Risk Management Committees

How is a Risk Management Committee Different than a Safety Committee?

A risk management committee is similar to a safety committee, but there are some distinctions. Identifying the group as a risk management committee can allow it to focus not solely on safety-related issues, but rather to take a broader approach. The complete menu may include diverse areas such as foreign study, special events, labs, art studios, athletics and recreation, substance abuse prevention, and disaster planning.

Does Your Campus Need a Risk Assessment Committee?

- What is the board of trustees' involvement, if any, in risk management/safety?
- How do the individual campus departments currently identify risks? Is the process similar among campus departments? Can departments learn from each other?
- Do you document these risk identification activities? How? Where are the records kept?
- How do the individual campus departments currently manage risks (such as implement training programs, develop policies and procedures, or transfer the risk)? What guidance is given to departments to manage these risks? Can departments learn from each other?
- What is the current mechanism to warn campus colleagues/students of risks and share safety/risk management information?
- Do you currently coordinate faculty/staff safety training? If so, which department is responsible for sponsoring/providing such training?
- Do you currently coordinate nonacademic training/safety awareness for students? If so, which department is responsible for sponsoring/providing such training?
- Does the training in the previous two questions overlap? Would it be more efficient to coordinate all training efforts through one forum/committee?
- Who receives incident reports and investigates accidents/Incidents? If several different departments, would it be more efficient to centralize this function?
- Does anyone have experience working with a safety committee (on campus or in previous positions)?
- If a safety committee were formed, what should be the goals/objectives of the committee?
Who Should be on the Risk Management Committee

- Risk management
- Environmental health & safety
- Student services
- Human resources
- Public safety & campus security
- Food services
- Public affairs
- Computer science
- Chemistry, engineering, physics, theatre, fine arts, athletics, study abroad, or other programs with special risks

Committee Formation Steps

- Brainstorming
- Consensus-building
- Create a framework
- Get constituencies to invest in its success
- Experiment
- Evaluate and modify

Role of Administration

1. Provide sufficient resources
2. Establish the authority of the committee
3. Develop the mission and goals of the committee

Subcommittees and Task Forces

Depending on the size, structure, and needs of your institution, you may decide to create additional subcommittees or task forces to support the work of the campus-wide risk management committee. A standing subcommittee might address ongoing concerns within a program, department, or building. A special task force might work on a particular project, such as safety around a construction site, or analyze a newly identified hazard. The mission and duration of any subcommittees or task forces should be set in advance. Some overlap in membership with the campus-wide committee helps ensure that the groups work toward a common goal. Consider including students in the work of subcommittees or task forces to tap into their ideas and enhance student awareness of risk.
Role and Operations

Before setting out, consider the following issues:

- What level of authority will the committee have to implement new policies or procedures?
- What will be expected from the committee members?
- How many individuals should serve on the committee?
- How will members be selected?
- Will members have adequate time, support, and commitment to participate successfully?
- How often should the committee meet?
- How will the committee’s activities be publicized throughout campus?
- Does your state impose requirements regarding the organization and responsibility of a risk management committee?
- Will the committee ensure compliance with state and federal law, such as OSHA or EPA requirements?
- How will you evaluate the committee’s effectiveness?

Responsibilities

- Developing and reviewing safety and risk management policies and procedures
- Identifying potential risks and dangers
- Accident investigation
- Tracking of risks (examining claims data for trends)
- Risk management briefings to the greater institution, if necessary
- Communication of the risk management process to the greater institution

Mechanisms for Implementing Risk Management Practices

1. Keeping of minutes and records
2. Review of pending issues
3. Assignment of responsibilities

Inventory of Current Risk Management Practices

- Look at approaches departments currently use to identify and manage risks.
- Examine the types of guidance departments receive concerning risk management.
- Identify current mechanisms for sharing risk management information.
- How are faculty and staff trained?
- How are incidents and accidents investigated?
- How are accident and incident reports distributed and used?

Recordkeeping

- Take minutes
- Review pending matters
- Stick to facts, actions taken, and basic rationales
Sample Campus Risk Management and Safety Committees
Baylor University
http://www.baylor.edu/risk_management/index.php?id=35637

Cal State Fullerton

Dakota State University
http://www.departments.dsu.edu/HR/newsite/policies/044000.htm

Portland State University
www.safetycommittee.pdx.edu

Princeton University
http://web.princeton.edu/sites/ehs/about/esrm.htm

Seton Hall University
http://admin.shu.edu/complianceprogram/riskmgmt.html

St. Mary's University, Nova Scotia
www.stmarys.ca/administration/ohs

University of Bridgeport
http://www.bridgeport.edu/pages/4809.asp

University of Nebraska, Omaha
http://www.unomaha.edu/ehs/safety_committee.php

General Risk Management and Safety Resources
Risk Management Resources Center (RMRC)
www.riskcenter.org

Alliance for Nonprofit Management
www.allianceonline.org

National Safety Council (NSC)
www.nsc.org

Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
www.osha.gov

Risk and Insurance Management Society (RIMS)
www.rims.org

The Natural Hazard Center
www.colorado.edu/hazards

University Risk Management and Insurance Association (URMIA)
www.urmia.org