



Ontario Association Of Fire Chiefs

Health and Safety Advisory Committee Terms of Reference

Version No: 006---02-08-2023



1. Purpose/Mandate

The purpose of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs (OAFC) Health and Safety Advisory Committee is to address matters of firefighter safety in Ontario as they arise and to make recommendations to the Board of Directors. Information will then flow through the association office to OAFC members relating to matters addressed at the committee meetings.

2. Scope of the OAFC Health and Safety Advisory Committee

The Health and Safety Advisory Committee is expected to raise and discuss issues of concern that affect OAFC members, which relate to health and safety in the fire service. The committee is expected to direct recommendations, via the Board Chair, to the Board of Directors for further action or resolution. This committee also acts as liaison with the OAFC members appointed to the Ontario Fire Services Health & Safety Advisory Committee (Section 21 Committee) in order to ensure that the Board of Directors are aware of emerging issues and matters being dealt with at the Ontario Fire Services Health & Safety Advisory Committee (Section 21 Committee). This committee will also address issues submitted to them by the Board for deliberation and recommendation.

3. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity

The OAFC, through the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusivity (DEI) Committee and the Board of Directors, adopted the following vision statement as a guiding principle of work conducted through the association. Visions motivate and enable us to see how our efforts contribute to an overall purpose. The vision statement is integrated into all committee and working group terms of references, so we can ensure that the work conducted by the Health and Safety Advisory Committee considers, and is reflective of a diverse, equitable, and inclusive fire service.

Vision: That every fire department in Ontario is equitable, inclusive, and reflects the diversity of the community they serve.

4. Role/Authority of the OAFC Health and Safety Advisory Committee

Committee roles include the discussion of fire service health and safety issues raised by the Board of Directors, OAFC members, government agencies or the Ontario Fire Services Health & Safety Advisory Committee (Section 21 Committee). The committee, or assigned members, may engage in discussion, research, data collection and the review of existing or emerging procedures or guidelines. The committee may invite speakers or content experts as approved by the Committee Co-chairs. The committee will report back to the Board of Directors for further action or resolution of issues. Meeting minutes will be maintained by the appointed OAFC staff representative and will be posted on the OAFC website for member reference. The committee is tasked with recommending individuals for the Ontario Fire Services Health & Safety Advisory Committee (Section 21 Committee), to the Board of Directors should an OAFC position on the Ontario Fire Services Health & Safety Advisory Committee (Section 21 Committee) become vacant. "Schedule A", sets out the process for recommendations to the Board of Directors, who then will consider and recommend candidates for Ontario Fire Services Health & Safety Advisory Committee (Section 21 Committee) appointment to the Minister of Labour.



4.1 General Membership

The committee is led by the appointed Board member, who also serves as Board Chair. Members of the committee are required to be Individual Members of the OAFC as outlined in the OAFC Constitution. The Board may also choose to appoint non-members to the committee. All committee members are appointed by the Board of Directors. The Board must strive to ensure the committee's membership is representative of both the rural/suburban, urban and large urban, as well as career and volunteer sectors; while also considering geographic diversity. The OAFC Health and Safety Advisory Committee has fourteen (14) positions in total. One is held for the Board Chair, one is held for the Board Alternate and the other twelve (12) are appointed by the Board. Current committee members are posted on the OAFC website.

4.2 Convenor/Chair/Board Alternate/Administration

The appointed Board member will chair the committee and be responsible for convening the scheduled meetings through a dedicated OAFC staff representative, whose tasks are outlined below. A co-chair will be appointed from the committee. Each committee will also be assigned a Board alternate, who will participate on the committee as a member. The Board alternate position is to provide additional continuity *should the* appointed Board member (Board Chair) no longer be able to participate on a *long-term, or permanent basis*.

The staff representative is responsible for working with the Board Chair for committee meeting coordination including scheduling meetings, forwarding meeting materials, collating agenda items, tracking/monitoring action items, internal communication(s)/tracking, and any other requirements as deemed by the chair.

4.3 Appointment and Term

Appointments on the OAFC Health and Safety Committee are for two years. Vacancies can be filled as required. The association will post for expressions of interest for committee members when vacancies occur. Expressions of interest for the OAFC Health and Safety Committee should be submitted to the OAFC staff representative(s). Expressions of interest will be reviewed by the Executive Director and chair, and submitted to the Board for consideration and approval. Committee members will be selected based on applicable skills and knowledge regarding health safety best practices for firefighters. Committee members will be appointed by the Board.

4.4 Meeting Agenda

The staff representative and Board Chair are responsible for the development of an agenda for the OAFC Health and Safety Committee meetings based on consultation with committee members. All members of the committee may submit agenda items for deliberation by the committee once a committee meeting has been scheduled. The staff representative will put out a call for agenda items. The agenda will be provided to the committee at least one week prior to the committee meeting. Items not included on the agenda may be raised as new or other business during the meeting.



