WORKSHEET 1.7

Consultation and Participation: Removing the Obstacles

Subchapter 1.7 · case in the book: Cartagena

GUIDING QUESTION

Your safety committee meets on Wednesday at ten. How many of the people who do the most dangerous work in your building could attend it if they wanted to, and what happened to the last thing one of them said?

This worksheet turns the tools of the subchapter into a form you can fill in. The texts come from the book; the empty columns are for your own property. Adapt it before use: an unadapted checklist is exactly what the book warns against.

Practical application: what to do in your property

Step (from the book)	Done?	What we found / owner
Count who can attend. Take your roster and your meeting time and work out how many people are structurally excluded. It takes twenty minutes, requires no permission, and at Cartagena the answer was eighty-six out of a hundred and ninety.		
Move the consultation to where the work is instead of moving the workers to where the meeting is. Handovers, departmental briefings and the floor during service are mechanisms; a room at ten on a Wednesday is one mechanism that happens to suit managers.		
Build the answer column and make it the only record you defend. Every item raised, by whom, what was answered and when. Unanswered items are not a backlog, they are the obstacle the clause requires you to remove.		
Check who your representatives actually are. If they are supervisors, they may still be the right people, but the property has not yet reached the population the clause emphasises and should not tell itself otherwise.		
Put participation where the standard puts it. Before the next control measure is chosen (for a trolley, a staircase, a chemical, a route), the people who will use it take part in choosing it. That single change discharges more of this clause than any committee reform.		
Pay for the time and say so out loud. Funding it converts a favour into a mechanism, and it is the clearest signal available that the property means the thing it has written in its policy.		

These steps are the book's method, not requirements of ISO 45001. Evidence can take whatever form suits the property; a separate document is needed only where an applicable requirement, or the property's own system, makes it necessary.

Verification Pact: what is believed, tested against the standard

What the property took to be true	What actually holds	Our position
“We have a committee that meets monthly. That is our consultation.”	The clause requires processes for consultation and participation at all applicable levels and functions. It does not require a committee, and a committee that most of the workforce cannot attend is a mechanism that does not reach the levels the clause names.	
“Our worker representatives are two respected supervisors.”	The emphasis in both lists is on non-managerial workers. Representation by supervisors satisfies the form and misses the population the requirement is aimed at.	
“We consult on everything. Nothing is decided without asking.”	Consultation is seeking views before deciding; participation is involvement in deciding. Hazard identification, control measures, training needs and incident investigation are on the participation list, not the consultation list.	
“Items raised are minuted. The record shows we take them seriously.”	Failure to respond to worker inputs is named as an obstacle to participation. Minuting without answering is not a neutral act: it is the barrier, generated by the mechanism that exists to remove it.	
“The night shift can raise anything through their supervisor.”	Obstacles that cannot be removed must be minimised, which is a duty to redesign the mechanism. A single relayed channel through the person who writes the rota is the arrangement examined in 1.6.	
“Attending in your own time shows commitment.”	The organisation is required to provide the time necessary for consultation and participation, alongside mechanisms, training and resources.	

Common mistakes: a self-check

Mistake (from the book)	Present here?	Action / owner
Treating the committee as the requirement. The standard requires processes, not a room, and a monthly meeting is one mechanism that structurally excludes everyone who works at night.		
Confusing consultation with participation. Asking for views on a decision already taken is neither, and the participation list contains exactly the matters a hotel prefers to decide technically.		
Choosing supervisors as worker representatives. Comfortable for the room, and it misses the non-managerial population the clause emphasises twice.		
Minuting without answering. The failure to respond is named in the standard as an obstacle, which makes an unanswered minute an active defect rather than an administrative one.		
Holding consultation on the worker’s own time. The clause requires the organisation to provide the time, and an unpaid hour is the obstacle rather than a test of commitment.		
Reading participation as consensus. Somebody still decides and still owns the decision, and a hazard left open through three rounds of comment is not an inclusive process.		

Operative synthesis

- **Consultation is seeking views before deciding; participation is being involved in deciding.** The standard lists different matters under each, and the participation list contains what hospitality most prefers to decide technically: hazard identification, control measures, training needs and incident investigation. Both lists place the emphasis on non-managerial workers, which is the population a committee of supervisors meeting at ten on a Wednesday cannot reach.
- The clause then does something no other requirement in this standard does: it obliges the organisation to determine and remove the obstacles to participation, and to minimise those it cannot remove. The obstacles in a hotel are mostly made of time, and the remedy is to take the consultation to the work rather than the workers to the meeting. Failure to respond is itself named as an obstacle, which means the answer column is the only record worth keeping, and a year of unanswered minutes is not a backlog but the barrier, produced monthly by the mechanism built to remove it.
- **Seventeen things were said by the two people in the room who were meant to speak for the others.** Three of them were answered. Everybody else in the building was watching, and eighty-six of them could not have attended in any case.
- **The clause assumes that the people doing the work know where the harm is.** The next subchapter is about what the organisation is required to do with that knowledge, and about why the process that collects it has to be continuous rather than annual, in a building where the work changes shape every season.

Action plan for our property

Action	Owner	Due	How we will know it worked

Source: Francesco Dore, The Helm and the Lens, Volume 3a «The Helm», subchapter 1.7. Edizioni Effedore, 2026. Clause references are paraphrased; this sheet does not reproduce the text of ISO 45001. It is not legal advice: health and safety law is that of the place where the property operates.