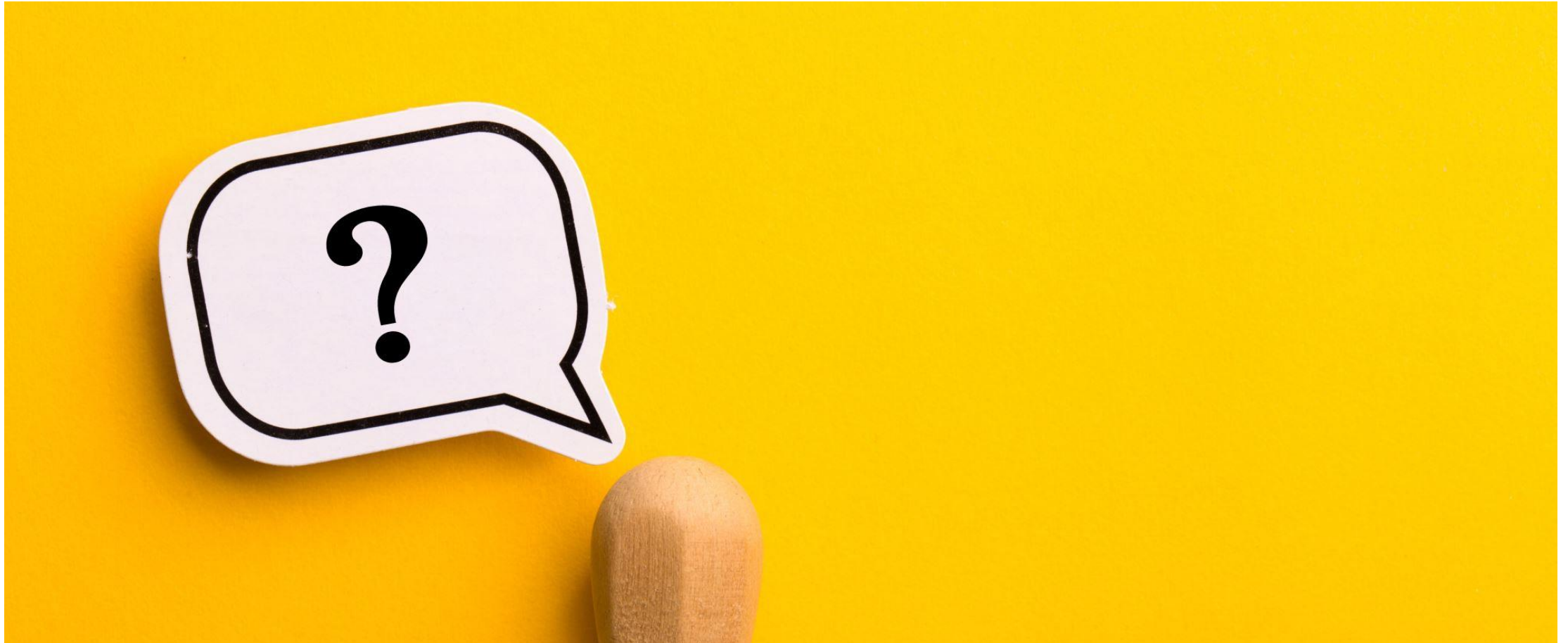
How effective is your committee?

Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee Fundamentals

A safety committee is a **collaborative advisory group**, made up of both **employer and employee** representatives that **work together to promote and improve workplace safety**.



What are some JOHS Committee responsibilities?



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Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee Fundamentals

A safety committee is a **collaborative advisory group**, made up of **employer and employee** representatives that **work together** to **promote and improve workplace safety**.



Committee responsibilities:

- Promoting health and safety
- Identifying hazards
- Receiving questions
- Consulting with working groups
- Regularly meeting
- Participating in inspections, investigations, and work refusals
- Making recommendations
- Evaluating the effectiveness of the committee's work



Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee Fundamentals

Regulatory and legislated
requirements:

Meet monthly

Maintain quorum

Identify co-chairs

Post meeting minutes

Participate in annual education

The cost of ineffective JOHS Committees



The cost of ineffective JOHS Committees

What's your biggest JOHS Committee challenge?



