

Health and Safety Committees

Background

Health and Safety is everyone's responsibility. This philosophy is known as the Internal Responsibility System (IRS). The IRS puts in place an employee-employer partnership in ensuring a safe and disease free workplace. A health and safety committee is a joint forum for management and employees working together to improve workplace health and safety. The committee must work as a team in an atmosphere of cooperation, effectively promoting and monitoring the Division's health and safety management system,

The committee or representative allows 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

If there is a conflict between the RDCRS Terms of Reference and provincial legislation, the more stringent requirements will apply.

For the remainder of this document committees will be referred to as the Health and Safety Committee (HSC) or Health and Safety (HS) representative.

Definitions

Co-chairperson - A committee chaired cooperatively by a member from the worker group and a member from management.

Worker Representative - A HSC member who represents workers that do not exercise managerial functions.

Workplace - is any place where a worker is or likely to be engaged in any work including vehicles, or mobile equipment used by a worker.

Employer Representative - a person designated by the employer as the employer representative (e.g., principals and non-school based department managers) who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker.

Management - a person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker.

Managerial Functions – A person is considered to exercise managerial functions when he or she supervises other workers, and when his or her recommendations to hire, terminate, promote, demote, increase wages, or discipline workers are usually accepted.

Roles and Responsibilities

1. The HSC and HSR are responsible to the Superintendent of Schools through the Secretary Treasurer and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Coordinator.
2. HSC co-chairs are responsible to convey health and safety matters related to their workplace to the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Coordinator.
3. Management is responsible for establishing a HSC or HS representative at their workplace.
4. Management has the final authority and responsibility for health and safety at the workplace.
5. Management must ensure that the HSC runs effectively and efficiently and that all safety issues are resolved each month.

Procedures

The Health and Safety Committee procedures will be implemented Division wide using the following requirements.

1. Committee Organization
 - 1.1. Each work site will establish and maintain a HSC or, at works sites with a small workforce, an HSR. A HSR has the same rights and responsibilities as the HSC.
 - 1.2. Site committees shall be known as the (School/Department) Health Safety Committee.
2. Health and Safety Committee Structure
 - 2.1. The HSC committee must consist of a minimum of 4 core members. At least half of them must represent the workers. The committee membership shall not be more than twelve. Management must ensure the committee's membership represents all Occupational Health and Safety concerns at their workplace.
 - 2.2. The committee must have two co-chairs, one representing the employer and one representing employees.
 - 2.3. The size and scope of the school or non-school based department should determine the number of employees involved in the committee.
 - 2.4. HSC core membership must consist of but is not limited to:
 - 2.4.1. One worker co-chair – selected by employees
 - 2.4.2. One employer co-chair - selected by management
 - 2.4.3. One employer representative – selected employees
 - 2.4.4. One worker representative – selected by employees

- 2.5. Names and contact information for the members must be posted at every workplace.
- 2.6. Criteria of Election
 - 2.6.1. HSC worker representatives will be selected by employees that do not exercise managerial functions.
 - 2.6.2. At least one worker representative must be from the ATA.
 - 2.6.3. Employer representative (s) will be selected by management.
 - 2.6.4. If the employees at a workplace do not select any representatives, the principal or department management will seek out and assign worker representatives.
3. Membership
 - 3.1. There are a number of responsibilities the HSC fulfills. The HSC distributes the health and safety responsibilities among the members and determines who on the committee will function as the Secretary, First Aid Rep, Emergency Preparedness Repr, Action Plan and Follow-up Rep, Education and Training Rep, Maintenance/Repair Rep, and WHMIS Rep. The HSC can also determine a specific representative to best serve the workplace.
 - 3.2. HSC members are encouraged to have alternates to assist in the facilitation of larger projects or attend a meeting should a core HSC member be absent.
 - 3.3. If a HSC worker representative or HS representative is not able to attend a scheduled meeting their alternate should attend. Alternate members are responsible for keeping informed of health and safety issues by reading the minutes.
 - 3.4. If a committee member misses more than 2 consecutive meetings without having an alternate attend, they shall be replaced on the committee.
 - 3.5. Employer co-chairs must ensure the committee's membership represents all Occupational Health and Safety concerns at their workplace.
 - 3.6. Where possible the HSC shall make every effort to ensure fair representation and participation at committee meetings to address safety concerns associated with the workplace. Any health and safety related matters specific to a work group or department are to be channeled through the respective representative.
4. Terms of Office
 - 4.1. Members of the HSC or HSR shall hold office for a term of not less than one year and be reviewed every two years.
 - 4.2. HS members may continue to hold office until their successors are elected or appointed. Members of the committee may be re-elected or re-appointed for further terms.

