

Meeting Minutes

Ontario Fire Service Advisory Committee (Section 21 Committee)

Thursday, June 8, 2023 – 12:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Friday June 9, 2023 – 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

*Meeting held in-person at Centre for Health & Safety Innovation, 5110 Creekbank Road,
Mississauga*

Present:

Rob Grimwood	O AFC – Committee Co-Chair
Dan Worrall	OPFFA – Committee Co-Chair
Tim Sparks	OPFFA
John Plater	OPFFA
Adam Neal	OPFFA
Aaron Burridge	O AFC
Harry Baranik	O AFC
Jeff Kirk	O AFC
Mark Pankhurst	AMO
Doug Kellam	Volunteer Firefighter
Randy Narine	Volunteer firefighter
John Snider	Office of the Fire Marshal (observer)
Juanita Martin	MLITSD
Tanya Morose	PSHSA (Facilitator)
Kayla Thomson	PSHSA (Minutes)

Regrets:

Cathy Hoffman	AMO
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Guests:

Rebecca Mukuna	MLITSD (Policy Advisor)
Cristina St. Pierre	Provincial Hygienist
Dr. Nik Rajaram	Provincial Physician

Thursday, June 8, 2023 – 12:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Greetings – R. Grimwood

R. Grimwood greeted the committee and went over the agenda for the day.

Review of minutes from March 3, 2023 meeting - R. Grimwood and D. Worrall

New business

Juanita introduced guests Rebecca Mukuna and Cristina St. Pierre. The committee took part in a round table of introductions.

Policy update – MLITSD Policy Advisor, Rebecca Mukuna

Policy is now a standing agenda item for updates

Rebecca gave the committee an overview on what is happening policy wise within the ministry:

- [Bill 79, Working for Workers Act](#) – Introduced on March 20, 2023. The bill has passed the 2nd reading and moved to a 3rd.
- [Amendments to the mining regulations](#) – Limits to levels for diesel particulate matter. When the committee reviews ventilation guidance notes, this is a piece that can be utilized.
- [Construction projects regulations](#) – Coming into effect on July 1, 2023, the amendments will address the fit of personal protective clothing and equipment and clarify, standardize or strengthen certain hygiene requirements on projects for toilet and clean up facilities.
- [Naloxone regulations](#) – As of June 1, 2023, under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) employers that become aware, or ought reasonably to be aware, that there may be a risk of a worker opioid overdose at a workplace where that worker performs work are now required to provide and maintain a naloxone kit in that workplace.
- [Expanded cancer coverage](#) – In early March, the government announced that it will expand the list of presumptive cancers under the Firefighters Regulation of the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act to include thyroid and pancreatic cancers.
 - Committee discussed the collection of information from past firefighters on cancer costs. Someone can make a claim for something that happened back in 1962. How do we better reach firefighters in 400+ communities who have retired or have left prior to cancer being a higher priority in fire services?

OSB – Provincial Hygienist, Cristina St. Pierre

Concerns with oriented strand boards (OSB)

- OSB is an engineered wood panel made from small diameter poplar and aspen trees. It is dimensionally stable wood-based panel that can resist delamination and warping, is lightweight, easy to handle and install and is used in floors, walls, roof sheathing, prefabricated wood joists and bonded together by a waterproof phenolic adhesive that is cured under heat and pressure.
- Exposure hazards associated with OSB include products of combustion and thermal decomposition, polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHS) and benzene, free formaldehyde and isocyanates. When they burn, formaldehyde and other chemicals could release into the air.
- Control measures include avoid using OSB or use materials that have low adhesive content, use all appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) when working or teaching during live fire exercises, remove SCBA away from contaminated areas, clean the skin and shower as soon as possible following training, launder turnout gear as soon as possible, conduct field decontamination and limit unnecessary exposures.
- The committee was asked how often OSB is used:
 - Exposure to fire in a controlled situation. It will give flame for a new firefighter to understand what's going on around them. There is a soy product out there now, but OSB gives a full smoke show so its part of the education. Right or wrong, it allows a firefighter in training to know what exactly is going on, the best representation of what it's like actually on the job.
 - Some places have switched to hay, but it isn't as effective.
- The committee was asked if OSB is needed all the time:
 - It is an important tool for training which generally happens once a year even when you're farther along in the fire service.
 - Could it be beneficial to provide firefighters with the ability to immediate launder bunker gear following training?
- C. St. Pierre agreed that it would be beneficial to alternate types of material used throughout the day.

