

Meeting Minutes

Ontario Fire Service Advisory Committee

(Section 21 Committee)

September 17, 2021

Meeting held on Zoom

Commencing at 8:30

Present:

Rob Grimwood	O AFC - Committee Co-Chair
Aaron Burr ridge	O AFC
John Mavrinac	OPFFA – Committee Co-Chair
Tim Sparks	OPFFA
Dan Worrall	OPFFA
Victor Dillabaugh	OPFFA
Doug Kellam	Volunteer firefighter
Mark Pankhurst	AMO
Cathy Hoffman	AMO
Juanita Martin	MLTSD
John Snider	Office of the Fire Marshal – Ontario Fire College
Randy Narine	Volunteer firefighter
Sheri Bastos	PSHSA (Facilitator)
Breanne Knowles	PSHSA (Minutes)
John Mielke	Guest speaker from University of Waterloo

Regrets:

Ellard Beaven	O AFC
Mike Vilneff	O AFC
Tanya Morose	PSHSA

Greetings

J. Mavrinac welcomed the group and facilitated a round table for introductions for new members. Team is looking forward to resuming in person meetings. A decision on a date to return to in person committee meetings is still pending.

- **Action Item: J. Martin to update committee list with J. Snider**

Review of Minutes from June 4, 2021 Meeting

The minutes from June 4, 2021 meeting approved as submitted, there were no reported changes.

Guidance notes (Juanita Martin)

- September and December 2020 Guidance Notes have been approved and are waiting to be posted.
- Guidance Note 3-1 (the feedback has been consolidated and is awaiting approvals).
- Revisit 4-1 based on regulation working group feedback

Cyclical Review Guidance Notes 5-1 to 6-5

Guidance Note 5-1 – This was last reviewed/updated approximately 1 year ago, No major changes. Committee discussed accountability system inclusion and determined that this is referenced in existing wording.

Guidance Note 5-2 – At the last meeting, the committee discussed inclusivity and changing term of “firefighters” in this note and others. However, FPPA, uses terms firefighters and defines as all fire service personnel. Committee decided to use term ‘fire personnel’. Additionally, “or in Isolation” was added to title; reference to buddy system was re-worded as the term has been retired. The committee discussed accountability check in and check out radio calls and determined no changes to this section. PSHSA referenced workplace violence toolkits as a resource for wording for similar settings. Opportunities to leverage controls and recommendations from these tools. PSHSA workplace violence tool kit resources were added to the resource list on this Guidance note.

- The committee recommended a guidance note specifically about violence
 - **Action Item: Sub-working group formed to develop new note. The working group consists of J. Mavrinac; D. Kellam; V. Dillabaugh, C. Hoffman**
 - **Action Item: J. Martin to send template to group**

Resources Provided in Chat: www.workplace-violence.ca;
<https://www.pshsa.ca/resources/protecting-workers-who-work-alone>; <https://terraform-20180423174453746800000001.s3.amazonaws.com/attachments/cjiiisgn62001nfxj7m26u1554-workplace-violence-health-care-section-21-committee-december-2014.pdf>

Guidance Note 6-1 – No changes at this time, the committee deferred this to the next meeting. The committee is deciding how this notes links to the Cancer Prevention checklist. The committee discussed linking the two resources or replacing the guidance note with the Cancer Prevention checklist in the future, however for now the Cancer Prevention checklist will be linked to Guidance Note 6-1.

- **Action Item: At next meeting, committee will compare 6-1 and Cancer Prevention Checklist, in the meantime, the Cancer Prevention checklist should be promoted.**

Guidance Note 6-2 - Additional wording needed for general precaution for the risk assessment/procedures section. The following was added: “rescue personnel who may be near water, or where there is an exposure to the hazard of falling into water, wear an appropriate personal flotation device (PFD)”.

Guidance Note 6-3 - This was last reviewed/updated in the last few years. Committee agreed to revise wording for list of training – change to **ice rescue, surface water rescue and swift water rescue** – this matches NFPA 1006 terminology. NFPA 1006 referenced within guidance note for definitions of these terms. Additional wording was added when referencing rescue equipment – clause relating to “per manufacturer’s recommendations”. Additional wording was added for pre-planning (location, hazard documentation) and limit of response capabilities/equipment.

