

# Making the JHSC Useful Again

How a regional employer used OHS Insider to turn its safety committee from a meeting obligation into a working prevention tool

## Case Story

**The JHSC should have been one of the organization's strongest tools for identifying risk early.**

At Northern Pines Retirement Living, the Joint Health and Safety Committee met every month.

The minutes were taken. The agenda was followed. Inspections were discussed. Recommendations were occasionally made. Everyone was polite.

But the safety director, Melissa, knew the committee wasn't working the way it should.

Northern Pines operated several long-term care and assisted living sites. The work was emotionally demanding and physically difficult. Staff dealt with resident handling, slips and falls, violence and aggression, cleaning chemicals, infection control concerns, fatigue and short staffing. The JHSC should have been one of the organization's strongest tools for identifying risk early.

Instead, it had become routine.

The same issues came up again and again. Wet floors near the laundry area. Staff rushing during transfers. Missing inspection follow-up. Confusion about violence reporting. Committee members weren't disengaged, but they didn't always know how to use their role effectively.

Some members were unsure what they were allowed to recommend. Others didn't understand the difference between a complaint, a hazard, a corrective action and a formal committee recommendation. A few worker members felt their concerns disappeared into the minutes without real follow-through.

Melissa didn't need to create a committee.

She needed to activate the one she already had.

OHS Insider became the tool that helped her do it.

### **Bringing structure to committee work**

Melissa started with a simple review of the JHSC's role, training, meeting practices and documentation.

Using OHS Insider guidance and checklists, she compared the committee's current process against the expectations for a functioning safety committee.

The review showed several practical gaps.

New members were not receiving consistent orientation. Inspection findings were discussed, but not always assigned for follow-up. Recommendations were sometimes written too vaguely to act on. Meeting minutes captured conversation, but not always decisions. Education leave and refresher needs were not being reviewed regularly.

None of these issues looked dramatic on their own.

Together, they weakened the committee.

Melissa used OHS Insider resources to rebuild the monthly meeting process. The agenda was revised to focus on hazards, inspections, incidents, recommendations, corrective action status and unresolved items. Committee members received a short orientation package explaining their role, the employer's duties and the purpose of recommendations. Inspection forms were updated so findings could be tracked to completion.

The tone of the meetings changed almost immediately.

The committee stopped spending most of its time talking about what had already happened. It started focusing on what needed to be fixed, who owned it and when it would be reviewed.

## Helping worker members be heard

One of the clearest changes came from a worker member named Jamal.

Jamal worked evenings and had raised the same concern several times about aggressive resident behaviour during understaffed periods. In earlier meetings, the discussion would usually end with a general note that staff should "use caution" and report incidents.

After the JHSC process was updated, Melissa asked the committee to treat the issue differently.

What was the hazard?

Where was it occurring?

What controls were currently in place?

Were workers reporting consistently?

Did staff need more instruction?

Was there a staffing, communication or environmental factor contributing to the risk?

Using that structure, the committee developed a clearer recommendation. It included review of incident trends, refresher instruction on violence reporting, communication between shifts and a follow-up review after 60 days.

For Jamal, the difference was noticeable. His concern was no longer just mentioned in the minutes. It became part of a tracked prevention process.

**That helped rebuild trust.**

## The key successes

Within six months, Northern Pines had a stronger, more consistent JHSC process across its sites.

Committee members received clearer role guidance. Meeting minutes became more useful. Recommendations were more specific. Corrective actions were tracked more consistently.

Inspection findings no longer disappeared between meetings. Worker concerns were handled with more structure and respect.

The company also improved its compliance posture. Melissa could show that the committee was not just meeting because the law required it. It was identifying hazards, making recommendations, following up and supporting prevention.

That mattered in a care environment where risks shift quickly and frontline workers often see problems before management does.

The JHSC became more than a compliance requirement.

It became a listening system.

## From meeting minutes to meaningful action

Northern Pines did not need a more complicated safety committee. It needed a more useful one.

OHS Insider gave Melissa the tools to clarify roles, strengthen documentation and help committee members participate more effectively. It helped translate legal expectations into practical meeting habits.

The result was a committee that felt less procedural and more connected to real work.

For Melissa, that was the value. OHS Insider didn't just help the organization avoid a compliance gap. It helped the organization hear its workers earlier, respond more consistently and document the steps taken to reduce risk.

The monthly meeting stayed on the calendar.

**But now it mattered.**



## Key Results

- Improved JHSC orientation and role clarity
- Created stronger meeting agendas, minutes and recommendation tracking
- Improved follow-up on workplace inspection findings
- Helped worker concerns move from discussion to corrective action
- Strengthened evidence that the JHSC was active, trained and effective

**A JHSC shouldn't be a paperwork exercise.**

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