4.5 Meeting Minutes

The minutes of each OAFC Health and Safety Advisory Committee meeting will be prepared by the appointed staff representative. Full copies of the draft minutes, including attachments, shall be provided to the chair for review, revision, approval and returned no later than one week following each meeting. The meeting minutes will then be distributed to the committee. The minutes will also be posted on the OAFC website for member review, upon approval of the chair. At the next meeting, committee members may suggest amendments to the previous minutes, which must be agreed to by consensus in order for them to be amended.

The minutes of each Health and Safety Advisory Committee meeting will be maintained by the appointed staff representative as a complete record.

4.6 Action Items

Any action items identified during the meeting, must be noted as an action item, and be tasked to a specific person or working group. It is the responsibility of the appointed staff representative to track and monitor all committee action items to ensure they are completed. The staff representative is responsible for apprising the chair on the status of action items before each meeting. The chair will discuss any outstanding action items during a committee meeting. Any action items that are flagged as an item to be brought forward to the Board of Directors, will be the responsibility of the chair.

The OAFC Health and Safety Advisory Committee does not issue motions, nor has the authority to act on its own behalf. Any issue requiring attention, should be considered by the committee by consensus, and then “actioned” to be brought forward to the Board of Directors by the chair, for further action.

4.7 Decision Making Requirements & Meeting Quorum

A quorum of half (1/2) PLUS one (1) committee member is required for the meeting to be recognized as an authorized meeting for any recommendations or actions to be valid. If no quorum is reached, a record will be kept of those who were, and were not present. Decision making is based on consensus. Where consensus can't be reached, a vote will be conducted.

4.8 Frequency of Meetings

The committee will meet in person, virtually, or by teleconference, at minimum, on a quarterly basis, or at the call of the chair. Meetings will be scheduled at least three weeks prior to the quarterly Ontario Fire Services Health & Safety Advisory Committee (Section 21 Committee) meeting. Any unscheduled meetings may be called at the request of the chair, as necessary to address time sensitive, urgent or legislative issues that can't be delayed until the next scheduled meeting.

4.9 Commitment

To ensure the OAFC Health & Safety Advisory Committee operates efficiently, and that issues of importance are discussed and actioned, it is expected that committee members participate in the scheduled meetings and any relevant follow up. Three (3) consecutive absences from committee meetings will be reviewed by the chair. The chair will deem any appropriate action, in consultation with the Board of Directors.



4.10 Communications

Committee members are expected to communicate amongst each other as needed. The appointed staff representative must be copied on all committee communications and will ensure relevant communications are forward to the communications strategist. Any communications outside the committee (i.e. to other committees or the membership at large) must adhere to the OAFC Communications Protocol and be vetted through the OAFC office, and sent by the OAFC office. It is up to the Board Chair, Board Alternate, and/or members of an OAFC committee to determine if an issue is cross-jurisdictional with another OAFC committee. If it is determined, by committee member consensus, that the issue should be shared and/or communicated with another committee, an actionable item must be created and tracked through the committee's meeting minutes, by the staff representative. As the staff representative is responsible to follow up on actionable items, it will be their responsibility to facilitate the sharing of information between each Chair of the applicable committees. A course of action will be determined by each Chair and shared with each committee via the staff representative.

5. Confidentiality

Respect for confidentiality is the cornerstone of trust and confidence as well as a legislated obligation. Committee members must at all times respect the confidentiality of any member, sponsor, staff, volunteer, or member names and/or circumstances, and all matters relating to those organization(s) and/or individual(s). Respect and maintain the confidentiality of information gained as an employee, board member, committee member and volunteer including, but not limited to, all computer software and files, meeting minutes, Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs business documents and printouts, and all membership, employee, candidate and vendor records.

Confidentiality means you may not relate such matters to anyone including immediate family members. The duty of confidentiality continues indefinitely after a Committee member has left the association.

Committee members shall agree to the Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest Policy and Confidentiality Policy.

6. Code of Conduct

The following Code of Conduct ("the Code") is designed to allow the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs to preserve its integrity and credibility within the association membership, affiliated organizations and the public. This Code applies to our Board of Directors, Committee Members, Volunteers and all Employees (permanent full-time, hourly, fixed term contract, permanent part-time).

1. Always act with fairness, honesty, integrity and openness; respect the opinions of others and treat all with equality and dignity without regard to gender, race, colour, creed, and ancestry, place of origin, political beliefs, religion, marital status, disability, age, or sexual orientation.
2. Promote and support the objectives, the mission and mandates of the association in all dealings with members, vendors and the public on behalf of the Association. Serve the overall best interests of the organization rather than any particular constituency.
3. Provide a positive experience for those receiving service within and outside the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs.



4. Respect principles of fair play and due process. Respect and give fair consideration to diverse and opposing viewpoints.
5. Demonstrate due diligence and dedication in preparation for attendance at meetings, special events and in all other activities on behalf of the organization.
6. Demonstrate good faith, prudent judgment, honesty, transparency and openness in their activities on behalf of the organization.
7. Avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest.
8. Act with honesty and integrity and in accordance with any professional standards and/or governing laws and legislation that have application to the responsibilities you perform for or on behalf of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs. The Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs policies apply to all Board Members, Committee Members, Volunteers and Employees. Policies are reviewed every year, or sooner, if an issue arises with its interpretation and use.
9. Adhere to the policies and procedures of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs and support decisions and directions of the Board of Directors and its delegated authority.
10. Take responsibility for your actions and decisions. Follow reporting lines to facilitate the effective resolution of problems. Ensure that you do not exceed the authority of your position. Publicly demonstrate acceptance, respect and support of decisions legitimately taken in transaction of the organization's business.
11. Conform to any By-laws and policies, in particular this Code of Conduct and Confidentiality and Conflict of Interest policies.

