Safety Organization

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Contents

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The effective production executive knows the value of organization. He realizes fully that no objective can be attained, whether it be for production, inspection, training, seling, or accident prevention without organization, and that an objective of accident prevention or elimination does not come about unless all levels of the organization are "turned in" toward that objecitive.

Objective organization goes beyond merely the drawing of lines. It attempts to create, first, the lines of authority, and second, the means that will bring about the objective to be attained. With these principles in mind, we can well appreciate that a reduction in accidents cannot be attained without organization, and that organization itself is without effect unless it has the complete support and interest of "top management."

More and more far-sighted executives are becoming convinced that they must maintain organized effort for the prevention of accidents. They increasingly realize that accident prevention is also a good, sound business policy.

A few musts should be considered before we discuss specific plans for safety organization:

AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY FOR ORGANIZATION

POLICY MAKERS
Top management, giving leadership and executive drive.

EXECUTIVE
The execution of the policy in the establishment of the type of organization, executive meetings, etc. by superintendents and staff heads.

SUPERVISORY
Carrying out in practice-inspection training, education, mechanical safeguarding, etc. by foremen, supervisors, and other staff personnel.

EMPLOYEES
Those affected by policy, procedure and practice.

From the foregoing, it is evident that the major part of safety work and education must be done by the regular organization. We may (making allowances for variations in detail) classify safety organizations in three general types, namely:

A) Those in which the safety work is carried on wholly through the line organization.
B) Those in which the safety work is directed by a safety director reporting to a major executive.
C) Those in which safety work is carried on primarily by committees set up for the purpose.

1. Type A organization-line organization

Obviously, if no full-time safety personnel-safety technicians-are used, the production executives must become expert in their knowedge of the safety than would be the case if he had a highly competent safety technician on his staff. This fact has led some chief executives using this type of safety organization to employ a safety specialist.
Such a specialist functions as a technical assistant to the chief executive. Should he possess strong qualities of leadership, he may take over increasing responsivilities for the safety work and bring about a progressive change of the organization into the Type B form.

The strength of the Type A setup lies chiefly in the fact that it centers entire responsibility for all safety effort within each operation unit on the head of that unit. It is his duty to incorporate safety into each and every part of the day-by-day activities of his unit. Just as he plans and supervises the work of each of his men for adequate production and satisfactory quality, so he plans for and supervises safety. He must become the best-informed and

(1) Safety must have top management approval, sanction, and support.
(2) Responsibility for safety must rest with the supervisory personnel.
(3) Safety must be given equally important consideration with other factors for production.
(4) Provision must be made for prompt action in the elimination of mechanical and personal hazards.

A definite program should be developed to interest and educate all employees in safety

and to secure their active cooperation in the effiort to eliminate accidents. Such a program must be based on the full assumption of its responsibilities by the management. The program must supply leadership and executive drive. Safety must be included in all phases of planning, purchasing, supervision, and operation. Once these fundamentals are understood by management, and it fully assumes the responsibilities that are involved, the appropriate type of organization can be evolved. But it is well to remember that whatever form the organization takes, it will function effectively only if it is backed by executive interest and drive. Proof of this is furnished by the fact that each type of safety organization is to be found among firms that have attained and continue to maintain a standard of first-rate performance in elimination work injuries.

Whatever the size of the firm, the principles and the purpose are identical: "To create within everyone, at all levels of the organization, a safety mindedness."

This atmosphere of safety reaching and influencing the minds and actions of those within the organization might well be portrayed as follows:

most safety-minded person in his unit. The weakness of this type of organization is that supervisory personnel occupied with other production problems find it difficult to acquire the special knowledge needed to reach a high standard of safety performance. This means that too much of the knowledge of how to prevent accidents is gained from the accidents that occur. In other words, it is largely "after-thought" Prevention, and, therefore, progress is likely to be slow.

Although some large firms use the Type A setup, it is most commonly found among firms too small to justify the employment of a full-time safety engineer. If, in a small plant, the chief executive will really give, and continue to give, a proper share of his executive attention to safety, stedy improvement invariably results, leading ultimately to excellent performance.

2. Type B organization-safety director

The form of organization used by most large firms is of this type. Its effectiveness depends upon two things-the attitude of the top management, and, after that, the competency and ability of the safety director. Although keen interest in safety by top management is essential to first-rate safety performance in any case, a large share of responsibility for the safety work can be delegated to a strong and competent safety director.

