

Participate in California Standards Advisory Committees

STANDARD SETTING PROCESS.

Occupational safety and health standards or regulations may begin with a petition from labor or industry, may be initiated by the Division of Occupational Safety and Health [DOSH or Division or Cal/OSHA] or the Department of Public Health, or may start with a similar standard issued by Federal OSHA.

In California OSH standards are issued by the OSH Standards Board. Regulations related to the administration of the Cal/OSHA program are issued by the Department of Industrial Relations. Both require public hearings and responses to comments per the Labor Code as well as review by the Office of Administrative Law.

ROLE of ADVISORY COMMITTEE. An advisory committee may assist the DOSH Research and Standards Development Unit (health regulations) and the OSH Standards Board staff (safety regulations). Advisory committees are not required by law.

COMPOSITION. Advisory committees are made up of representatives from the labor and industry groups most likely to be affected by the standard (thus different people and organizations participate on different advisory committees). Independent health and safety experts are also included when possible. Individuals or organizations known to have an interest in a particular standard or who ask to be on the advisory committee are invited to be members. If possible, equal numbers of labor and industry representatives (or their respective experts) are invited, **but labor is usually outnumbered on these committees.**

PARTICIPATION by UNIONS and WORKER ORGANIZATIONS is critical.

Volunteer by sending your request to:

Research & Standards Development Unit
1515 Clay St #1901
Oakland, CA 94612

(and/or)

Occupational Safety & Health Standards Board
2520 Venture Oaks Way #350
Sacramento, CA 95833

OPEN to PUBLIC. Advisory committee meetings are open to the public. Any individual or organization may be placed on an advisory committee mailing list. Generally, even a person who is not an official member of the advisory committee may speak and make suggestions.

COMMITTEE PROCEDURES.

Generally, the advisory committee is presented with a draft of the proposed standard prepared by staff, but sometimes labor or industry prepares a discussion draft. It is not unusual for an advisory committee to meet several times over months or years to discuss a particular standard before it is finalized and presented to the Standards Board for the formal public hearing.

Advisory committees cannot veto a proposed standard, but suggestions are often incorporated, particularly industry suggestions, to gain consensus which makes it easier to secure approval from the OSH Standards Board. Consensus is not required, but during more conservative administrations, lack of consensus can significantly delay, or even halt, progress on a regulatory proposal.

Minutes are kept by staff. Research data and other information necessary for discussion is usually supplied by staff, but sometimes committee members are assigned tasks. For example, the committee that handles Permissible Exposure Limits (PELs) contained in Title 8 California Code of Regulations § 5155 has a Health Expert Advisory Committee (HEAC) and a Feasibility Advisory Committee (FAC) which relies on the volunteers who are committee members for scientific expertise. □

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