- It was noted that OSB is considered class A whereas some departments only train with class B. It might not be possible to fully protect members.
- It was also noted that we can reduce issues but we can't get rid of them. Update guidance notes to recommend staying on air and launder gear following training with OSB.

ACTION: New guidance note for live fire training to be created by A. Neal, R. Grimwood and J. Snider. A lot could be included in this note. It should be created for the training officer.

Guidance note to live under Section 7.

ACTION: C. St. Pierre to be back in September to talk about diesel exposure.

Review of minutes from March 3, 2023 meeting – R. Grimwood and D. Worrall

One issue caught ahead of time regarding healthcare and corrected. Otherwise, minutes were approved.

Cyclical review of Guidance Notes – J. Martin

6-36 Limiting exposure to fire gases

- “Air monitoring to detect...” include HCN monitoring. Most fire departments don't do formaldehyde monitoring,
 - Cristina mentioned that there is a formaldehyde air detection device available.
 - Committee discussed lithium ion batteries setting off carbon monoxide alarms often.
- “Scene decontamination” section to be changed to reflect the immediate need for decontamination and how to transport gear.
- After “operating policies and guidelines,” add in the suggestion that firefighters tell their family doctors they are firefighter so they can be monitored and tested appropriate, relative to increased occupational risks. The committee continued the conversation on Friday on medical screening and surveillance.
- Reference guidance note 6-1, Hygiene and decontamination, under the related notes section.

ACTION: New guidance note to be created on air monitoring. D. Worrall and J. Kirk to work on the new note and send to C. St. Pierre after the draft is complete for feedback.

6-37 Active attacker events

- Active shooter and hostile event response (ASHER) to be added to where active attacker is mentioned. The acronym is very commonly used within the fire service.
 - Committee discussed ASHER protocols.
- “Establish how incident command will be transferred to police” change to “unified with police.”

6-38 Carbon dioxide hazards

- Add reference to respiratory guidance note at the end.
- Add reference to air monitoring guidance note once done.
- Add reference to SCBA 6-43.

6-40 Working at heights

- It was noted that this guidance note is specifically related to construction. Currently, there is not a guidance note for working at heights in general.
 - Update the note to say, “In a construction site *or other locations*”.
- Add reference to industrial regulations.

- The committee discussed situations where members have been refused access to areas during an investigation because they do not have the proper working at heights training.
- Add training to the job references.
- Move all references to construction to the construction section.
- In the “Actions for employers” section, change to “Which may include”.
- Section title change to “Risks of working at heights”.
- Add reference to NFPA 1983.

6-41 Safety around helicopters

- No changes.

6-42 Training with artificial smoke

- Add reference to NFPA 1403.

6-43 SCBA air management and work cycles

- Emphasize time to complete field decontamination.
- Committee discussed the different stages of decontamination.

6-32 Elevator Rescue – R. Grimwood

R. Grimwood reached out to a TSSA provider and the only comment was to remove reference to [ASMEA17.4-2015](#) as it doesn't reference elevator rescue directly and can be contradictory.

Guidance note comments

6-26 Structural fire fighting

1. Various comments received from three departments.

ACTION: R. Grimwood and D. Worrall to follow up with members.

2. There was a comment submitted concerning the term “make certain” being used in the note surrounding a 360-degree inspection being completed prior to committing crews to interior operation. The commentor noted that this unfortunately may not always be able to be done due to building size, access issues etc.
 - Comment was approved by the committee.
3. Various comments were made throughout the guidance note from one commentor. A side-by-side review is required as no track changes were made.

ACTION: R. Grimwood complete side by side review and bring to committee for discussion in September 2023.

Marine Vessel guidance note– H. Baranik

- Committee discussed details outlined in the guidance note and made word choice changes.

ACTION: H. Baranik will incorporate committee's feedback and bring revised draft guidance note to committee for discussion at September 2023 meeting.

Guidance note approval status update – J. Martin

- New colour coded form that shows guidance notes that are posted online, waiting to go online, in approvals and in committee review.
 - The following guidance notes are awaiting publication on Ontario.ca.