A safety director's job is not easy. He should function both as the special assistant and adviser on safety to the major executive, and as the adviser and stimulator on safety for the whole organization. He cannot interfere with or usurp any of the functions of any member of the supervisory force, but he must work closely with all of them. Since no man can function properly under two bosses, the safety director cannot give orders except to personnel under him, yet he must often secure prompt correction of unsafe conditions or practices. His effectiveness, therefore, will be in direct proportion to:

(1) His ability to secure the confidence and respect of every foreman or other executive. ecutive.

(2) The amount of responsibility given him by his "boss."

The safety man must realize that his is a "service" job and that be must not encroach upon the various members of the supervisory force. His standing with the "boss" will be good if he gets the confidence of the supervisory personnel and if, in addition, he keeps his chief fully informed on the progress of the safety work. To be effective, the actual means of doing

this must suit the personal preferences of the chief. Reports should be brief, definite, and factual.

In brief summation, the safety director must first think of the help he can given each supervisor or other staff man. Second, he must try to determine the viewpoint of each so that his help will be well accepted. Third, be must be sure of his facts and careful in drawing conclusions. Fourth, he must keep the "boss" informed.

There has been much controversy over the position that the safety engineer should occupy in the organization. Probably the prevailing practice is to place him under the personnel director, who, in turn, reports to the chief operation executive, usually a vice-president or general manager. Each large plant of a corporation will also have a plant safety director or safety engineer whose position in the plant set-up will usually correspond to that of the safety director in the head office.

In many cases, the safety director reports directly to the chief operating executive, together with the personnel director and the executive director or the chief engineer.

A study of the organizational set-ups in companies that have achieved and continue to maintain extremely low injury rates does not indicate the essential superiority of any one of these or other organizational set-ups. Whatever the position the safety director occupies on the organization chart, it is vitally important that the channel between himself and the executive head be so open and direct that safety matters receive full and prompt consideration, with appropriate action. When this is not the situation, safety performance is, at best, less than of first rank.

The safety director is the center and source of safety imformation for the establishment. He should have the technical know-how that his professional stats implies, and he should keep himself fully-informed concerning the status of the safety performance of his company. This requires the compiling, analyzing, and keeping of the records necessary to this end. Of vital importance is the manner in which he presents this information to management so that it may take suitable action as needed, to supervisors to aid their understanding and efforts, and to the rank and file to promote their interest and participation in the safety program.

Finally, the safety director must be "in on" the affairs of management, at least insofar as they have to do with safety. Since safety must be an intimate part of all plant activity, this means that he should attend all staff meetings having to do with plant operations and should have a voice in all matters that may affect employee safety.

3. Type C organization-safety committees

Safety work governed by committees is usually found in establishments too small to justify a full-time safety director or where, by preference, the management wishes the work to be directed jointly by the members of his staff. It has the weakness of any setup governed by a committee instead of by an executive.

A committee is, at best, weak in execution. It has the advantage of bringing together the viewpoints of the group and its joint judgment is normally better than that of any individual in the group. But prompt, effective, and orderly execution depends upon the placing of authority and responsibility, including both the giving of the orders and the "follow-through" necessary to their proper execution. Therefore, the committee-type of organization functions best when the chief executive himself is chairman and makes use of the committee to:

(1) Strengthen his judgment.

(2) Keep chosen staff members fully in touch and informed.

(3) Promote the interest and cooperation of the committee members.

When made use of in this manner, the Type C organization merges into the Type A setup.

Failure to appreciate the limitations of the committee method is responsible for frequent examples of establishments having, on paper, excellent committee setups whose safety performance is disappointing. Too often the safety committee idea is borrowed from an establishment making successful use of it and is installed in a more or less perfunctory manner. The chief executive, insuch a case, presumably views the method as a means of shouldering off most of the responsibility, or agrees to the move upon the urging of an enthusiastic "safety salesman" (insurance of factory inspector, safety council member, or the like), who fails to make clear the fundamentals necessary to secure satisfactory results.