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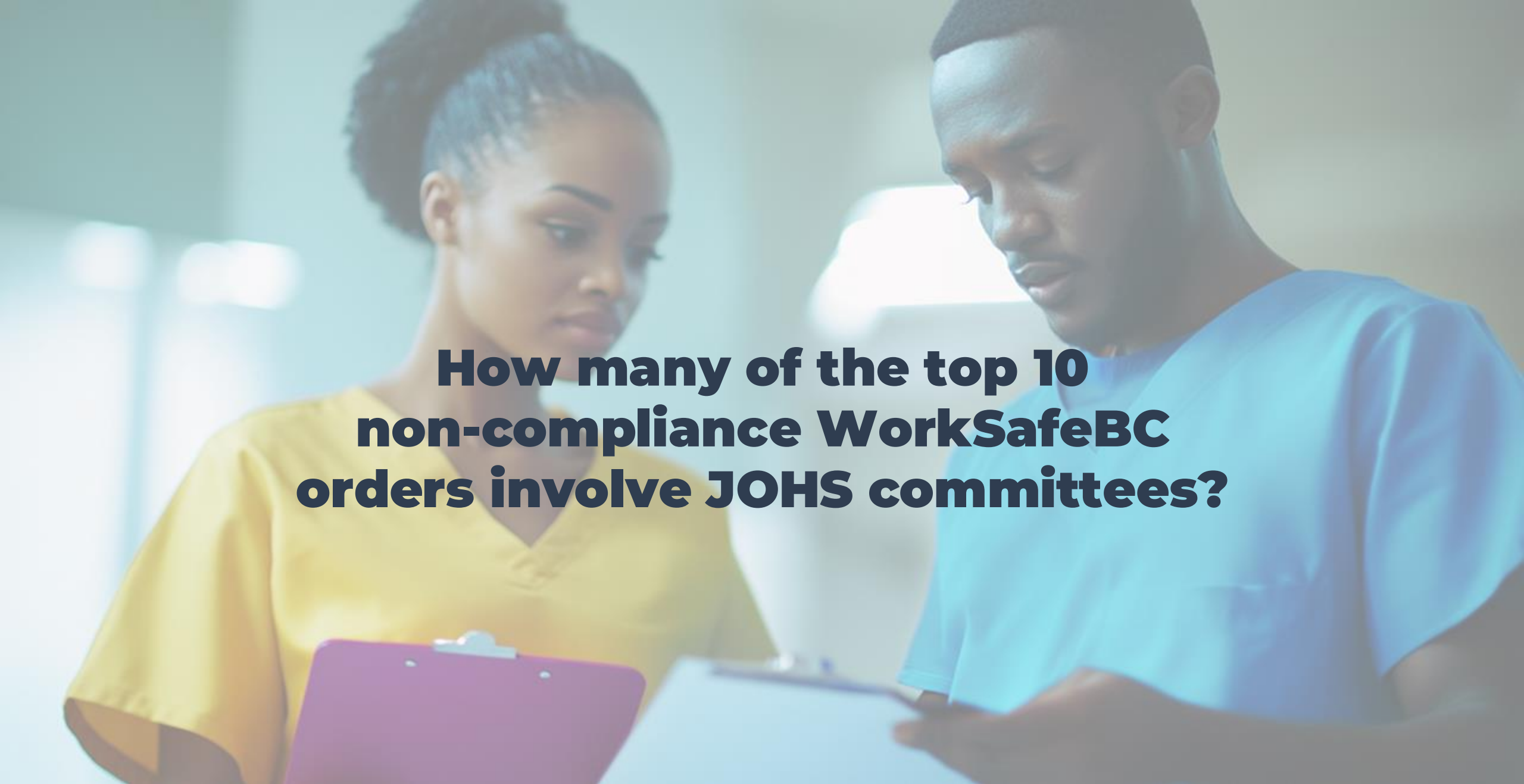
or



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Common JOHS Committee Challenges

- Low interest in health and safety
- Difficult to get committee members
- Meeting time doesn't fit well into everyone's schedule
- Hard to see if the committee is making a difference
- Never sure what we're supposed to do
- Meetings seem ineffective or go on too long
- Don't feel like my ideas are heard or taken seriously

A blurred background image of two healthcare workers, a woman in yellow scrubs and a man in blue scrubs, looking down at documents or clipboards. The woman is on the left, and the man is on the right. The image has a soft, out-of-focus quality with a light blue tint.

