



# A BRIEF LOOK AT HOW OUR SAFETY COMMITTEE WORKS

to be read together  
with the RSC Handbook for  
Safety Committees



## Introduction

**When our Safety Committee was originally formed,** members of the Committee received training from the Accord/RSC about safety hazards in the RMG industry, as well as training to make sure our Committee could be an effective tool for safety in our factory.

The Handbook for Safety Committees compiles key information that was provided in the training sessions and useful resources for Safety Committees, including checklists and safety guides. The Handbook has been developed by the Accord and will be used by the RSC to solidify the Committees' knowledge of workplace safety and to support them in their role to address and monitor safety in their factories.

This booklet is a very brief summary of the **Handbook for Safety Committees**.

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RMG Sustainability Council (RSC) is an organisation established in May 2020, governed by representatives of global brands, global and national trade unions, and the Bangladesh garment manufacturers associations. The RSC continues the inspections, remediation, and workplace programmes work and operations established by the Accord on Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh. The RSC inspects factories, monitors remediation and provides health and safety training to workers and Safety Committees at factories producing for RSC participating brands. The RSC also operates a Safety and Health Complaints Mechanism available to workers in the covered factories.



## WHAT YOU WILL LEARN FROM THIS BOOKLET:

- how our Safety Committee works
- what our Safety Committee does to ensure our factory is a safe and healthy workplace

If you have recently joined the Safety Committee, make sure that in addition to this booklet, you also read the Handbook, where you can find a detailed description of safety and health hazards, inspection checklists, a Corrective Action Plan sample, and a Fire Safety Guide.

**Copies of the Handbook  
are available in our factory.**

As a member of the Safety Committee, you have the right to access the Handbook and all other materials that help you to exercise your responsibilities relating to health and safety in our factory, including the safety booklets provided by the Accord/ RSC and factory policies addressing safety & health hazards.



## WHAT MAKES A GOOD SAFETY COMMITTEE MEMBER?

An effective Safety Committee is the best way to ensure safe and healthy workplaces. And good Committee members are what make a Committee effective.

### Both Worker & Management Representatives need:

- A willingness to learn more about workplace safety and health.
- An alertness in identifying safety and health problems and a commitment to finding solutions to those problems.
- A belief in constructive worker-management relationships.
- A willingness to participate fully in meetings and activities.
- An ability to listen carefully and consider different points of view.

## A Worker Representative needs:

- A sympathetic attitude to problems faced by workers.
- Enthusiasm to encourage workers to get involved in safety & health issues.
- A willingness to speak up for workers' concerns.
- An ability to work with management to find solutions to problems.
- The trust and confidence of fellow workers.



## A Management Representative Needs:

- The trust of other managers to implement needed safety & health policies.
- A willingness to listen to worker problems and work to find solutions to those problems.
- Trust in a joint labour-management approach to problem solving.
- A willingness to be an example to other managers in collaboration.
- Authority to implement safety & health policies.



## WHAT ARE THE KEY ELEMENTS OF A GOOD SAFETY PROGRAMME?

More information available in Chapter 1 of the Handbook

An effective workplace safety programme should include the following elements:

- **Management Commitment.** Management should support the Safety Committee and all efforts to keep our factory safe.
- **Employee Involvement.** Employees should help the Safety Committee by reporting safety and health hazard/problems and following safety rules.
- **Hazard identification and Control.** Safety and health hazards should be recognised and reduced.
- **Safety Training.** All employees and managers should receive regular workplace safety and health training.
- **Regular and continuous safety monitoring.** Workplace inspections and safety maintenance need to be done on a regular basis.

An effective Safety Committee is **active and visible** at the workplace.

Basic activities of the Committee include:

- Regular meetings
- Regular workplace inspections
- Resolving safety complaints from workers
- Identifying and reducing workplace hazards
- Training for workers and managers

## COMMON HAZARDS IN RMG FACTORIES

See Chapter 4 of the Handbook for details about these hazards

Below are listed some of the more common safety and health hazards found in RMG factories.

The Safety Committees job is to identify and reduce these hazards wherever they occur.



## Common Safety Hazards

**Electrical Hazards** are common and can come from many sources, including faulty wiring, overloaded electrical outlets, and unprotected live wires. The dangers include electrocution as well as fires.



**Fire Hazards** exist in every factory. Common sources of fire include hot processes like welding, any open flame process, cooking materials, smoking, faulty electrical equipment, and



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**Structural Hazards** include anything that weakens the structural integrity of a building. This can be cracks in walls, overloading on upper floors, stressed columns, foundation cracks, and more



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**Chemical and Dust Hazards** may come from chemicals used in the work process or from pesticides or cleaning products used in the workplace. Other sources may be building materials like asbestos, or fumes from welding.



