



Joint Workplace Health and Safety Committee

Company Joint Workplace Health and Safety Committee Program



Joint Workplace Health and Safety Committee

Contents

Overview	1
Requirements.....	1
Health and Safety Representatives.....	1
Health and Safety Committee.....	1
Training Requirements.....	2
Duties and Roles	2
Duties of the Employer	2
Committee Role	2
Duties of Committee Members	3
Duties of Co-chairs.....	3
Purpose and Objectives of the Committee.....	3
Reporting Procedures	4
Meeting Guidelines.....	4
Meeting Minutes.....	4
Effective Committees.....	4
Resolving Issues	5
Work Site Inspections	5
Inspection Schedule	6
Investigations.....	6
The Committee's Role in Work Refusals.....	6
Meeting Agenda.....	8
Sample Meeting Minutes.....	9
Sample Action Plan and Follow up.....	10



Joint Workplace Health and Safety Committee

Overview

Work site health and safety committees and representatives bring supervisors and workers together to discuss and address health and safety related concerns in the workplace.

They allow workers to participate in occupational health and safety and support the three basic rights of workers:

- the right to know
- the right to participate
- the right to refuse dangerous work

Requirements

Employers must have a health and safety committee or representative for all work sites that are expected to last 90 days or more.

Health and Safety Representatives

Employers with 5 to 19 workers at a work site must have a health and safety (HS) representative regardless of project duration. The HS representative is chosen by the workers.

The employer or prime contractor should:

- meet regularly with their HS representative to discuss health and safety matters
- work with the HS representative to determine how often meetings should take place and what record is made of the meetings (there are no minimum requirements in the *OHS Act*)

Health and Safety Committee

Employers with 20 or more workers at a work site lasting more than 90 days must have a joint health and safety committee (HSC) for the site. Names and contact information for the members must be posted at every work site.

Who is Responsible for Establishing a committee?

The employer is responsible for establishing a committee.

- If a work site has multiple employers or self-employed people, the prime contractor is responsible for establishing an HSC.
- If there is no prime contractor, all employers and self-employed people must work together to establish a HSC for that work site.

Committee Components

The HSC must have at least **4 members**, with at least half representing the workers:

- worker representatives are selected by the workers for a term of not less than one year
- employer representatives are assigned by the employer

Each committee must have **2 co-chairpersons**:

- worker co-chair is chosen by worker members
- employer co-chair is chosen by employer members



Joint Workplace Health and Safety Committee

Meeting Requirements

HSC meetings must adhere to the requirements outlined in the *OHS Act* to be considered a valid meeting.

- HSC members must meet within 10 days after being established, and then once every quarter.
- Health and safety meetings and functions are to be carried out during normal work hours. Employers can't deduct wages for time spent in HSC meetings.
- Meeting minutes must be recorded and available for inspection by an HSC member or OHS officer.
- Meetings must meet quorum in order for the committee to make decisions.

Training Requirements

The employer or prime contractor must provide work site health and safety committee members and representatives with training about the duties and functions of their role.

Committee members and representatives shall be permitted to take the greater of 16 hours or the number of hours they would normally work during two shifts, to attend work site health and training programs, seminars or courses of instruction.

Duties and Roles

Within the health and safety committee the following duties, roles and responsibilities apply.

Duties of the Employer

Employers, contractors, and prime contractors have a duty to:

- Consult and cooperate with HSCs and HS representatives to develop policies, procedures and codes of practice for their work sites.
- Provide committees and representatives with reasonable opportunity to inform workers on OHS matters.
- Allow committee members and representatives to examine records, policies, procedures, codes of practice, reports or manufacturer specifications required under OHS legislation.
- Give information or documents addressed to the HSC or HS representative as soon as possible after it is received.
- Employer appoints Employer Representative
- Establish a committee meeting the requirements specified in the Alberta OHS Act. Part 3.

Establishing a committee does not reduce or change the employer's responsibilities.

In consultation with the HSC or HS representative, the employer must:

- Develop and implement the violence prevention plan and the harassment prevention plan.
- Review the violence and harassment prevention plans when an incident occurs, when the committee or representative recommends it, or every three years.

Committee Role

The committee's role is to discuss health and safety issues and make recommendations to the employer about ways to prevent incidents, injuries, and illness. The employer has the final authority and responsibility for health and safety at the work site. *Establishing a committee does not reduce or change the employer's responsibilities.*



Joint Workplace Health and Safety Committee

Duties of Committee Members

Committee members should work together to identify their specific duties. The duties will depend on the resources available, such as safety specialists on staff, or persons with incident investigation experience.

Duties of **all** committee members include:

- Attending meetings
- Promoting health and safety in their area of work
- Making recommendations to improve work site health and safety
- Helping to resolve HS concerns

Duties of Co-chairs

Co-chairpersons will have extra responsibilities. If an OHS officer conducting a work site inspection requests it, the co-chair representing workers, the co-chair's designate, or the HS representative will accompany the officer on the inspection.