4. Safety committees in general

Although the advisable committee setup will depend chiefly on the size of the establishment, other factors have a bearing, such as the progress that has been made in safeguarding the plant when committee work is started, the size and relationship of the various departments or plant-units, the type of business (Manufacture, construction, transportation, public utilities, and the like). However, the following fundamentals at least should be met in forming the committee or committees decided upon:

(1) Each committee should be so made up as to have standing appropriate to its field of work. For instance, a main or governing committee should include such key executives as master mechanic and production manager. A workers' committee should be made up of members well-known to and having the respect of their fellow workmen. workmen.

(2) The committee membership should encompass the maximum in knowledge of the methods, practices, and conditions in the plant, under-taking, or group represented.

(3) The committee should be as small as is consistent with the above requirements. A committee of three functions more effectively that does one of five. The larger the committee, the more the debate and the less the action.

When a committee is formed, certain matters of policy and procedure should be definitely set forth in writing. Written instructions should comer at least:

(1) Scope of committee activity.

(2) Extent of committee authority.

(3) Procedure as to:

a. Time and place of meetings.

b. Frequency of meetings.

c. Order of business.

d. Records to be kept.

e. Attendance requirements.

A committee will take its work seriously in proportion to management's attitude toward it. A management that sets up a committee to accomplish a specific purpose, makes it clear that it wants results and gives effective executive supervision to its activities, will get satisfactory results. Effective committee conduct of safety work in the absence of executive leadership is possible only when committee members have unusual initiative and determination to advance to cause of safety. In such instances they often convert the nonsafety-minded management. Sometimes the "salesman" of safety, failing to arouse adequate management interest, can accomplish his purpose by getting a safety committee organized and aiding it to

plan a program that will interest the top management, at the same time that he gets the job started.

Although, as was pointed out, scope of activity, extent of authority and the procedure to be followed should be put in writing and records of activities kept, this should not be carried too far. Too little system leads to confusion, waste motion, duplication of effort, and indirection. Too much system yields "red tape" and the needless expenditure of valuable time and effort. In other words, as is true of any other committee activity, safety committee work requires planning and orderly procedure under executive leadership.

In summation it can be said that the major advantages of committees are:

(1) They bring together varying viewpoints and generally yield sounder decisions than does the individual viewpoint.

(2) They widen interest by giving active participation to a number or persons in conducting the work.

Major weaknesses of committees are:

(1) Group action requires deliberation and is, therefore, slow.

(2) The meetings necessarily consume much time of many persons.

Commonly used types of safety committees are:

(1) Main governing or executive committee.

(2) Workmen's committee.

(3) Technical committee.

(4) Special-purpose committee.

A large plant may make use of all these types of committees. A small plant may use only one. The point is that once a definite decision is made as to the scope of the work to be handled by committee action, the type of committee needed and the number of committees required are readily determined.

5. The main or governing committee

The chief function of the main or governing committee is to determine the policy and set the standard or plane at which the safety work is to be conducted. The chief operation head of the plant or undertaking in question should be chairman. This makes it possible for the chair to issue definite orders to the various members as committee decisions are reached, and thus avoids both the delay and the possibility of overruling involved where committee decisions must be reterred to a chief executive. It might appear that since the chief operating head can give orders at any time, the use of committees is of little value. If, however, he has an honest desire to strengthen his judgment from the opinions of the committee members and promote the interest of and full participation in the safety effort by every member of the committee, he will find the safety committee a very useful tool for the furtherance of safety.

Matters for determination by the main committee normally include:

(1) Planning for the control of physical hazards concerning:

a. Purchase of safe and properply guarded equipment, tools, supplies, etc.

b. Relationships between various departments.

c. Standards to be followed in guarding machinery, the design of equipment layout of process, etc.

(2) Planning and arranging for the promotion of:

a. Safe operating practices and procedures.
b. Adequate inspection.

(3) Planning and supervising programs of:
a. Arousing and maintaining worker interest in safety.
b. Safety training.

(4) Disciplinary procedures.
(5) Decision as to the disposal of specific problems.
(6) Investigation of accidents.
(7) Passing on specific recommendations.
(8) Study of accidents and accident records.

It should be noted here that, ordinarily, the full committee will participate in the decision on policies and plans, but that action decided upon will be assigned to individuals or small sub-committees. Often such sub-committee consist of a member of the main committee as chairman with the other members not drawn from the main committee. This allows the use of technicians or other personnel as may be justified for specific purposes.

