

Health and Safety Committees 101: *Building the Foundation*

NYS/PEF Health and Safety Conference May 2026

Facilitators:

- **Leisa Abraham**, OPWDD Psychologist 2, Region 3 Coordinator & Article 18 H&S Co-chair
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- **Jazmine Nova Morales**, Health and Safety Specialist



WELCOME!!!!



- Introductions
- Housekeeping (Sign-in, Evals, Question Checkpoints)





What You'll Learn

- Benefits of HS Committees
- Legal Foundation
- Labor & Contract Framework
- Committee Operations
- Hazard Identification & Response
- Tools & Resources



Why BEEs?



Are renowned for their teamwork



Each bee performs an important role that benefits the whole colony



Symbolic of focus, dedication, hard work, teamwork, generosity, prosperity





Why Health & Safety Committees Matter

- Tie to real-world issues participants see
- Committees = problem-solving space, not just meetings



Legal Foundation



OSHA (1971)

Occupational Safety and Health Act ensures safe workplaces

Employers must provide a workplace free of recognized hazards

Workers have the right to report hazards

Protection from retaliation

NYS Public Sector: PESH



Public Employee Safety and Health Bureau enforces OSHA standards in NYS



Established 1980



Covers state and local government workers



Allows complaints and inspections



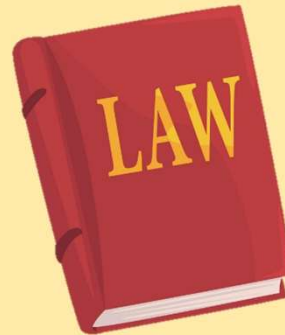
Ensures accountability for public employers

PESH/OSHA Standards



Standards Include:

- BBP
- Emergency Action Plans
- Exit Routes
- Fire Prevention
- Machine Guarding
- Toxic Chemicals
- Noise
- Walking/Working Surfaces
- Housekeeping/Sanitation
- Workplace Violence



There are not standards for every hazard:

- Indoor Air Quality
- Occupational Stress
- Ergonomics
- Temperature
- Mold



What is a Worksite?

- Office settings (desk, meetings)
- Facilities
- Field sites (inspections, site visits)
- Travel between job locations
- Wherever you conduct employer-directed activities



On the way to
WORK!



Traveling for
WORK!



VS

What is the difference?





Worksite .. While in...Travel Status???

- Travel status = still “at work” when performing duties
 - Includes temporary sites (meetings, trainings, field work)
 - Employer-directed travel/activities are covered
 - Worksite may include travel between job sites
 - Hotels only if work is occurring
 - Commuting (home ↔ work) not covered
- *OSHA considers if activity was work-related**

Labor Framework (Taylor Law & CBA)

Taylor Law (NY)

- Governs labor relations for public employees in NYS
- Guarantees right to organize and join unions
- Requires employers to negotiate in good faith
- Establishes grievance procedures
- Prohibits strikes by public employees
- Enforced by PERB (Public Employment Relations Board)
- Health & Safety addressed through negotiated terms



Article 18 — Health & Safety Framework

18.1–18.2: Establishes Joint Health & Safety Committees & State commitment to safe workplaces

18.3: Defines committee structure and operation

18.6: Requires agency & local committees; supports issue escalation

18.4: Provides funding through SHIP grants (Safety and Health Initiative Program)





ARTICLE 18
STATEWIDE

AGENCY LEVEL

LOCAL LEVEL



Local Committees & the Role of Agency-Level Committees

LOCAL Committees

- ▶ Site-level issues & daily operations (examples: plumbing, indoor air quality (temp, ventilation) construction, workplace violence, etc.)
- ▶ Firsthand knowledge of workplace conditions
- ▶ First line of defense for hazard identification

AGENCY — Level

- ▶ Cross-site coordination & escalation
- ▶ Best practices & updates
- ▶ Mentors and supports local committees statewide

STATEWIDE — Article 18

- ▶ Policy guidance & statewide oversight
- ▶ Safety data & trend analysis
- ▶ Final escalation for unresolved issues



Local Committee Formation (Union Side)



- Varies by agency/division
- Guided by Division/Council By-Laws/Agency-Level Health and Safety Committee
- May include H&S-specific language (or general committee process)
- Outlines member selection (appointed/elected/volunteer)
- Defines roles, structure, expectations



Divisions

[Home](#) / [PEF Departments](#) / Divisions

The Divisions Department serves as a resource for PEF's 231 Divisions. Our responsibilities include coordinating and conducting various elections, such as Division Officer and/or Steward Elections; PEF/AFT/SEIU Convention Delegate Elections; PEF's Triennial Officer/Executive Board Elections; Special Elections for Statewide Officer and/or Executive Board vacancies. The department also conducts Division Constitution development or amendments, annexations and/or secessions and agency consolidations, and maintains current and historical data on each division and all elections conducted.