- 4.3. When necessary, a member of a HSC may be replaced at any time during the member's term of office by those persons for whom the member represents.
 - 4.4. Alternate members may be selected by the worker representatives and employer as they deem appropriate so that in the event that member is unable to attend or fulfill their functions, the alternate may assume the role.
5. Meetings
- 5.1. The committee must meet every other month starting in September. Meetings will be monitored by the Health and Safety Coordinator.
 - 5.2. Employer co-chairs will be notified through the Division online safety management system to schedule a meeting and report when it is complete.
 - 5.3. HSC co-chairs or HS representatives may call a special meeting to deal with matters of urgent concern.
 - 5.4. Meetings will be scheduled on or before the 15th of the month and will be chaired by the two co-chairs.
 - 5.5. The schedule for meetings shall be posted in the workplace. The agenda for the regular HSC meeting will be distributed 5 days before the meeting.
 - 5.6. All committee members are expected to attend all meetings. Roll call will be taken at each meeting and recorded on the minutes.
 - 5.7. If a representative is unable to attend their alternate may be sent in their place. In order for the committee to make a decision there must be a quorum.
 - 5.8. Quorum (minimum of four in attendance) is required for all monthly HS meetings. Any meeting where a quorum is not present is not a valid meeting of the committee.
6. Recording and Posting Safety Committee Information
- 6.1. The co-chair selected by employer members must ensure that the minutes of each meeting are recorded and that copies of the minutes are given to the employer representative for review and sign off.
 - 6.2. After the review of meeting minutes, workplace inspections, and HSC recommendations, management must take action to investigate and address issues noted on these documents as soon as reasonably practicable.
 - 6.3. Final copies of the minutes must be posted or provided electronically at the work site within 7 days after the meeting.
 - 6.4. Copies of meeting minutes, workplace inspections, and HSC recommendations must be retained for 3 years, and available to committee members, workers, or

OHS Officers when requested. Past copies of the minutes must be filed in the associated document binder.

- 6.5. Post safety information on a staffroom bulletin board that includes the following information:
 - 6.5.1. Minutes from the last 3 meetings, displaying that issues have been discussed and followed up.
 - 6.5.2. Names of first aid trained staff, location and certificate expiry
 - 6.5.3. Names and location of HSC member or HS representative.
 - 6.5.4. Any OHS orders issued to the workplace
7. Resolving Health and Safety Issues
 - 7.1. Most recommendations of the HSC are informal and can be dealt with through normal channels of communications and shall be made on the basis of consensus
 - 7.2. It is management's responsibility to implement controls as soon as possible after being advised by the HSC of the recommended corrective action
 - 7.3. If the HSC or site HS representative is unable to reach an agreement on workplace safety related issue or concern, it is recommended that the resources listed below be contacted in the following order:
 - 7.3.1. Principal or Department Manager
 - 7.3.2. Division Occupational Health and Safety Coordinator
 - 7.3.3. Executive Health and Safety Committee Member
 - 7.3.4. Senior Administration
 - 7.3.5. Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Contact Centre
8. Formal Written Recommendation
 - 8.1. Formal recommendations are those that are written by the HSC and directed toward management for a written response.
 - 8.2. The type of concerns included in a formal recommendation might include:
 - 8.2.1. The establishment of new processes or administrative procedure
 - 8.2.2. The allocation of significant funds significant health and safety concern that comes to the attention of the HSC
 - 8.2.3. Additional training and/or education of employees
 - 8.2.4. A repeat item on the agenda that has not yet been resolved
9. Workplace Inspections

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE NO. 113 Appendix A

- 9.1. A health and safety inspection of the entire workplace will be conducted and documented on or before the monthly meeting. The HSC or site HS Representative has the responsibility of ensuring that the inspection takes place
 - 9.2. The HSC may choose to increase the number and frequency of inspection depending on:
 - 9.2.1. History of injuries and incidents
 - 9.2.2. Size of the work site
 - 9.2.3. Numbers of workers
 - 9.2.4. Types of equipment and processes
 - 9.2.5. Introduction of new processes or machinery
 - 9.3. At a minimum one worker and one employer representative/manager will conduct the inspection.
 - 9.4. Copies of the inspection must be forwarded to the HSC co-chairs and management with the most current inspection posted on the site health and safety bulletin board.
 - 9.5. Periodically the Government of Alberta OHS Officer may conduct an inspection or safety audit of the work site. The HSC co-chairs should accompany the officer during the inspection.
 - 9.6. Contact the Division Health and Safety Coordinator, Lisa Vogt, as soon as an OHS Officer enters the premises.
10. Division OHS Coordinator
- 10.1. Division Occupational Health and Safety Department will:
 - 10.1.1. ensure HSC members receive appropriate training as required;
 - 10.1.2. support site HSC's and/or HS representative, and act as an advisory body to solve health and safety issues.
11. Co-chairs
- 11.1. Co-chairs must have leadership qualities, are solution focused, and have the confidence of the workplace administrators and staff.
 - 11.2. The co-chairs shall share the following responsibilities:
 - 11.2.1. Report committee membership to the Division OHS Coordinator
 - 11.2.2. Facilitating the meeting to keep on task
 - 11.2.3. Maintaining an unbiased viewpoint ensuring all committee members have the opportunity to contribute to discussions, decisions and recommendations.
 - 11.2.4. Encourage open dialogue and school/department driven decision-making
 - 11.2.5. Follow-up on management response to formal recommendations.
 - 11.2.6. Arranging and preparing meeting agendas
 - 11.2.7. Post signed copies of both the site inspection and meeting minutes.
 - 11.2.8. Scheduling meetings
 - 11.2.9. Reviewing previous minutes and material prior to the meetings.