The workmen's committee. This type of committee, whichis composed entirely of workmen or of workmen under the chairmanship of a foreman, can have great value, particularly in:

(1) Bringing into the safety program the viewpoint and practical knowledge of workmen.
(2) Stimulating worker interest in safety.
(3) Investigating accidents.

Fundamental to the effective functioning of a workmen's safety committee is the sincere desire of the management to enlist the help of the workers and obtain their faithful adherence to a course that will promote mutual confidence and respect. Workmen's committees should not be set up unless at least the following essencials have been provided for:

(1) The work and place of the committee in the scheme of things is accepted as important.
(2) All recommendations and suggestions made by the committee receive prompt consideration. If accepted, the action called for should be prompt.
If rejected or modified by the chief executive or a higher committee, the reason for such rejection or modification should be clearly explained.
(3) If a foreman or other supervisor is chairman, he should function as the chairman of a committee of equals, never as the "boss."

Firms using workmen's safety committess usually report their chief value to be that of promoting worker safety-mindedness. Until at least the more evident physical hazards are safeguarded, it is of little use to attempt to get worker cooperation to prevent accidents. Every workman knows that safeguards cost money, and efforts to get him to improve his work practices before obviously justified expenditures are make for safeguards will be taken as evidence of management's desire for safety "if it doesn't cost anything." This means that workmen's committees should not be started until at least a reasonably good standard has been reached in the safeguarding of physical hazards.

Technical committees. As the name implies, technical committees are useful on specific problems or activities for which specialized knowledge is needed, as, for example, engineering revision, guard design, and special process problems. Some firms maintain standing technical committees under the chairmanship of the chief engineer, the safety engineer (if there is one), master mechanic, chief chemist, or other technician.

Special-purpose committees. Special committees may be set up for specific jobs, and these are normally dismissed when their purpose is accompushed. Such jobs or purposes include

contests, safety celebrations or sward occasions, check-up accident investigations, rehabilitation or relief problems, special investigation of specific problems of worker behavior, off-the-job safety, and so on.

In some cases, particularly in small plants. It may be advisable to have a single committee including both supervisors and workmen. Such as committee to be effective must be conducted as a committee of equals. The workmen members of the committee may, in fact, be the most important part of it because, in many situations, their influence in promoting the safety-mindedness of their fellow workers may be greater than that of the supervisors.

6. Justification for full-time safety personnel

There have been many attempts to devise a standard formula to determine how large an establishment must be to justify the employment of a full-time safety engineer, director, or supervisor, and at what added increment of size he should be given a full-time assistant or assistants. Elaborate charts have been drawn to indicate the number of engineers, inspectors, offfice personnel, and first-aid attendants justified for various sizes of plants, usually in steps of 1000 employees. Actually, practice varies widely. Size in terms of number of employee is not a satisfactory basis of determination because the range of variation in degree of hazard and complexity of the safety problems and activities is very great between the various branches of industry. High-hazard work such as a heavy construction job, a magnesium foundry, or a logging operation employing 200 men might gain more from the full-time services of a safety engineer than would a low-hazard type of manufacture such as tobacco or hoisery employing ten times as many persons.

Probably the best approach is that of cost as against the savings in direct and indirect costs possible, plus the probable intangible benefits such as better employee morale and the improvements in work methods that the services of a competent safety engineer can bring. The cost will, of course, be the engineer's salary, whatever insurance, pension, or other benefits the company provides for its staff personnel. Such costs can be estimated reliably in advance.

The savings practicably obtainable must be taken largely on faith. However, if the injury rate is not good, if the chief operation executive really wants to bring it down and is willing to give it a reasonable share of his executive attention, he will be reasonably safe in estimating at least a 25% cut in injury frequency rate during the first year's operation of a well planned, viorously prosecuted safety program, with somewhat smaller annual gains thereafter until top rate performance is achieved. If this estimate of possible savings is applied to an estimate of accident costs made along the lines discussed in the chapter on that subject, the decision as to whether or not to employ a full-time safety engineer will be made easier. If the decision is a close one, the intangible benefits certain to accure if the selection is a wise one should make the venture a profitable one.