Other duties may include:

- Scheduling meetings and notifying members
- Preparing the agenda
- Inviting specialists or resource people, as needed
- Chairing and leading the meetings
- Reviewing and signing the minutes
- Acting on behalf of the committee between meetings

Purpose and Objectives of the Committee

The legal duties of the committee are outlined in the OHS Act. The committee should identify the specific issue and the highest priorities for action at the work site. It should avoid having too many priorities at one time and spreading its energy in too many directions.

Here are some of the main duties:

- Assist the employer in the implementation of health and safety policy and programs.
- Help identify hazards, evaluate risks and recommend control measures.
- Respond to worker health and safety concerns and suggestions.
- Recommend effective action to prevent serious injuries and incidents.
- Promote cooperation between employer and workers on health and safety issues.
- Monitor work site health and safety and make recommendations for improvement.
- Maintain accurate records.
 - Incidents and injuries
 - Receipt of concerns and complaints
 - Actions taken to resolve concerns and complaints
 - Work refusals
 - Work site inspections
 - Recommendations made
 - Other matters relating to committee duties



Joint Workplace Health and Safety Committee

Reporting Procedures

The committee should report its recommendations in writing to the employer. The employer may designate a manager who has knowledge and authority to take action over health and safety matters.

In Alberta, the employer or prime contractor must either resolve the issue within 30 days or respond in writing within the 30-day timeframe and state how the concern will be addressed and when. The response must include a timetable, and if any interim control measures will be used. If they do not agree with the concern, they must give reasons why they disagree with the recommendations or state why they do not believe there is a concern.

Meeting Guidelines

Be sure to:

- Meet at a set frequency.
- Set a meeting time that is convenient for all committee members.
- Try to have full attendance at each meeting.
- Postpone meetings for emergency reasons only.
- Meet at a location that is free from interruptions.
- Run a well-organized meeting that stays on schedule.

Meeting Minutes

When drafting the minutes, ensure that you:

Record issues and recommendations.

Briefly highlight facts leading to recommendations and decisions.

Minutes of each meeting must be recorded, and an approved copy given to the employer within 7 days after the meeting. Copies must also be posted or provided electronically at the work site within 7 days after the meeting. Copies of the meeting minutes must be kept for 2 years and be available to a committee member or OHS officer when requested.

Post minutes to show that issues have been discussed and followed-up.

Effective Committees

One way to measure effectiveness is to find the answers to these questions:

- Do workers know who their representative is or who members of the committee are?
- Are the duties and authority known to the workers?
- Is the committee or representative seen by workers and the employer as being useful in providing leadership in safety?
- Are members seen as enforcers or advisors?
- Do workers make suggestions to the committee members or representative?
- How many recommendations have been implemented?



Joint Workplace Health and Safety Committee

Resolving Issues

Members will receive and resolve issues brought to their attention from co-workers and through inspections. To resolve the issues the members will reach an agreement through discussions. A vote and/or a show of hands will be discouraged to determine outcomes.

Steps to resolving issues

Step 1: Validate the Concern

Review the issue to be sure it is a health and safety matter.

Often, labour-management issues are brought to the committee. Labour-management issues should be the concern of human resources, the union, or other groups. Sometimes the issue may be both a health and safety **AND** labour-management issue.

The committee will focus on the health and safety issues only.

Step 2: Determine the Best Solution

Some concerns will be expressed as a need for an item, action, or policy. The committee should examine the entire issue and recommend a solution that resolves the safety concern (but it may not be the specific action requested by the worker).

Step 3: Make Specific Recommendations

Be sure to specify **who** will act and **when**.

If a recommendation is too general, it may be difficult to take action or know if appropriate action has been taken.

Step 4: Follow-up

Make sure that recommendations are implemented. If not, find out why not.

Work Site Inspections

Inspections are not only important, they are required under legislation. Committees assist to plan, conduct, report, and monitor inspections.

Inspections allow a committee to:

- Ask workers and supervisors about their concerns.
- Gain more knowledge about jobs and tasks.
- Identify existing and potential hazards.
- Determine the underlying causes of hazards.
- Recommend corrective actions

Hazards to Consider During Work Site Inspections

- **Safety** - inadequate machine guards, unsafe workplace conditions or practices
- **Biological** - bacteria, moulds
- **Chemical** - ineffective control measures, improper work procedures, unsafe storage or disposal, out-of-date safety data sheets (SDSs)
- **Ergonomic** - repetitive and forceful movements, awkward positions arising from improper work stations or methods
- **Physical** - noise, vibration, temperature extremes, radiation or pressure
- **Psychosocial** - stress and violence



Joint Workplace Health and Safety Committee

Inspection Schedule

Occupational health and safety legislation requires that inspections be conducted at least once each quarter, before committee meetings.