**How many of the top 10
non-compliance WorkSafeBC
orders involve JOHS committees?**

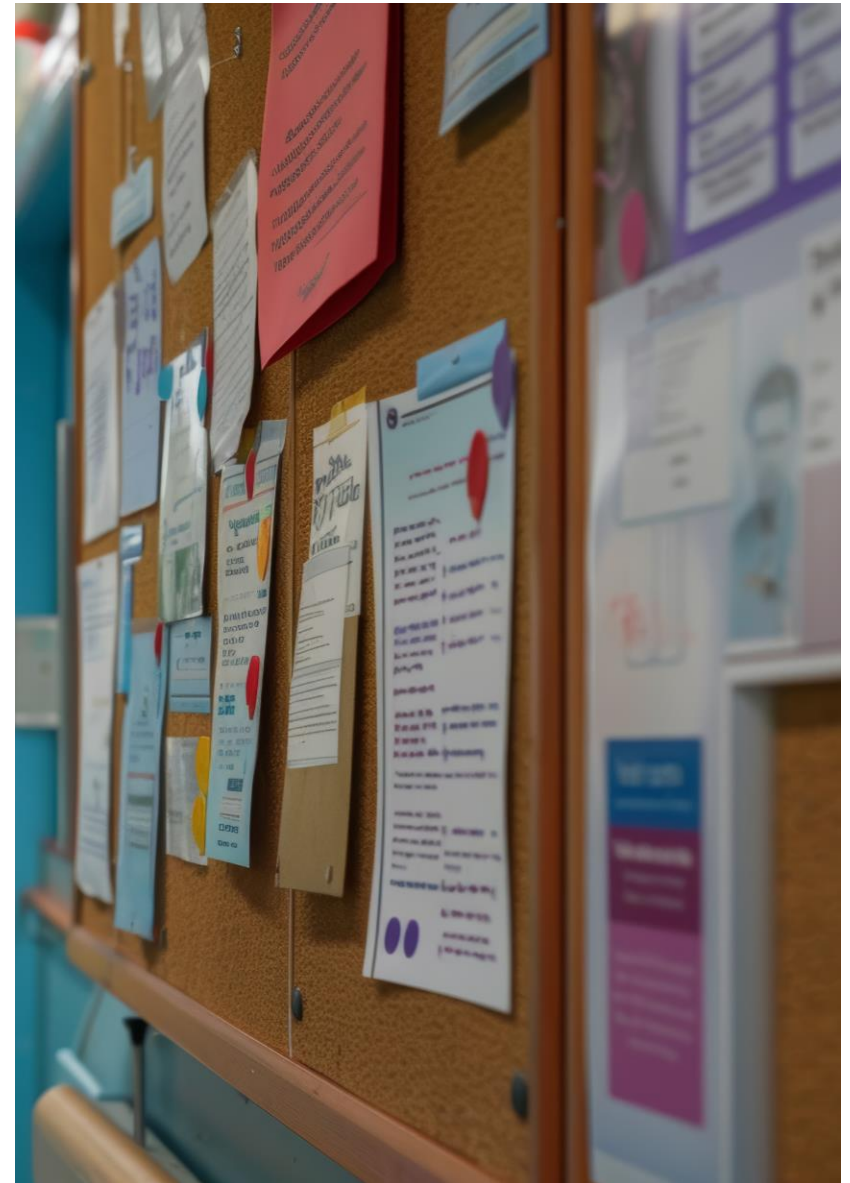
JOHS committee non-compliance orders

Citation Ranking	Regulation Cited	Regulatory Description	Locations Cited
2	WCA31(a)	An employer must establish and maintain a joint health and safety committee in each workplace where 20 or more workers of the employer are regularly employed.	73
3	WCA32(1)(c)	Despite section 31, the Board may, by order, require or permit an employer to establish and maintain... (c) one joint committee for the workplace or parts of the workplaces of a number of employers, if the workplaces are the same, overlapping or adjoining.	53
5	OHS3.26(2)	An employer must ensure that, with respect to each of the employer's joint committees , a written evaluation is conducted annually by (a) the co-chairs of the joint committee or, with respect to each co-chair, the member or members of the joint committee designated by the co-chair, or (b) the employer or a person retained by the employer.	43
8	OHS3.27(2)	The employer must ensure that each member of the employer's joint committees who was selected on or after April 3, 2017 to be a member receives, as soon as practicable but no more than 6 months after becoming a member, a total of at least 8 hours of instruction and training , as set out in subsection (4).	26
10	WCA37(2)	A joint committee must meet regularly at least once each month , unless another schedule is permitted or required by regulation or order.	22

Credit: WorkSafeBC Power BI Public Data – CU's 766011 & 766006 from 2020-2025

Other JOHS committee-related citations include:

- **Posting information:**
 - the last three committee meeting minutes
 - who is on your committee, and their work locations
 - copies of orders
- The committee establishing its own **rules of procedure**
- Holding **quorum** (4 members) with at least half of the committee representing workers
- Employer must **consult with joint committees**



Credit: WorkSafeBC Power BI Public Data – CU's 766011 & 766006 from 2020-2025

Risks of a passive JOHS Committee



Risks of a Passive Committee

The costs of an ineffective OHS program.

Direct:

- Time loss claims
- WorkSafeBC
Premiums and
Experience Rating

Indirect:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| • Quality of care | • Communication | • Recruitment | • Workload |
| • Responsive behaviours | • Residents' dignity and well-being | • Retention | • Institutional knowledge |
| • Engagement | • Family confidence | • Culture | • Reputation |
| | | • Scheduling | |

Moving committees from
compliance to champions

Empowering JOHS Committees



Moving committees from compliance to champions

Peer Support
Coaching
Program | Off
the Rails at The