- **Action Item: J. Snider to follow up on if the link for “Selecting a Water/Ice Rescue Capability” should be removed from Resource section.**

Guidance Note 6-4 – Additional reference was added for Rope Rescue program relating to testing and maintenance and logbooks. Reference to CSA 1006 and NFPA 1670 and NFPA 983 were added.

Guidance Note 6-5 - Additional wording was added relating to inspection, testing and maintenance of Confined Space rescue equipment in accordance with manufacturer's recommendations. Reference to calibration and bump test in accordance with manufacturer recommendation prior to use was also added. Resource hyperlinks that no longer work were corrected.

General Discussion on Guidance Notes:

The committee discussed that some guidance notes have considerations for safety, some do not. The committee discussed and agreed upon standardizing the approach to guidance notes to include this "Consideration for Safety section" in all guidance notes.

- **Action Item: T. Sparks to review and identify the language to be used and what notes are impacted re: "considerations for safety section"**
- **Action Item: J. Martin to support T. Sparks to prepare this for next meeting, documents to be sent over email to committee to review**
- **Action Item: Committee to review prior to meeting and prepare any questions or discussion on this for next meeting.**
- **Action Item: Add this to the agenda for next meeting**

Cancer costs (Juanita Martin)

J. Martin shared data which prompted the committee discussion around promotion of the Cancer Prevention checklist. This data demonstrates the Cancer Prevention checklist should continue to be promoted and the committee has a desire for AMO to highlight this at future conferences. The committee discussed the data and the breakdown of costs and would like more drill down data from WSIB. PSHSA confirmed that WSIB has the capabilities to assist with this drill down inquiry which is known from experience on committees. The committee considered the data in relation to the committee's initiatives and areas of focus. This data provides good value proposition for promoting the Cancer Prevention checklist. This data can not be shared without permission.

- **Action Item: J. Martin to ask WSIB for drill down for this data and exposure data. The committee would like to know "What incident type, is the data pulled from"**

Cancer Checklist and Webpage usage (J. Martin)

The committee reviewed data on website views over the last 6 months. There were 748 total visits over last 6 months usually via google or the OAFCA website. We can see some areas where we get increased traction to the website in April 2021 (March online conference, OPFFA promoted) and May/June 2021 (OAFCA presented webinar on the topic). This shows that when we highlight this at conferences etc., we see impact. The committee should continue to promote.

- V. Dillbaugh inquired page views of cancer checklist vs guidance document 6-1 hygiene and decontamination to help inform decision re: 6-1. 339 total views for 6-1.

Guest Speaker: Dr. John G. Mielke, University of Waterloo

Work-related Stress, Health, and Well-being Among Firefighters in Waterloo Region

Dr. Mielke was introduced to the committee and his background on research involving factors influencing changes in health was shared. Dr. Mielke is currently studying Occupational stressors in Firefighters relating to heart disease. Dr. John Mielke thanked the Committee for having him. Of note from the presentation:

- We know that stress related hormone can affect heart disease risk. There are contributing factors – smoking, blood pressure, cortisol. However, unexplained factors can be deferred

to be social stress. Therefore, social stress can lead to increase stress hormones and increased stressed hormones can lead to increased disease risk. And work-related social stress increase disease risk.

- **Research Question: Could workforce social stresses increase stress hormones and therefore can increase disease risk *specifically in firefighters***
- **Methodology:** 63 participants, onsite meetings, 30 minute sessions/meetings and surveys (General Health Status and Psychometrics (stress scale) were the focus of surveys and interviews with the goal to get information about ‘general life stress vs. work related stress. Biometrics were taken (metabolic, cardiovascular, and neuroendocrine)
- **Results/Findings:** Phase 2 of study was completed in Fall 2020 and January 2021. The team is looking at the data now and seeing that between Phase 1 and Phase 2, there were increase stress, some very large increase. Notable items: in-between phase 1 and phase 2, the pandemic occurred
 - o Over 75% reported they felt a large degree of support within the work context. This was an area of strength – there is a feeling like work colleagues were open to talking about work experience and events, feeling like colleagues were available to help with work related tasks and feeling when ill, people are available to help
 - o Research over time has shown us that our level of social support is one of the key indicators of how successful we might be, so these strength areas are good news! Notable item: Women reported higher levels of social support than man.
 - o When we look at feelings of support and feelings of stress, we see that more social support, indicated people felt less stress. Therefore, social support is an important resource to resist the impact of stress