- 3-06 PFAS Awareness,
- 5-01 Accountability and Entry
- 5-02 Working alone or in isolation
- 5-03 Violence
- 6-39 Chemical suicides
- The following guidance notes are in approvals with MLITSD
 - 4-01 Firefighters protective equipment
 - 6-03 to 6-12
 - 6-14 to 6-23
 - 6-28 to 6-30
 - 6-46 Structural Collapse (NEW)
 - 6-47 LPG and LNG tank fires (NEW)
 - 7-05 Live fire training considerations for acquired structures

Regulation Working Group – R. Grimwood

O.Reg. 714/94 phase one prioritization and housekeeping – All

- The working group met with the ministry’s policy department because this regulation is out of date. 25 pages of changes were suggested from the working group, which is too much. The working group prioritized the following three topics for phase 1: Training, procedures and everything related to hygiene and cancer.
- Committee reviewed the work done so far in consolidation of the top three topics to include more information on “what” and “how” to do instead of the requirements in the regulation as it stands today.
- Committee discussed collaboration between fire services, specifically if another service is first on scene at a call for service in an adjacent municipality. What procedures, equipment, etc. are different? What are the procedures?

ACTION: R. Grimwood and D. Worrall to create a written submission consisting of the top three topics and sending to J. Martin who will share with the policy department. Working group to update committee in September after meeting again with the policy department.

Cancer Communications Working Group – T. Morose, K. Thomson, R. Grimwood, C. Hoffman and M. Pankhurst

Draft documents – K. Thomson

- Draft documents sent by K. Thomson to the committee prior to the meeting. The working group presented a toolkit of resources including a firefighter cancer fast facts sheet, draft email templates, and various presentations that can be used to present the information to members of government and groups of firefighters.
- Committee had no comments.

Branding – K. Thomson

- K. Thomson gave an overview to the committee on proposed branding.
- Committee discussed the current proposed branding developed by PSHSA to make the documents more central to the committee, creating the committee their own brand for this and future projects.
- Committee had no comments on the branding.

ACTION: Working group to meet and discuss next steps with a focus on signs and symptoms. The poster idea could work for this: One poster for each cancer to list symptoms and other information.

Substation fires – Electrical safety handbook update and current practices – J. Snider

- The handbook is going well. It is being remade in a more functional use.
- It was decided that there would be a major revision every 5 years and the working group would meet yearly to discuss emerging issues and any urgent updates outside of the five-year review cycle.

Volunteer Firefighter Representation on the Committee and Recruitment – J. Martin

- There were 34 applicants:
 - 8 are health and safety professionals in their “regular” job.
 - 1 sits on a CSA committee.
 - Most have extensive firefighter certification courses and committee experience.
 - There’s a broad range of years of experience as well as geographical location. Also, a very diverse range of jobs including construction, mechanic, healthcare, heavy industry.
- The next step will be a panel interview with a written assignment.

O AFC update – R. Grimwood

No update.

New business (Continued)

Decontamination instructional video

Committee watched a decontamination instructional video created by Mississauga Fire and Emergency Services. The committee discussed policies and procedures regarding decontamination and discussed creating a decontamination video for all fire services to use.

Slow down move over law update – R. Grimwood and D. Worrall

The slow down move over law does not have a required speed decrease like other provinces do. In Ontario if the speed limit is 100 km/h and a driver slows down to 99 km/h, they have complied with “slow down”. O AFC met with the Ministry of Transportation and explained the issues and concerns. MTO reports that when legislation is revised, they may be willing to propose adjustments.

Friday June 9, 2023 – 9:00 am - 12:00 pm

Greetings – D. Worrall

D. Worrall greeted the committee and went over the agenda for the day. The committee took part in round table of introductions for Dr. Nik Rajaram.

PFAS discussion – all

- The PFAS guidance note is in queue for publishing with the ministry.
- During a report, station wear was found not to have PFAS. More information can be found in the “Station wear” section below.



Potential Toxins in
Station Wear and Uni

ACTION: R. Grimwood and D. Worrall to send findings to the committee on the report.

- Committee discussed if a firefighter needs to be wearing bunker gear at every call.

Lithium ion battery discussion – all

- Originally started as Guidance Note 6-19.
- “LiESS” is the new way it’s being categorized.
- The committee discussed the need for Lithium ion batteries being its own guidance note.
- Committee discussed Lithium ion (LI) vs Sodium ion (SI) when on fire: LI releases toxic gases whereas SI is higher on the chart so not as much of a water reaction. However, it is safe to always assume that LI is what is used.

ACTION: Dan to continue drafting guidance note and committee to continue discussion in September meeting.

PSHSA update – T. Morose

Memo sent to the committee from Tanya.

2023 Building Resilient Organizations and Managing Mental Health Courses

- Memo sent to the committee from T. Morose.
- Now – 2026, Tanya’s focus will be on courses, organization assessments, resources, etc.
- PSHSA will be offering more free [R2 for Leaders Building Resilient Organizations](#) and [Mental Health Stay at Work and Return to Work for First Responders](#) distance learning sessions in the fall. The dates will be coming soon. There is also the option of doing onsite training if organizations would like that.
- Kurt Bohme or Ricardo Romero will be your consultant depending on where you are located.