- [PEF Division Constitutions](#)
- [Division Documents](#)
- [Elections](#)
- [Steward Election Procedures](#)



Stay Informed

The
COMMUNICATOR

Sign up for the Communicator

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What Are Committee Operations?



What It Covers

- ▶ Rules, roles, and responsibilities of committee members
- ▶ Processes to plan, run, and document meetings
- ▶ Decision-making, communication, and follow-up procedures

Key Components

- ▶ Roles & structure: co-chairs, members, representation
- ▶ Agenda management: standing vs. moving items
- ▶ Meeting schedule: regular (quarterly) + emergency
- ▶ Operating parameters— formalizes how the committee functions

Roles and Responsibilities



Co-Chairs (Labor & Management)

- ▶ Lead and facilitate meetings
- ▶ Set dates, notify members, finalize agenda jointly
- ▶ Both must agree on decisions — this is a joint committee

Committee Secretary

- ▶ Records accurate minutes at every meeting
- ▶ Distributes minutes and agenda to all members
- ▶ Tracks all recommendations and action items

Committee Members

- ▶ Attend all meetings and complete assignments
- ▶ Raise safety concerns from their work areas
- ▶ Participate in on-site inspections

Managing Agenda Items



Standing Items (Every Meeting)

- ▶ Incident data review
- ▶ Action item status updates
- ▶ WPV statistics and near-miss review
- ▶ Training status and gaps
- ▶ Ensure consistency and track ongoing priorities



Moving Items (New Topics)

- ▶ New topics introduced at a specific meeting
- ▶ Allows flexibility to address emerging concerns
- ▶ Either co-chair may add; both must agree if added after 7-day exchange

Documentation

PESH Reporting & Recordkeeping Basics (NYS Public Sector)

- Employers must record work-related injuries and illnesses
- In NYS public sector, use **SH 900 Log** and related forms
 - Record incidents within 7 calendar days of learning about them
 - Report serious incidents to PESH:
 - Fatality → within 8 hours
 - Inpatient hospitalization, amputation, or loss of an eye → within 24 hours
- Records must be accurate, complete, and accessible
- Employees have the right to report incidents without retaliation
- Records must be maintained and available for review

- Reporting forms are typically found in your **employee portal (self-service)**
- Ask your **supervisor or management** if you need assistance locating or completing forms



Calling for Emergency Meetings



Examples — not limited to:

Safety Emergencies

- ▶ Serious incident, injury, or fatality
- ▶ Imminent danger or life-threatening hazard
- ▶ Hazardous exposure (known or unknown)
- ▶ Fire, evacuation, or major safety event

Security & Regulatory

- ▶ Workplace violence incident or credible threat
- ▶ Building safety issue (gas, air quality, structural)
- ▶ Regulatory inspection or citation (OSHA/PESH)