Committee Discussion on next steps

- Next steps will include phase 3 which is pending – Phase 3 will include factors of self-efficacy – which is important for pushing back against stress. The research aims to understand what the levels of self-efficacy in the typical firefighter population are and what can we do to drive it. When discussing how to help reduce stress/how to help people Dr. Mielke recommends some factors that can inform what we act on:
 - Information on diet, exercise, changing way work is done to improve sleep and promote good behaviors and opportunities relating to this
 - Put in place resources to help deal with stress that will always be present
 - Continue to promote social support and drive self-efficacy
- Goal would be to extend this to other units across the province for more holistic lens of how we are doing. We need to ‘take pulse’ of firefighters in general, recognizing there are differences in attitudes across different units across different generations and different geography. The committee inquired about different demographics (ethnicity, gender) or volunteers vs FT, Dr. Mielke agrees that we would absolutely see difference with demographics, biographic etc. Dr. Mielke thanked and acknowledged the research team and partners; University of Waterloo; Waterloo Fire Services and Funders NSERC and Alberta Government The committee offers any help for help with expanding the research. Dr. would like to see the work expand across the province and across other emergency services branches – police, paramedic as it is believed that a true accurate reflection will allow us to look at risk that we expect down the line and what resource are valuable where.

O AFC H&S Day Update (R. Grimwood)

O AFC Health & Safety Day is on October 20th. We have a Section 21 Committee panel discussion. Once registration opens R. Grimwood will send info to all members for promotion/encourage participation within their groups

- o **Action Item: R. Grimwood to send registration information to members**

Regulation Working Group Update (R. Grimwood)

The items proposed for inclusion are complete and the group continues to add more detail to the rationale for each item

Minister Response to Letters (J. Martin)

Currently still awaiting response for all. Letters were sent in March 2021.

- Work on highways – public education
- PTSD prevention plans
- Line of duty deaths – coroner's inquest

The Committee is requesting someone to join the Section 21 meeting, invites have been sent previously. J. Martin outlined correspondence unit/processes and will follow up.

PFAS Discussion – Follow up to June presentation

Advisory/Note on Use of PFAS - Chemical that is in the bunker gear/clothes – T. Sparks being asked if Section 21 will support. J. Martin intends to include it in the next round of revisions to the cancer checklist

- **Action: J. Martin – send presentation from June's meeting to Provincial Hygienist and invite them to attend the December meeting to discuss the hazard and what can be done in the meanwhile to mitigate the risk and then the committee can discuss next steps**

Structural Collapse Rescue Discussion

The committee is proposing a new guidance note, committee reviewed the draft and R. Grimwood will send out for further review by members

- **Action: R. Grimwood to share with J. Mavrincac to create and send the “one drive” shared version to allow committee to collaborate on the same document. J. Mavrincac to manage master file.**
- **Action: Committee to review/provide edits for finalization at next meeting. Comments are due by Oct 15 and reviewers should utilize track changes**
- **Action: R. Grimwood to connect committee with OAFCC contact as OAFCC will need to be engaged to put the note out for consultation.**

Resources Provided in Chat: Reference CSA Z1006 Management of work in confined spaces

Head Protection Harmonization (J. Mavrincac and R. Grimwood)

Consultation piece went out and was due September 10, 2021, this relates to regulation 714, and work/changes that the sub group was working on, the committee desires to see this implemented and has offered to collectively update and improve. The intent is to harmonize head protection across all sectors, with Fire the committee has desire to harmonize even within the profession.

- J. Martin has shared the current proposal for head protection – harmonize doesn't mean that everyone is going to wear the same helmet but the wording is general enough so everyone can appropriately select PPE for the circumstances.
 - Proposal is about head protection in general when head injury hazard is present
 - The type of head protection will be up to the employer
 - Where head protection that is appropriate for the circumstances
 - Will also include reference to electrical hazards and adequately securing head protection
 - Compatible attachments/accessories
 - General provision – use per manufacturer's instructions, out of service if damaged, training on use, care, limitations

- Guideline for different circumstances will be needed.
- Committee discussed the general nature of the proposal. Goal is to harmonize the requirement across all sectors and between provinces.