In large establishments, the size of the safety staff will be largely dependent upon company policy. When maximum emphasis is placed on the inclusion of safety as an intimate component of operation, safety activities are a line and staff function and are carried on as a part of their day-by-day duties. Safety engineers, in such cases, are what the term implies; engineers who have specialized in the engineering phase of safety and who function as members of the engineering staff. Other companies go to the opposite extreme and have all safety activities that can be set up as such-inspection, accident investigation, job safety analysis, the development of safety rules, the scheduling and handling of safety meetings, safety education and training-handled by the safety department.

7. Safety representatives

Many managements have found it very helpful to assign specific safety responsibilities other than those connected with their own daily work to selected individual workmen, thus, in effect, making them a part of the formal safety organization. The kinds of activities thus assigned vary widely but may include: cautioning fellow employees seen committing unsafe acts or violation a safety rule, aiding the forman to develop safe work methods; keeping watch for and reporting hazards; with the approval of this foreman aiding in developing safety interest and safe behavior among others in his crew or department; upon assignment by his foreman investigating minor accidents; in general acting as a safety assisant to his foreman. Attempts have been made to have these men report concerning their safety duties to the safety engineer, but this rarely works well because it divides responsibility. The foreman is the key to the safety performance of his crew just as he is to its work performance. Anything that lessens his responsibilities for the functioning of those under his charge is not good.

8. Union participation

Whether or not management should invite or even willingly permit the union (if the plant is organized, or partly so) to participate in the safety program through representatives of its own choosing has long been subject to controversy, frequently very heated. However, a substantial number of such joint labor management safety programs have been set up. Although an adequate and entirely objective appraisal of their value would be very difficult, available reasonably reliable analysis appears to justify the following essentials for their maximum functioning:

(1) Both the management and the union leadership must be sincere in their desire to cooperate in the cause of safety.

(2) The scope of the agreement and the activities carried on under it must be limited to safety. No extraneous issues can be allowed to enter either by subterfuge or otherwise.

(3) The employer must accept and fully discharge his responsibility to make and keep his plant, equipment, and processes as safe as is practicably possible. He must furnish the safety leadership.

(4) The union must select its safety representatives solely from the standpoint of their effective functioning in such a joint program. They should:
   a. Be entirely devorced from controversial union activities such as bargaining, grievarces, and the like. Safety is not a proper subject for bargaining, nor does it thrive in an atmosphere of controversy.
   b. Be cooperative-minded, sincerely interested in the cause. Their judgement and knowledge of work methods should be good.
   c. Have at least sufficient knowledge of safety methods and technique to enable them to function effectively with the management safety representatives.

(5) The union must recognize management's right to leadership in the joint safety program. Management has to spend the money, and the final decision as to how to spend it and how much is to be spent must be a management decision. However, any management that really accepts and wishes to meet its responsibility "to provide safe plant equipment and processes" will not quibble over any reasonable expenditures that can be shown to be advisable for safety's sake.

Joint labor management safety programs that meet all of the abovve seenstials are getting

excellent results in terms of injury reduction. Perhaps an even larger dividend is the effect they have in improving mutual understanding and cooperation between the management and the union.

Some unions have attempted to force management to accept joint programs. No worse mistake could be made. Cooperation in any activity such as safety that requires the whole-hearted participation of everyone concerned can never be brought about by force. Therefore, unless (in any specific case) the union leadership can convince the management that the union can make a worthwhile contribution to safety through being included in a joint program, it had better concentrate on developing the safety competence and "knowhow" of at least selected individuals in such as way as ultimately to be able to prove its case.

Some managements consider safety wholly a management prerogative and refuse to "let labor in on any part of it. "Presumably, this attitude is at times, prompted by fear that the union might attempt to "take safety over." Any attempt by the union to dominate the safety program would doom the whole program to failure, and constructive union leadership realizes this. On the other hand, it should be obvious that if the strength of the union and the loyalty its membership has for it can be drawn effectively into the fight against accidents, much is to be gained thereby. This has been proved through experience. Union participation in the safety prgram (on the proper basis) greatly improves member interest, and participation in safety activities improves the observance of safe practices and helps to bring out the firing line "job know-how" of those who actually do the work.

Progress to date appears to justify the prediction that union participation in safety will grow and that organized labor will make an increasingly valuable contribution to the cause of safety, particularly in small establishments. If unions will, as a general practice, develop technically competent safety personnel among their membership, they should be effective in carrying the "know-how and practice" of safety to all small business whose employees are union members.

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