Heights at Mtn.
View



Peer Support Coaching Program - Off the Rails

What we got right at the start:



- Strong buy-in from staff and leadership.
- Clear goals tied to safety awareness and injury reduction.
- Coaches were trained and equipped with tools.
- Program created a culture of mentorship and peer support.
- Focused support during onboarding, improved retention and confidence.

Peer Support Coaching Program - Off the Rails

How the program lost momentum:



- Staffing shortages left little time for coaching.
- Single site orders limited staffing flexibility.
- Safety Coaches focused on filling urgent operational gaps.
- Program coordination and visibility faded due to operational pressures.
- Program lacked a long-term sustainability plan.

Moving committees from compliance to champions

Peer Support
Coaching
Program | Off
the Rails at The
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View



Peer Support Coaching Program - Off the Rails

What we learned:



- Develop a clear implementation plan with scalable phases.
- Build in flexibility.
- Maintain regular check-ins to monitor the impact.
- Integrate with onboarding and orientation processes.
- Ensure ongoing Committee oversight; maintain a feedback loop.
- Sustainability support from all levels.
- A strong JOHSC can be a voice of continuity.

Peer Support Coaching Program - Off the Rails

What we did to improve:



- Assigned a dedicated program coordinator.
- Temporarily modified expectations.
- Used micro-coaching, huddles, videos, and digital tools.
- Recognized and rewarded coaches.
- Leadership promoted and protected time to engage.
- The Committee and leadership developed a contingency plan.
- Scheduled quarterly program reviews.

** Based on the work of Dr. Kathy Allen*

ICEBERG OF IGNORANCE



4%

Problems known to
executive



9%

Problems known to
middle managers



74%

Problems known
to supervisors



100%

Problems known to staff



96%

Problems hidden from
senior managers



Moving committees from **compliance** to **champions**

Leadership support is key

- Lead by example
- Prioritize health and safety
- Invest in safety resources and training
- Recognize that safety improves over time through small, steady changes



Moving committees from **compliance** to **champions**

Expanding the role of the Committees

- Proactively spot safety issues
- Encourage respectful teamwork and communication
- Improve workplace culture

**Beyond
compliance**

Case studies



**Table
discussion**

Case Study Questions

1. Identify the root cause(s) of your case study.
2. Discuss how this shows up at your organization?
3. Brainstorm a few small, practical changes you could try at your organization.



Table discussion



Case study:

Who's on the committee?

