Managing a Safety Committee — study guide

A safety committee gives the crew a formal voice on safety and turns findings into action. This guide covers when it meets, its roles and its functions.[1][2]

When it meets

Aside from the committee's regular safety meetings, a meeting should also be held before a hazardous situation, when at least two members request a meeting to resolve an issue, and after a serious incident. If there is an urgent need for an informal safety meeting at short notice, the appropriate tool is a **toolbox talk**.

Status and roles

The safety committee is an essential part of the ship's Safety Management System (SMS). Its key roles include the **Chief Engineer**, the **Chairperson** and the **Safety Officer**.

Functions

The functions of the safety committee are to inspect the ship to verify that onboard safety procedures are fulfilled; to pass findings on to the crew, managers and the shipowner; and to participate in planning, managing and coordinating the work required for safe and healthy working conditions on board.

Key facts to remember

- Extra meetings: before a hazardous situation, on request by at least two members, after a serious incident.
- Urgent short-notice informal meeting = toolbox talk.
- The committee is an essential part of the SMS.
- Key roles: Chief Engineer, Chairperson, Safety Officer.
- Functions: inspect the ship, report findings to crew/managers/shipowner, plan and coordinate safe working conditions.

Sources

1. ISM Code (SOLAS Chapter IX) — shipboard safety management and safety committee arrangements.
2. Maritime Labour Convention, 2006 (as amended) — ship's safety committee (Regulation 4.3 and related provisions).

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