



نظام الشارقة للسلامة والصحة المهنية
Occupational Safety & Health Sharjah

حكومة الشارقة
هيئة الوقاية والسلامة
Government of Sharjah
Prevention And Safety Authority



Guideline

Employee Consultation, Communication & Involvement

OSHJ-GL-23



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1 Introduction

Consultation, communication and involvement of employees are an effective tool in the management of Occupational Safety and Health system. Consultation, communication and involvement of employees regarding OSH can result in the following benefits, including but not limited to:

- Increased entity productivity;
- Improvements in productivity, efficiency and quality;
- Higher levels of employee motivation;
- Builds trust between the entity and employees;
- Test ideas and get feedback in a confidential environment;
- Improve employee performance, engagement and productivity;
- Improve employee wellbeing;
- Decisions made in a way that reduces the risk of disagreements at a later stage;
- Risks identified with employees can result in better decisions on OSH matters;
- A safer and healthy workplace.

2 Purpose and Scope

This Guideline document has been developed to provide information to entities to assist them in complying with the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health System in Sharjah.

To achieve compliance in the Emirate of Sharjah, all entities are required to demonstrate a standard of compliance which is equal to or higher than the minimum acceptable requirements outlined in this Guideline document.

3 Definitions and Abbreviations

Entities:	Government Entities: Government departments, authorities or establishments and the like in the Emirate. Private Entities: Establishments, companies, enterprises and economic activities operating in the Emirate in general.
Risk:	Is the combination of likelihood of the hazard causing the loss and the severity of that loss (consequences).
Risk Assessment:	The systematic identification of workplace hazards and evaluation of the risks associated. This process takes existing control measures into account and identifies and recommends further control measures where required.
Hazard:	Anything that has the potential to cause harm or loss (injury, disease, ill-health, property damage etc).
Hazard Identification:	Recognising that a hazard exists and including the hazard in the risk assessment process.



OSH:	Occupational Safety and Health.
Consultation:	A platform for employees to give their opinion and input into safety and health issues prior to decisions and actions being taken by the entity.
Communication:	A two-way process wherein the message in the form of ideas, thoughts, opinions is transmitted between two or more persons with the intent of creating a shared understanding.
Effective Communication:	Communication is effective when all parties (sender and receiver) in the communication, assign similar meanings to the message and listen carefully to what has been communicated.
Involvement:	Involving employees in decisions that affect their safety and health to promote a culture of consultation and collaboration to make better business decisions.

4 Responsibilities

4.1 Entity Responsibilities

- Provide a mechanism for employees to consult, communicate and be involved with the entity to develop, maintain and promote measures in the decision-making process on issues and concerns that affect employee's occupational safety and health;
- Provide resources to enable employees to consult, communicate and be involved in the decision-making process on issues and concerns that affect employee's occupational safety and health.

4.2 Employee Responsibilities

- Support the entity safety and health policies and procedures;
- Cooperate with the entity and support safety and health policies and procedures;
- Cooperate with the entity and receive safety information, instruction, supervision and training.

5 Guidelines

5.1 OSH Consultation

Consultation of employees refers to a two-way dialogue with employees and the entity on occupational safety and health issues affecting the workplace, it involves employees having a voice within the entity. Information flows downwards from the entity via management to employees, this information can be:

- Proactive – Informing employees about business performance, strategic issues and forthcoming changes;
- Reactive – Responding to questions from employees.

Information also flows upwards to enable safety and health issues from employees to be raised with management, including but not limited to:



- Ideas for innovation;
- Problems to be addressed;
- Other key safety and health issues.

5.1.1 How to Implement OSH Consultation

The entity should develop processes to ensure effective OSH consultation with employees. These processes should ensure the safety and health of employees and others affected by the work activities of the entity are delivered through joint dialogue and cooperation.

An entity can consult with employees in several ways, including but not limited to:

- Holding formal consultations or meetings;
- Having safety and health as a regular topic at departmental or management meetings;
- Sharing information on notice boards, intranet and through e-mail alerts.

One of the most efficient ways to make progress with the motivation and promotion of occupational safety and health is to involve the entity and employees in consultative arrangements. These arrangements can be informal for a smaller entity or formal for a larger entity who may require a structured approach, including:

- A larger entity - May form an active OSH Committee which takes into account the size and nature of the workplace activities and meets regularly;
- A smaller entity – May not wish to form an OSH Committee but can simply add occupational safety and health topics into meeting agendas and discuss during periodic business meetings.

If an entity decides to form an OSH Committee it should ensure employees from a cross-section of the workforce are represented, which should include management and employees from all levels. The committee should not consist of only management personnel.