Covid Discussion

The Privacy Protection legislation is being confused by some workers as the OHSA. The committee discussed the paramedic communicable disease standard, and other acts/legislation that supersede, for example the Reopening Ontario act.

The committee discussed mandatory testing and vaccine policies. The committee spoke to some examples and approaches to programs to support testing and vaccine policies. Consideration was given to the personal/social/peer/family and work pressure to vaccinate or not to vaccinate as an individual. The committee spoke about the impact of implementation of policies and ensuring safety in firefighting and capacity. PSHSA shared some sample clauses relating to policies and staffing that may help.

Resources Provided in Chat: <https://www.ontario.ca/page/covid-19-vaccines-and-workplace-health-and-safety>

PSHSA update – Shared by S. Bastos on behalf of PSHSA

PSHSA update was provided by S. Bastos and was distributed to committee members. S. Bastos provided an overview of what’s going on at other Section 21 meetings.

- AGM – overview of our plan and our purpose “Elevate”
 - Part 1: Welcome, board report and AGM business
 - Part 2: CEO report and guest speakers
 - 2020-21 Annual Report and 2021-24 Strategic Plan
- Small Business Study – free access to certain resources
- October is MSD Prevention Month
- Research for IWH for online learning – PSHSA will be actively participating in comparing objectives and knowledge transfer with online learning vs in person learning
- CREOD – dermatitis, free learning and resources

New Business (All)

Stats – MOLTSD (J. Martin)

The committee reviewed website hits; the committee reviews this every 6 months to assess what guidance notes are being referenced most often (page views). 33 704 unique views, 45 341 total views – compared to previous 6 months, appears to be same level of engagement, however compared to past “Source Medium” (how people navigate to the guidance note page), we see an increase of users navigating to this page via a google search or the OAFIC website. This demonstrates people are finding the materials with ease.

Fire Services Annual Report (J. Martin)

The Fire Service Annual report provides stats and data on injury, incident, disease, occurrences, and refusals. We see a spike in Occupational illness – likely related to COVID. The committee discussed critical injury statistics year over year to assess if any increase and to consider risk of fatality. Findings show similar numbers year over year (2017-2021). The committee also reviewed the orders by region (visits, orders, contraveners/employers). There were 110 field visits to 68 distinct workplaces (in line with previous year) and there were 30 orders written, the

majority related to 25(2)a and 25(2)h. There is evidence in the orders that the Cancer Prevention checklist is being referenced by inspectors (ex PPE decontamination and decontamination of trucks)

Flash Over Units (J. Mavrincac)

The committee discussed that wood being burnt in units is not safe and the committee is looking for update on flash over units. The committee has inquired about units being operated in Ontario, OFC reports 2 units but not in use.

- **Action Item: J. Snider to inquire re: more details, what wood etc.**

PTSD (D. Worrall)

The committee discussed inviting “Wounded Warriors” to an upcoming meeting to discuss new programs on resiliency.

The committee learned that Canada employs 4 part time trauma specialists who are available by phone 24/7, so if there is a critical incident and you need to talk to someone urgently, this option is available to workers via the 1-800 number.

Resources Provided in Chat: <https://woundedwarriors.ca/our-programs/first-responder-assist/>

- **Action Item: D. Worrall to look into inviting guest speaker for December meeting prior to Agenda setting meeting.**

Silo Fires (J. Martin)

PSHSA inquired about Silo Fires as a topic for new eLearning development. The committee provided feedback and find that this is an infrequent but complicated and dangerous scenario for workers. The committee discussed that rural firefighters are aware of Silo Fire operations and the bins are a problem, but the dryers (dust build up) would also be a good area of focus. The committee identified that there is no guidance note. Additionally, machinery extraction would be good to consider for eLearning and guidance note. The committee supports any education available to members and believe that any eLearning for fire is beneficial, but we want to ensure it is consistent with the fire college and endorsed. The committee recommends that PSHSA should coordinate with OFMEM for consistency.

- **Action Item: R. Grimwood to ask OFMEM about current approach for information on this topic. R. Grimwood to ask about college endorsement and appropriate zones.**
- **Action Item: S. Bastos to clarify PSHSA intention and focus**

Next meeting dates:

December 2nd and 3rd 2021

Meeting concluded September 17, 2021 @15: 00 hrs.