Occupational Stress Injury Resilience (OSIR) Tool

- The OSIR tool is a purpose-built and practical assessment that helps organizations understand risks for occupational stress injuries, identify approaches to build resilience and guide workplace psychological health strategy and action planning.
- PSHSA’s new [OSIR tool](#) is now available.

Project echo – Better educate physicians and connect them to resources

What do first responders want physicians to know about treating first responders?

- “Do more of this”, “do this”, “know this” etc. Fill out the form for what you’d like them to know.

Public safety personnel (PSP) input needed on curriculum for care providers

A new program is launching for Ontario care providers to gain confidence and skills in treating public safety personnel with mental health injuries that affect their ability to work. Input on the curriculum from PSP (including firefighters, paramedics, police, communications and corrections personnel) is needed. Please tell us what you think care providers need to learn to better support PSP patients. [Complete the short survey.](#)

Naloxone

As a reminder, on June 1, 2023, the OHSA now requires certain workplaces to have a Naloxone kit in the workplace. More information can be found [on the PSHSA website.](#)

Mandatory Blood Testing Act Changes

MBTA changes come into effect on July 1, 2023 that include:

- Shorter timelines for a decision on the requirement of a respondent to give a blood sample.
- Increased fines for non-compliance.

- Enforcement for non-compliance (the course can involve police as the court sees fit).
- Longer time for the applicant to submit the MBTA application to the public health unit.

A detailed summary of the changes to the legislation can be found [on the PSHSA website](#).

New business (Continued)

Medical screening and surveillance - Provincial Physician, Dr. Nik Rajaram

- Dr. Rajaram introduced himself to the committee.
- Dr. Rajaram delivered the following presentation to the committee:



Medical
Surveillance and Fire

- Dr. Rajaram provided feedback on the draft medical surveillance document by the committee. The first page has some tests that they don't do anymore or don't offer without red flags or other criteria. Also, the tests shouldn't be the first page, it should be goals outlined first.
- Dr. Rajaram: Know what all the cancers look like in early stages so you know when you should approach a family physician. To do screening, you need a lot more. This is a good first step by looking at cancer concerns and educating on symptoms and when to approach a doctor.

ACTION: R. Grimwood and D. Worrall to continue the conversation with the committee in September.

LODD review from Chief Coroner – D. Worrall

- R. Grimwood and D. Worrall to meet with Coroner's Office and OFM.
- There was a process map developed that they would like input from the committee on. The goal is to have it kicked off before summer.
- The Coroner's Office thanked firefighters with all they do across the province.
- Rob and Dan to share information with committee members by email throughout the summer so this doesn't wait for the September meeting

ACTION: Continue conversation in September.

Station wear – D. Worrall

- NFPA 1975 was utilized for parameters.
- In a study, station wear was showing some levels of PFAS, also finding amounts of chlorine, lead, brine, etc. used in fire resistant fabric.
- Station wear could be worn all day
- The committee discussed whether this would be addressed in the new PFAS guidance note.
- Committee discussed the change in station wear material: Dry fit, cool materials vs fire resistant materials, and what outcome of material is better for the health and safety of firefighters. Heat stress was raised as an issue.
- There might be an opportunity to add bullets in guidance note 3-3 about what firefighter can do to help with heat stress, including materials of station wear.

ACTION: Revisions to guidance note 3-3 by T. Sparks and A. Burrige for September 2023 meeting.

Encampments – M. Pankhurst

- There is potential for a guidance note on firefighter safety when responding to incidents at encampments.
- There are issues regarding needles, weapons, fire and other hazards that should be addressed to help firefighters going to a call in an encampment.
- Tanya: Is this something new around transient communities or an update to something? Is a situational risk assessment needed?
 - R. Grimwood: This is a challenge – OFM was advised to be cautious providing guidance because encampments are illegal and not classified under the Building or Fire Codes.
 - It was pointed out that it would be easier to have one guidance note for reference than go through a bunch looking for individual concerns – similar to the approach taken for clandestine drug labs.

ACTON: M. Pankhurst and J. Plater to work on a new draft guidance note.

Meeting adjourned.

2023 meeting dates:

Monday, September 25 and Tuesday, September 26, 2023

Thursday, November 30 and Friday, December 1, 2023