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**Ergonomic Hazards** are hazards caused by the way a work station is set up, the overall environment of a work station and by how a worker needs to move to do her job.



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**Machine Hazards** exist whenever there are machines with moving parts. Hazards come from a lack of machine guards, or from drive belts and rotating pieces of the machine.



**Physical and Environmental Hazards** are hazards caused by the environment that workers work in. That environment may be too noisy, or too hot or cold, or too wet. Any of these conditions poses a hazard and can lead to injury.



**Biological Hazards** can exist even in Ready Made Garment Factories. Biological hazards may include insects and pests, contaminated water, viruses and diseases, bacteria and mold



**Safety Hazards** exist everywhere, and because of that these hazards can be easily overlooked. They include slippery or uneven floors, poorly-lit stairways, and blocked aisles or exits. These kinds of hazards are a major source of workplace accidents and injuries



## Common Health Hazards



**Sexual Harassment** Sexual Harassment is any unwanted sexual advances or requests for sexual favors. It may be verbal or physical. Sexual Harassment includes any unwanted touching or comments of a sexual nature.

- Examples of sexual harassment: unwanted touching, comments of a sexual nature or requests for sexual favors, unnecessary request to remove your scarf or other piece of clothing.



**Workplace Violence** is any violence or threat of violence in the workplace. It can be verbal as well as physical, and may occur inside or outside the factory.

- Workplace violence includes pushing, slapping, pulling of clothing, and fighting.



Any type of sexual harassment or workplace violence is illegal and should not be tolerated. Report such behaviour or incidents immediately to management.



**Excessive Work Hours and Forced Overtime**, overtime worked beyond the legal number of hours allowed, is dangerous to a worker's health, and can cause mental, physical, and social problems.

- Forced overtime and inadequate break time can create stress and fatigue, which increase the chance of workplace injury.



**Failure to Receive and Use Maternity Leave** & Maternity Pay is a health hazard to both the mother and the baby. Paid maternity leave allows mothers to recover and bond with their new babies.

- Using maternity leave results in healthier babies and mothers, as well as a decrease in infant mortality and post-natal depression.

## Reducing Workplace Hazards

### More information available in Chapter 4 of the Handbook

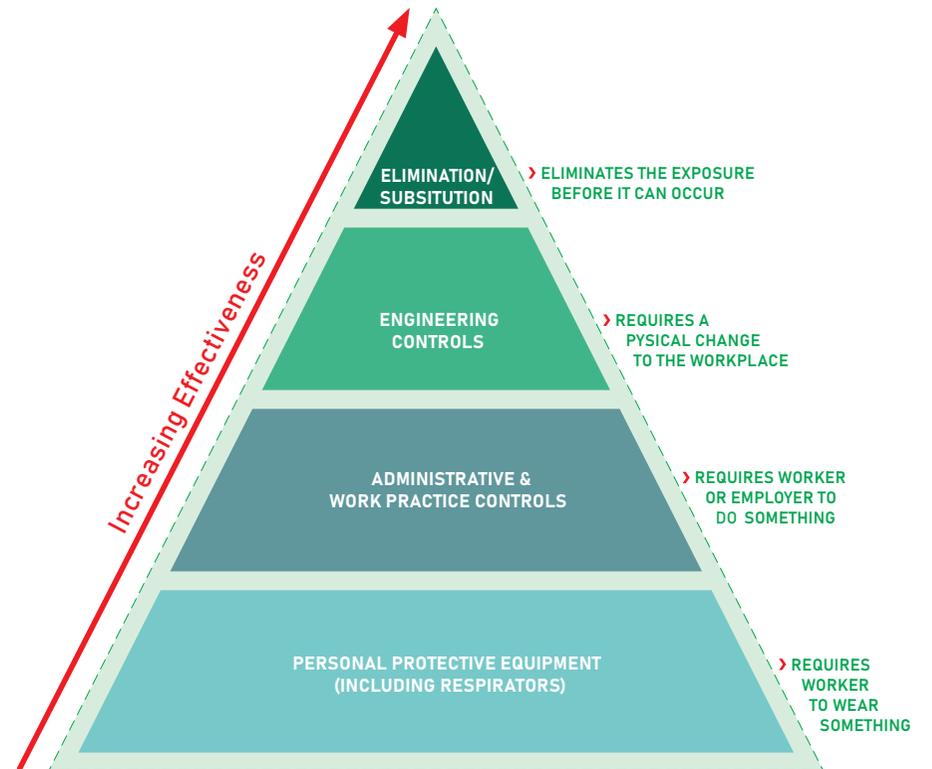
One important job of the Safety Committee is to find the **BEST** solution available to reduce workplace hazards.