The chairperson of the OSH committee should ensure that the committee functions effectively and that business is conducted in a structured orderly manner. The meetings should be recorded and can consist of the following OSH topics for discussion, including but not limited to;

- Any matter relating to safety, health or wellbeing to be escalated to the entity;
- Review of inspection and audit reports;
- Review of incident reports and findings;
- Reviewing OSH training requirements;
- Reviewing leading and lagging indicators to identify trends;
- Discuss solutions to OSH issues.

A record of the meeting should be produced, identifying the areas of discussion, the recommendations, who is responsible for implementing the recommendations and a timeframe for implementation.

The entity shall record and retain records of minutes of meetings.



5.2 OSH Communication

The entity should have processes in place to communicate OSH matters to employees and others affected by their work activities. Suitable methods for communication of OSH information should be made available to all employees, contractors, visitors, and others.

5.2.1 How Information can be shared

Occupational safety, health and wellbeing information can be shared in a variety of different ways. The information should be provided in a format and language that the target audience will understand, including but not limited to:

- On workplace notice boards;
- Posters displayed in the workplace;
- Toolbox talks;
- Safety signage;
- Safety meetings;
- OSH committee meetings;
- By email;
- OSH newsletters;
- Desktop banners;
- Screensavers;
- Internal and external OSH training.

The entity in consultation with employees, should decide what information is to be communicated, who shall receive it, how the information will be distributed and in what format, including but not limited to:

- Changes to the workplace, safe systems of work, plant or materials used;
- Hazard control measures;
- Incident reports and corrective measures;
- Updates to OSH legislation or associated requirements.

5.3 OSH Involvement

For any occupational safety and health programme to be successful, it requires the meaningful involvement of employees. Employees generally know what potential hazards are in their workplace. Successful entity engagement accesses and utilises this knowledge.

To have successful OSH involvement, employees should be encouraged to:

- Participate in OSH matters and feel comfortable providing input;
- Reporting safety and health concerns;
- Have access to information they need for effective involvement;



- Have opportunities to be involved in OSH design and implementation.

It is important to give employees the necessary time and resources to be involved, acknowledge and provide positive reinforcement to those who are involved and maintain an open door policy that invites employees to talk to managers about safety and health and make suggestions for improvement.

There are different areas where employees can be involved, including but not limited to:

- Selection of personal protective equipment;
- Development of safe systems of work;
- Safety inspections and walk arounds;
- Hazard identification and risk assessment processes;
- Selection of new equipment.

5.3.1 Employee Involvement in Risk Assessment

The entity should assess the OSH risks within the workplace that employees and others may be exposed to. When conducting risk assessments, employees should be consulted their involvement provides better insight into the various work processes and generally delivers better risk control measures.

Employees need to believe that the entity is committed to creating a safer and healthier workplace for them. Therefore, employee involvement in the risk assessment process should not be a one-time event, it should be a regular and ongoing initiative that develops and evolves over time.

Further information on risk assessment can be obtained in OSHJ-CoP-01: Risk Management and Control.

5.3.2 Employee Involvement in OSH Inspections

OSH inspections are part of monitoring OSH performance, and the entity should involve employees in the different OSH inspections. The number and frequency of inspections in the workplace should be agreed between employees and the entity and based on the work activities and the hazards present within the workplace.

5.3.3 Employee Involvement in Reporting OSH Concerns

The entity is required to have a mechanism in place for employees to raise or report any concerns that may lead to injuries or ill-health. The entity should encourage employees to report safety and health concerns, by encouraging reporting and promptly following up on all reports, the entity can take action before injury or ill-health occurs.

The entity should establish a process for employees to report injury, illness, near miss, hazards and other safety and health concerns and respond to reports promptly. Employees should be actively involved in reporting OSH concerns to the entity, including but not limited to:

- Report back to employees about action taken in response to their reported concerns and suggestions;
- Involve employees in finding solutions to reported concerns and suggestions.



6 Training

The entity should ensure that employees receive training in languages and in a format that employees understand. The information, instruction and training for the employees should consider the following, including but not limited to:

- Arrangements for the consultation process;
- Arrangements for OSH communication;
- How to communicate OSH concerns;
- The procedures in place to involve employees.

The entity must record and maintain accurate training records of OSH training for employees.

Further information on training can be found in OSHJ-GL-26: Training and Competence.

7 References

OSHJ-CoP-01: Risk Management and Control

OSHJ-GL-26: Training and Competence



8 Document Amendment Record

TITLE	Employee Consultation, Communication & Involvement		
DOCUMENT AMENDMENT RECORD			
Version	Revision Date	Amendment Details	Pages Affected
1	15 SEP 2021	New Document	N/A