The committee may choose to increase the number and frequency of these inspections depending on:

- History of injuries and incidents
- Size of the work site
- Number of workers
- Types of equipment and processes
- Number of work shifts (especially if activities vary depending on the shift)
- Introduction of new processes or machinery

A Recommended Inspection Procedure

- From the entrance of the room/site: Get an overall impression - check for problem areas.
- Use checklist for guidance
- Clearly describe each hazard in your notes.
- Take pictures if possible
- Ask questions, but do not disrupt work activities.

Investigations

All incidents should be investigated. When possible members of the HSC will be involved in the incident investigations. All investigations will be reviewed by the committee during the Quarterly meeting. Recommendations from the committee to prevent reoccurrence will be provided to the management for consideration.

Studies have shown that for every serious incident, there are about 600 incidents with no visible injury or damages. Always take the opportunity to act and prevent serious incidents.

The Committee's Role in Work Refusals

A worker has the right to refuse to work if they believe their safety (or the safety of a co-worker) is in danger.

Steps involved in reporting and resolving a refusal to do dangerous work are outlined in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

The worker co-chair, the health and safety representative, or if neither one is available, then another worker selected by the refusing worker may be asked to accompany the employer and worker when an inspection is done.

The committee should also receive a copy of the report that is completed after the inspection about the refusal to work, the inspection and action taken, if any.

A worker may refuse to work or to do particular work at a work site if the worker believes on reasonable grounds that there is a dangerous condition at the work site or that the work constitutes a danger to the worker's health and safety. [OHS Act, Sec.31.(1)]

Helps to resolve the work refusal according to legislated requirements and established procedures at the work site.

Ensures that decisions are made jointly without coercion by labour and management.



Joint Workplace Health and Safety Committee

Steps for a Work Refusal

Work refusals could involve several different parties at the work site. Below is a brief summary of the steps that involve the committee or representative:

- If a worker believes that the assigned work is dangerous, the refusal and the reason for the refusal are promptly reported to the employer or supervisor.
- If the dangerous condition is not remedied immediately, the condition is inspected by the employer, the worker, and the committee worker co-chair.
- When the inspection is completed, the employer will prepare a written report of the refusal, the inspection, and action taken.
- A copy of the completed report is provided to the worker and the committee.



Joint Workplace Health and Safety Committee

Meeting Agenda

1. Attendance
2. Introduction to Visitors/Guests
3. Approval of previous minutes
4. Business Arising for the minutes/Progress on Outstanding Items
5. Incident/Injury Review
6. Inspection Report
7. Worker Concerns
8. Lagging Stats Review
9. New Business
10. Recommendation for Action
11. Setting of next meeting Date/Time
12. Adjournment



Joint Workplace Health and Safety Committee

Sample Meeting Minutes

Health & Safety Committee Meeting Minutes, 9 – 11 AM, April 19th, 2018

1. Present: Jared Smith, Sue Jones, Jean Murray, Jane Hills, Mary Right and Peter Hill. Absent: Joe Shin
2. Welcome to: Frank Evans(sub-contractor)
3. Minutes from the last meeting were approved without changes
4. Review of Action Items: All action items were completed as planned
5. Injury/Incident Review: An injury, which occurred on March 29th, 2018, was discussed: Individual slipped and fell in the warehouse. The incident was reviewed, and the incident investigation results were discussed. Recommendations for addressing the unsafe condition in the warehouse have already been implemented. The floors will be washed on a regular basis and inspected once per shift
6. Work Site Inspection Report: Inspection report from the past month was discussed. Follow up steps were recorded and tracked on the health and safety committee follow up log. Overall the area was in good shape.
7. Worker Concerns: A worker reported a smell, probably due to poor air circulation in the west end of the office complex. The health and safety committee has recommended air testing in that part of the building. Jared will be putting together a recommendation to the employer
8. Lagging Stats Review:
 - End of Q1 2018
 - Krawford – 0.0**
 - Sub-Contractors 0.0
 - Combined 2018 TRIF 0.0
 - Rolling TRIF 0.00 (12 months)
 - Trailing LTC 2.60 (12 months)
9. New Business The issue of ongoing WHMIS training for workers was discussed. Brochures from several outside companies that offer this type of training on the computer were reviewed. Mary will follow up with ABC Inc. to get more information on their training and will report back to the committee at the next meeting.
10. Recommendation for Action:
 - a. Air testing be conducted in that area to identify any potential causes of smell.
 - b. An outside firm be used to conduct the air monitoring.
 - c. The committee would appreciate a written reply to this recommendation and planned action.
11. Next Meeting: July 19th, 2018, 9-11am, Boardroom:
12. Meeting adjourned at 11am.

SIGNED: _____ / _____

WORKER CO-CHAIR

EMPLOYER CO-CHAIR



Joint Workplace Health and Safety Committee

Sample Action Plan and Follow up

Date	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion	Status
19-04-18	Air Quality testing to be requested/Completed	Management		Sent to management
19-04-18	WHMIS Training information to be gathered	Mary		To be presented at next meeting