In every factory, there are various ways to reduce and control hazards.

This Hazard Control Pyramid shows four different levels of hazard control.

The best method is at the top - eliminating the hazard - and the other methods are below.

The Safety Committee should work with management to implement the highest level of hazard control whenever possible.



Hazard Control Pyramid

## THE SAFETY COMMITTEE'S ROLE IN HAZARD PREVENTION

### More information available in Chapter 3 of the Handbook

The Safety Committee should establish a **Safety Complaint Process** that workers can use to let the Committee and management know about safety hazard/problems at work.

All employees should know how to raise a safety complaint, and should be able to raise complaints whenever they find safety problems.



## A SAMPLE SAFETY COMPLAINT PROCESS

**Step 1:** A Safety Committee member discusses the complaint with a supervisor or manager and the complaint is resolved and the safety hazard/problem fixed.

**Step 2:** If the supervisor or manager can't resolve the complaint, the Safety Committee Co-Chairs can jointly talk to a higher level of management to try and get the hazard/problem resolved.

**Step 3:** If that doesn't get the problem solved, the entire Safety Committee can meet to discuss the problem and make a recommendation to top management about how to resolve the problem.

**Most important:** when workers raise safety problems, they should feel confident that the Safety Committee and management will respond quickly to fix the problem and reduce the hazard.



Management and the Safety Committee should encourage workers to report unsafe working conditions and safety hazards, since many times workers will be the first to notice such hazards.

Workers should feel confident that they will not be punished or reprimanded when they raise safety or health issues with management.

## MONITORING SAFETY IN OUR FACTORY

● See Chapter 6 of the Handbook for important details about Safety Monitoring Systems

Maintaining a safe workplace is a continuing process. Problems may be fixed one day, but new safety problems will arise the next day.

To keep a factory safe, the Safety Committee should make sure there are Safety Monitoring Systems in place.



## WHAT ARE SAFETY MONITORING SYSTEMS?

They are a systematic approach to managing and monitoring safety that include all the organisational structures, accountability, policies and procedures needed to monitor safety in the factory.

The Safety Committee can determine how many different Monitoring Systems are needed in any factory, but every RMG factory should have systems to monitor at least the following areas of concern:

- Fire Safety
- Electrical Safety
- Emergency Evacuation
- Machine Safety
- Personal Protective Equipment
- Workplace Inspections

**Workplace Inspections** are a good example of a Safety Monitoring System at work.

Regularly conducted safety inspections can uncover unsafe conditions and hazards and are a good way to make the work of the Safety Committee visible to workers and managers.

📌 **Refer to Chapter 6 of the Handbook for more details about how to do effective workplace inspections**



## TIPS FOR CONDUCTING EFFECTIVE WORKPLACE INSPECTIONS

- Draw attention to the presence of any immediate danger. Other items can await the final report.
- Shutdown and lock out any hazardous items that cannot be brought to a safe operating standard until repaired.
- Do not operate equipment. Ask the operator for a demonstration. If the operator of any piece of equipment does not know what dangers maybe present, this is cause for concern.
- Never ignore any item because you do not have knowledge to make an accurate judgment of safety.

- Look up, down, around and inside.  
Be thorough.

- Do not spoil inspections with a  
once-over-lightly approach.



- Clearly describe each hazard and its location  
in your notes.

- Allow on-the-spot recording of all findings  
before they are forgotten.



- Ask questions, but do not unnecessarily disrupt work activities. This may interfere with efficient assessment of the job function and may create a potentially hazardous situation.

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- Consider the static (stop position) and dynamic (in motion) conditions of the item you are inspecting. If a machine is shut down, consider postponing inspections until it is functioning again.

- When looking at equipment, processes or the environment, **discuss as a group**: "Can any problem, hazard or accident come from this situation?"



## A FINAL WORD

A functioning and effective Safety Committee is a crucial element in keeping workplaces safe and healthy. Although the members of the Safety Committee will change over time, the basic job of the Safety Committee will remain the same.



## Keep these four basic tasks of the Safety Committee in mind:

- **Meet Regularly**
- **Get management support** for the resources needed by the Safety Committee, including the **time and space** to do the Safety Committee's work, **training** for members of the Committee, and **outside expertise** when needed.
- **Communicate** about the work of the Committee.
- **Fix safety problems** quickly and effectively.



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**DELIVERING WORLD-CLASS SUSTAINABLE  
WORKPLACE SAFETY PROGRAMMES**