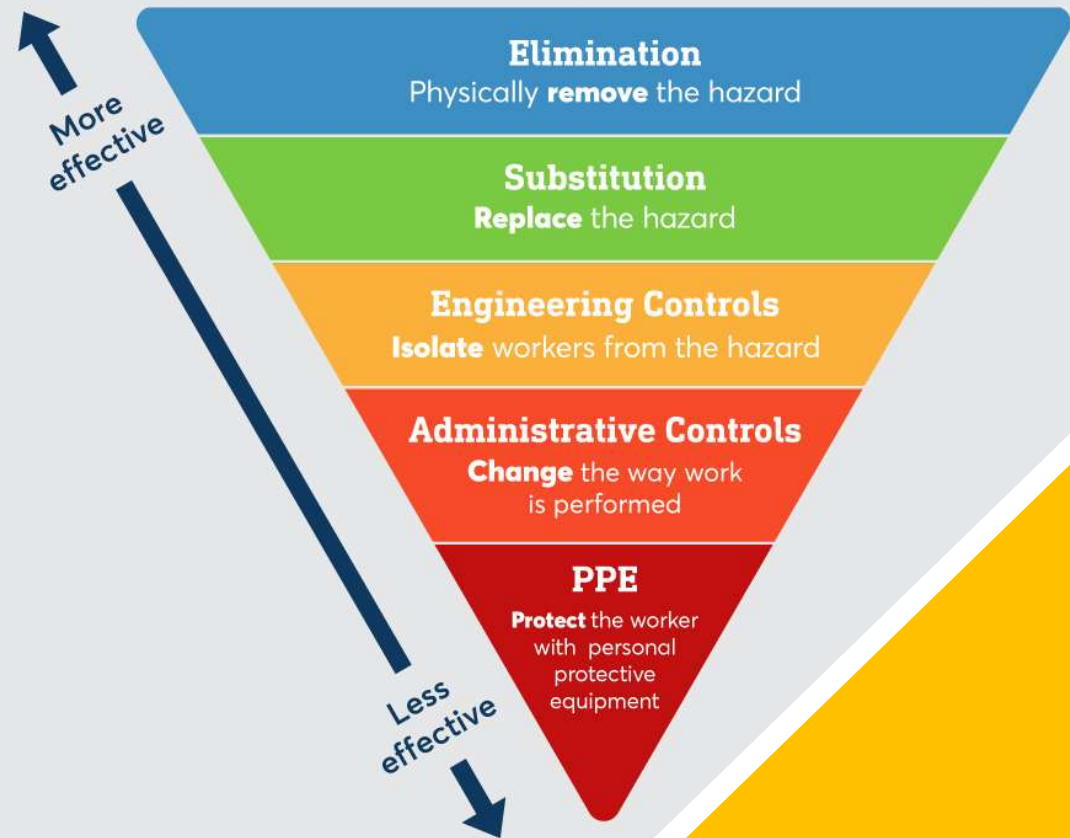
Pattern & Operational

- ▶ Significant operational change impacting safety
- ▶ Pattern of incidents or urgent member concerns
- ▶ Committee determines what qualifies — co-chairs coordinate



Controlling Hazards: From Identification to Action

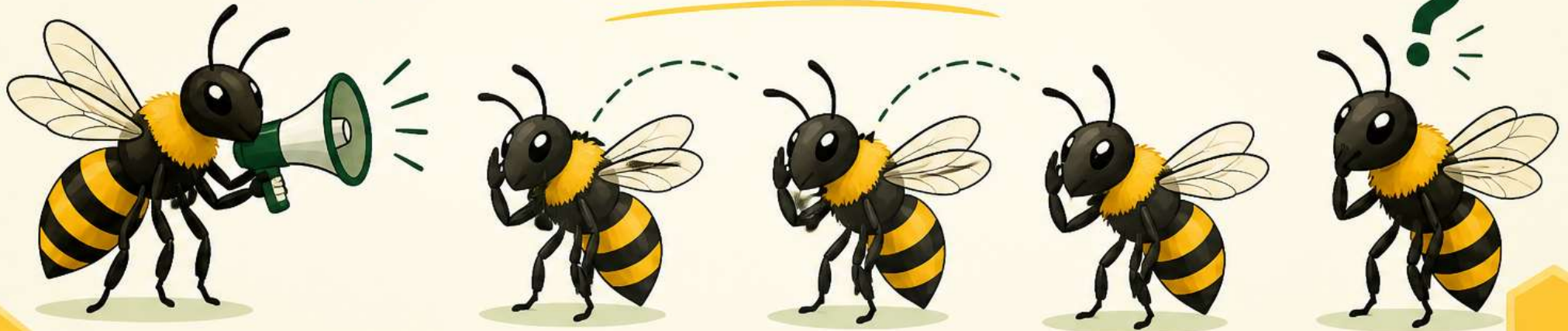
Hierarchy of Controls



ACTIVITY

The Game of Telephone

What is the Buzz?



Let's see how a message
changes along the way!

How Can We Prepare?

- Determine course of action by asking...
 - Can the issue be resolved locally?
 - Through the H&S committee?
 - Is a grievance appropriate?
 - Is using PESH appropriate?
- Gather all the facts
- Identify possible solutions
- Prepare a financial case for results:
 - Reduce # of injuries/illnesses
 - Reduce workers' compensation cases
 - Reduce lost time
 - Increase productivity