Despite meeting regularly, the JOHS Committee is struggling to maintain a connection with frontline staff. Meeting minutes aren't posted consistently, and there's little communication about what the committee is working on.

Staff are unsure who the committee members are, or how to bring forward concerns. Without regular updates or visible action, workers are unsure of the committee's activities, and they don't see the value in getting involved.



Case study:

When staff hurt, residents feel it

The committee reviewed injury data and staff feedback, uncovering gaps in equipment use, and transfer techniques. A rise in musculoskeletal injuries among care aides led to short staffing, more overtime, and an increased reliance on casuals—disrupting resident routines, contributing to responsive behaviours, and family complaints.

As stress and burnout grew, so did errors, absenteeism, and injury-related costs. Many staff felt their safety concerns were ignored, creating frustration and a disconnect between the committee, supervisors, and frontline workers.



Case study:

You can't pour from an empty cup

The committee noticed an increase in near misses and tense interactions between staff and residents.

Through confidential check-ins and focus groups, burnout emerged as a root cause. Staff reported feeling emotionally and physically exhausted, leading to brief, task-focused resident interactions with reduced resident engagement.

Recreational participation declined, and families increasingly raised concerns about disconnected or disengaged care.



Case study:

Safety isn't a solo act

In a recent code white incident, a response was delayed due to unclear roles and responsibilities, and low confidence among new staff. Team members hesitated, unsure who was supposed to intervene, who to call, or what their role should be. The incident led to confusion, increased risk for both staff and residents, and shook the confidence of those involved.

Newer staff members later said they didn't recall receiving any formal code response training and others mentioned they had "heard about it" during orientation but never practiced it. The committee was not involved in the incident review, and no follow-up discussion occurred with frontline staff. As a result, concerns about communication, preparedness, and role clarity remained unaddressed.



Case study:

Policy vs. practice

The committee noticed a pattern: newer staff brought up safety ideas in private, but never at meetings or huddles.

A recent safe lifting audit revealed widespread inconsistencies between policies and practices.

It became clear that the culture was stifling current policies and procedures, and reinforcing outdated, and unsafe habits.



Case study:

Going through the motions

On the surface, the committee was doing everything right: meetings were held, minutes posted, and members assigned. But frontline staff didn't feel heard.

Many shared that when they did raise safety concerns, there was little follow-up, or visible change. One care aide said, "Why speak up if it won't go anywhere?" Another added, "I don't even know who's on the committee." Over time, workers disengaged, and the safety culture stagnated.

Strategies for a stronger JOHS committee

Expanding how we think of JOHS Committee work



Addressing the root causes:

- Addressing functional issues
- Strengthening relationships
- Enhancing communication skills
- Fostering a positive culture of safety

An OHS program is just a tool — real impact comes from how it's embedded and owned by everyone.

Strategies for a stronger JOHS committee

Driving continuous safety improvements

- Celebrate progress
- Shift from compliance to prevention
- Track safety outcomes
- Strengthen partnerships
- Annual review of the OHS program,
and committee effectiveness





Encouraging involvement and engagement

- Make it **easy** to join
- Make participating **appealing**
- **Support** the committee success

Strong JOHS Committees aren't just a compliance requirement—they're a lever for improving staff morale, reducing risk, and enhancing resident care.

How we can help



info@safecarebc.ca

We have a variety of resources and support to help. We provide training, education, health and safety program audits, consultive services, webinars, checklists, templates, toolkits, and more!

**CELEBRATE.
EDUCATE.
INSPIRE.**

Hearts & Hands

10 YEARS OF CELEBRATING HEALTHCARE ASSISTANTS

TICKETS ON SALE NOW!

\$60

**10/15 NANAIMO 10/22 LANGLEY
10/24 KELOWNA**

PRESENTED BY  SafeCare BC

heartsandhands.ca

Call to Action:

What's one idea you'll take back to your workplace?

Start with one action. Small changes build strong committees.

THANK YOU



Jennifer Derksen

Manager, Occupational Health
and Safety, SafeCare BC
jderksen@safecarebc.ca



Christine Shearer

Director, Labour Relations and
Occupational Health and Safety,
Baptist Housing
cshearer@baptisthousing.org