- 11.2.10. Notifying members of meetings
- 11.2.11. Inviting resource people
- 11.2.12. Discussing a monthly topic at the meeting

12. Rights and Rate of Pay for Committee Members

- 12.1. HSC members are entitled to time off from work for:
 - 12.1.1. Meeting preparation
 - 12.1.2. Meeting attendance.
 - 12.1.3. The carrying out HSC duties and functions
 - 12.1.4. Annual paid educational leave totaling 16 hours, for the purpose of attending occupational health and safety training courses.
- 12.2. Members are expected to attend at least one education session of up to four hours on topics organized by the Division OHS Department.
- 12.3. Attendance at committee meetings or time required to perform the duties prescribed by the Act will be paid at the member's current rate of pay

13. Confidentiality

- 13.1. While conducting committee business, members may be privy to confidential and/or personal information. HSC members have a responsibility to keep such information confidential unless required to be disclosed by law.

14. Responsibility Summary

- 14.1. Employer Representatives will:
 - 14.1.1. Ensure that a HSC or HS representative is established, maintained and carries out the activities required by provincial legislation and this standard.
 - 14.1.2. Ensure that HSC members are provided with the necessary time to perform committee duties functions.
 - 14.1.3. Review and sign off minutes and workplace inspections.
 - 14.1.4. Review formal recommendations of the HSC and respond in writing twenty-one days.
 - 14.1.5. Communicate high impact items arising from HSC minutes, and inspections recommendations to the Health Safety Coordinator.
 - 14.1.6. Ensure action items are completed as reasonably as possible.
 - 14.1.7. Hold meetings.
 - 14.1.8. Ensure names and contact information of committee members and representatives are where they can be seen by all workers (e.g., staffroom safety bulletin board).

15. Committee and Representative Duties and Functions

- 15.1. The role of the committee and representative is to advise and assist, not assume managerial responsibilities for health and safety in the workplace. HSC members shall:

- 15.1.1. Act as an advisory body and recommend to management, practical ways to improve workplace health and safety.
- 15.1.2. Identify situations that may be unhealthy or unsafe for workers or other persons and advise on effective systems for responding to those situations i.e., address issues proactively vs reactively.
- 15.1.3. Consider and expeditiously deal with worker health and safety concerns, complaints and suggestions.
- 15.1.4. Develop and promote measures to protect workers and other persons at the workplace by identifying hazards, evaluating risks and recommending control measures.
- 15.1.5. Participate in the identification of workplace hazards and unsafe work practices through regular inspections, discussions with workers, review of information or procedures, equipment, or materials.
- 15.1.6. Participate in the implementation of health and safety recommendations and monitor their effectiveness.
- 15.1.7. Make recommendations on educational programs promoting the health and safety of workers and compliance with the OHS legislation and other applicable regulatory standards.
- 15.1.8. Participate in effective workplace safety inspections and investigations.
- 15.1.9. Assist in the investigation of any workplace incident that may result in medical attention or potential serious incident (i.e., near miss) and recommending corrective actions to prevent recurrence.
- 15.1.10. Help investigate worker reports of dangerous work and refusal to work.
- 15.1.11. Review inspection reports, injury summary reports and incident investigations to consider recommendations for further corrective actions.
- 15.1.12. Keep accurate records of all workplace health and safety matters including meeting minutes, correspondence, concerns and complaints, inspections, incidents, work refusals etc.
- 15.1.13. Develop and implement a workplace violence prevention and harassment plan in consultation with employer representatives.
- 15.1.14. Review the violence and harassment prevention plan when an incident occurs, when the committee recommends it, or every three years.
- 15.1.15. Assist with health and safety orientation for new employees
- 15.1.16. Hold regular meetings
- 15.1.17. Promote cooperation between management and workers on health and safety issues.
- 15.1.18. Act as a liaison between the site and the Division Health and Safety Department.
- 15.1.19. Monitor safety program compliance with the OHS legislation and applicable regulations.
- 15.1.20. Cooperate with anyone exercising a duty imposed under the OHS legislation.
- 15.1.21. Cooperate with anyone exercising a duty imposed under the OHS legislation.

Date Review: January 2023

Reference

Section 18, 20, 45 45.1, 60, 61, 113 School Act

Emergency Medical Act

Occupational Health and Safety Act

Alberta Provincial Fire Commissioner's Regulation

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act

Workers Compensation Act

Personal Information Protections Act