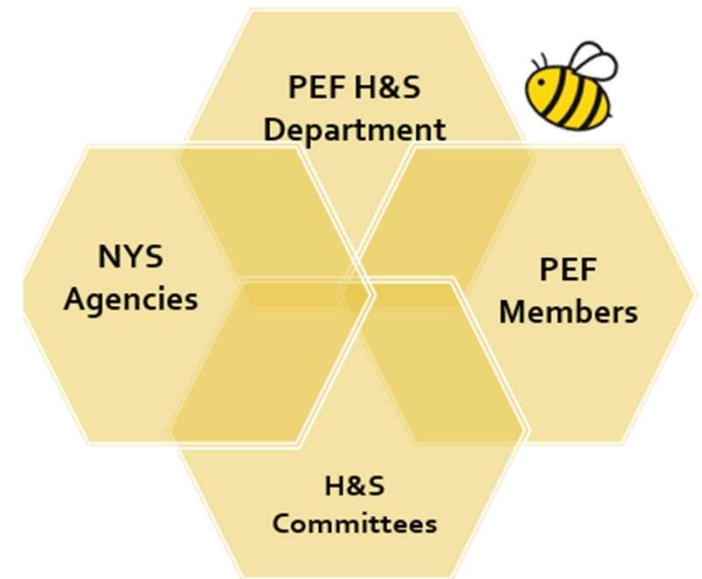
Resources & Tools YOU can use

- PEF/NYS Contract
- Article 18 SHIP Grants
- Fact Sheets
- PESH
- Allies/Coalitions/Resource Groups
- Local & Statewide Committees
- Health and Safety Department!



PEF Health and Safety Department

- Interacts with members, H&S Committees and NYS agencies on occupational safety and health issues.
 - Answers technical requests
 - Educates & trains on H&S issues
 - Advises on OSHA/PESH, Fire & Building Codes, local regulations, PEF/NYS Contract
 - Assists with worker's compensation: statutory, contractual & NYS Civil Service Law rights & benefits
 - Assist joint H&S committees



PEF Health & Safety



Health & Safety Dept. | email: healthandsafety@pef.org

Website: <https://www.pef.org/departments/health-safety/healthandsafety@pef.org>

H.Q. (800) 342-4306 ext. 254 | NYC: (212) 227-3132 ext. 771 | Syracuse: (315) 471-2311 ext. 741

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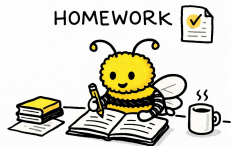


Key Takeaways

- Build your foundation
- Stay organized & consistent
- Work collaboratively - get and stay connected!!!
- Use your tools & resources
- Take action and follow through



Homework: Know Your Resources



WORKSHOP HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT Health & Safety Committees 101 Building the Foundation — Take It Back to Your Worksite!

Bee a Champion for Health & Safety at Your Worksite! Complete the tasks below within 30 days of your workshop. Return this form to your committee chair or H&S rep.

PARTICIPANT NAME _____	AGENCY / WORKSITE _____
PEF DIVISION / COUNCIL _____	DATE COMPLETED _____

1 Identify Available Resources at Your Worksite

- Locate your worksite's Health & Safety bulletin board or posting area
Note location: _____
- Find the posted SH900 log, emergency action plans, and required NYS notices
- Identify where SDS (Safety Data Sheets) are kept on-site
- Locate first aid kits, AED units, and emergency exits
- Note the PEF H&S contact: 800-342-4306 x254

4 Identify Key Agency Contacts

- Human Resources — Name & contact: _____
- Agency Safety Officer — Name & contact: _____
- Facilities / Building Manager — Name & contact: _____
- EEO / Labor Relations — Name & contact: _____
- Save all contacts in your phone/email for quick access

2 Review Your Division/Council By-Laws

- Obtain a current copy of your Division/Council by-laws
- Identify sections related to Health & Safety committee structure and responsibilities
- Note meeting frequency required and quorum rules
- Share findings with at least one coworker or steward

5 Locate Policies, Programs & Reporting Tools

- Find your agency's Injury & Illness Prevention Program (IIPP)
- Locate the workplace violence prevention policy
- Identify the accident/incident reporting form and process
Form name / location: _____
- Locate workers' comp and injury reporting resources at your agency
Where to find forms / who to contact: _____
- Access the PEF H&S webpage: HealthandSafety@pef.org

3 Connect with Local Leadership & Committee Members

- Introduce yourself to your Division/Council President or designee
- Identify current H&S committee members and their roles
Names / contacts: _____
- Attend or schedule your first H&S committee meeting
Meeting date: _____
- Exchange contact info with at least two committee members

NOTES / ACTION ITEMS

Return completed form to your H&S Rep / Committee Chair by: _____