6.1 Personal or Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment is any conduct, comment, gesture or contact of a sexual nature that one would find to be unwanted or unwelcome by any individual, or that might, on reasonable grounds, be perceived by that individual as placing a condition of sexual nature on an employment or career development.

Personal harassment means any conduct whether verbal or physical that is discriminating in nature, based upon another person's race, colour, ancestry, place of origin, political beliefs, religion, marital status, physical or mental disability, sex, age or sexual orientation. It is discriminatory behaviour, directed at an individual that is unwanted or unwelcome and causes substantial distress in that person and serves no legitimate work-related purpose.

The Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs has a zero-tolerance policy with respect to personal/sexual harassment.

Personal/sexual harassment in any form is strictly prohibited and may be grounds for termination as a Committee member.

7. Conflicts of Interest

In general, a conflict of interest exists for Board members, Employees, Committee members and Volunteers who use their position at the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs to benefit themselves, friends, family or relatives.

Upon appointment to an Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs Committee, Committee Members shall arrange their private affairs in a manner that will prevent any conflict of interest from arising.

A Committee member's actions should not compromise or undermine our members or public's trust in the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs.

O AFC Health and Safety Advisory Committee Terms of Reference



Committee members should not place themselves in a position where they are, or appear to be, under personal obligation to any person who might benefit or seek to gain special consideration or favour resulting from the relationship.

Committee members shall avoid any situation in which there is, or may appear to be, a potential conflict which could appear to interfere with their judgment in making decisions in the best interest of the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs. Committee members shall exercise care in the management of their private affairs so as not to benefit, or be perceived to benefit from:

- A. The use of information acquired solely by reason of their membership on a committee; or
- B. Any Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs transactions over which they can influence decisions (e.g. investment, borrowing, purchases, sales, contracts, grants, and appointments).

There are a variety of situations that could give rise to a conflict of interest. Committee members should make it known to the association, or delegated authority, if they believe they may be in conflict of interest. These include but are not limited to: accepting gifts, entertainment, favours or “kickbacks” from suppliers or other organizations, personal gain from relationships established through the Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs, close or family relationships with outside suppliers or other organizations, passing confidential information to competitors or other interested parties, or using confidential information inappropriately.

8. Reporting

Members of the committee, including the co-chair, are to provide reports and/or recommendations from the O AFC Health and Safety Advisory Committee, through the action item process, to be brought forward to the Board of Directors, through the chair. The committee is not permitted to take independent action on behalf of the committee, the O AFC or the Board of Directors, without approval by the Board of Directors

9. Review of Terms of Reference

The O AFC Health and Safety Advisory Committee Terms of Reference will be reviewed during the first committee meeting following the installation of the new Board of Directors.

Annual review by the Committee for recommendation to the Board: October 12, 2017

Last approved by the Committee: October 12, 2017

Last approved by the Board: February 27, 2018

Annual review by the Committee for recommendation to the Board: TBA

Last approved by the Committee: June 15, 2020

Last approved by the Committee: February 8, 2023

O AFC staff representative:

Mark Tishman, Program & Policy Analyst

Updated: February 2023



Schedule A
Selection Process for filling O AFC vacancies on the
Ontario Fire Services Health & Safety Advisory Committee
(Section 21 Committee)

The O AFC Health and Safety Advisory Committee is responsible for recommending a candidate to the O AFC Board of Directors to fill a vacancy, however caused, on the Ontario Fire Services Health & Safety Advisory Committee (Section 21 Committee). The Board of Directors ultimately makes the recommendation, and then forwards the name for consideration to the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.

The following process outlines the steps to fill a vacancy.

1. Those serving on the O AFC Health & Safety Advisory Committee will submit their interest to the staff representative. Should there be no interest from the members of this committee, a call to the general membership will be facilitated by the staff representative.
2. Names of those who submitted interest, along with the information they submitted, will be provided to the remaining committee members (who did not express interest) for review. If the majority of members express interest, the Board Chair and Co-Chair can ask members of the O AFC Board of Directors to sit on the selection panel. This is at the discretion of the Board Chair/Co-Chair.
3. A meeting will be held to review the submissions of interest, and complete a selection of a candidate.
4. The candidate recommended by the O AFC Health & Safety Advisory Committee will be formally recommended to the Board of Directors in a Director report prepared by the Board Chair.
5. The Board of Directors shall formally endorse a committee.
6. The O AFC staff representative will submit a recommendation letter to the Minister of Labour indicating that the Board of Directors are endorsing the candidate to fill the vacancy on the Ontario Fire Services Health & Safety Advisory Committee (Section 21 Committee).