

Meeting Minutes

Ontario Fire Service Advisory Committee (Section 21 Committee)

Friday, June 6, 2025 – 8:30 am - 12 pm

Meeting Held In-Person at 675 Cochrane Dr, East Tower, Markham

Attendance:

Rob Grimwood	OAFC – Committee Co-Chair
Dan Worrall	OPFFA – Committee Co-Chair
John Plater	OPFFA
Tim Sparks	OPFFA
Harry Baranik	OAFC
Aaron BurrIDGE	OAFC
Jeff Kirk	OAFC
Mark Pankhurst	AMO
Doug Kellam	Volunteer Firefighter
John Mcbeth	Office of the Fire Marshal (Observer)
Jason Eyres	MNR – Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES)
Chris Boccinfuso	MLITSD
Jon Lee	MLITSD (Prevention) (Observer)
Ricardo Romero	PSHSA (Consultant/Facilitator)
Kayla Thomson	PSHSA (Minutes)

Regrets:

Adam Neal	OPFFA
Cathy Hoffman	AMO
Andrew King	Volunteer Firefighter
Stephanie Maragna	MNR – Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES)
Ronald Landry	MLITSD
Patricia Clausen	PSHSA (Alternate facilitator)

Greetings – D. Worrall and R. Grimwood

- D. Worrall greeted the committee and welcomed them on day two of our committee meeting. He also welcomed J. Lee from the prevention division who attended the last meeting in April and will continue to join us as an observer on the committee.
- J. Lee thanked the committee for having him and introduced himself, leading the committee in a round table of introductions.

Review of Minutes from the April Meeting – D. Worrall and R. Grimwood

- No changes.

ACTION: K. Thomson to remove draft watermark and send to OAFC for posting.

Guidance Notes

Update on guidance notes currently with the ministry – C. Boccinfuso

GN-3-03 Heat and Cold Stress

- Guidance note was sent for comments through the ministry and C. Boccinfuso is waiting for approval.

The following GNs are still going through the ministry process:

- GN 5-03 Workplace Violence
- GN-6-18 Unprotected Lightweight Building Construction
- GN-6-26 Structural Firefighting Tactics
- GN 6-48 Marine Vessels
- GN 6-49 Encampments
- GN 6-50 Lithium-Ion Batteries
- GN 6-51 Air Monitoring
- GN 6-52 Firefighter Safety Around Rail Lines
- GN 6-54 Rail Emergencies
- GN 6-55 Supplementary Support Vehicles
- GN 7-08 Live Fire Training

Review new/revised guidance notes

GN 6-19 Alternative Powered Vehicles

- C. Boccinfuso read through the guidance note with the committee
- There were word changes and additions completed as well as some reorganization of existing content between sections including the description change from electric vehicles to alternative fuel vehicles (AFV).
- The committee discussed alternative fuel types and safety regulations and concerns.

ACTION: C. Boccinfuso to send K. Thomson the guidance note to go out to comment through the OAFCC.

GN 6-53 Energy Storage Systems

- Co-chairs approved changes.

ACTION: K. Thomson to send the guidance note out to comment through the OAFCC.

Cyclical review – C. Boccinfuso

- The guidance notes from last cycle's cyclical review have been approved. C. Boccinfuso is waiting for the French translation, and the updates will be posted soon.
- C. Boccinfuso is hoping that the guidance notes that were lost last year would hopefully be ready by September.
- The committee decided to pause the cyclical reviews until the backlog of guidance notes finish going through ministry review.

Cancer Prevention Checklist – R. Grimwood, D. Worrall, H. Baranik, and C. Hoffman

- R. Grimwood gave an overview of the April meeting's discussion and the completion of the edits to the checklist.
- R. Grimwood reminded the committee to review the checklists sent to them from other provinces to compare with ours

ACTION: Committee to come back in September having reviewed checklists and come with thoughts and ideas for ours.

MLITSD Policy Update

- No update.
- D. Worrall spoke with the committee about an email sent to the CPO with recommendations.
- The committee still has not received the document from policy regarding the recommendations as presented during the last meeting.

Ontario Regulation 714/94 Modernization – D. Worrall

- D. Worrall will be attending a meeting coming up where updates on the 7/14 will be given.
- There is also a meeting coming up on the topic of occupational illness that D. Worrall will be attending.
- An OPFFA seminar will have a speaker present to talk about testosterone levels, cortisol, and sleep apnea.
 - J. Lee spoke about exposure rates with different jobs in connection to testosterone and cortisol levels.

Cancer Prevention Working Group – R. Grimwood, D. Worrall, C. Hoffman, M. Pankhurst, and K. Thomson

Review data from WSIB

- C. Boccinfuso received summary data from the WSIB.
- D. Worrall went through the data with the committee.
- Notable:
 - Cancer:
 - Female cancers are exceeding the averages.
 - Regionally, there is more data with career firefighters, so some areas are higher reported than others due to types of firefighters (volunteer vs. career).
 - More cancers continue to be added as data comes available.
 - Average age of diagnosis within the first 5 years of diagnosis. For example, testicular cancer is in the 40s.
 - 60K is the average cost of non-fatal cancers.
 - \$440K is the average cost of fatal cancers, \$550M spent on cancer since presumptive legislation came about in about 2007.
 - Mental health:
 - Average age is still a long way from retirement.
 - Northern areas with smaller departments have less access to resources.
 - The committee discussed direction from the ministry to protect workers from mental and psychological health crisis.’
- The committee discussed PTSD prevention plans and how they were asked to make them, but it was not required or enforced. Some people who created the original plan are no longer in the service, current members have made changes, but the original plan cannot be changed even though it’s not being followed. Suggestion would be to bring it back and make them required, enforce their creation and use.
- The committee discussed the need for support in preventing PTSD in their members.

- The committee discussed medical surveillance and how it has a mental health component.
- It was emphasised that updates to O. Reg 7/14 is key in future prevention.

ACTION: The working group is to meet and discuss next steps.

OPFFA Update – D. Worrall

- D. Worrall is currently working on the lobbying for medical surveillance and O. Reg 7/14.
- There is a seminar in the fall which R. Grimwood will be speaking at.

OAFC Update – R. Grimwood

- The OAFC health and safety seminar is happening in November in Niagara Falls.

PSHSA Update – R. Romero

Updates:

- First Responders First website
- Anti Stigma Initiative
- Prevention Plans
- SOLGEN's Mental Health for PSP (MH4PSP) program via Warrior Health
- Workplace Wellbeing Webinar Series – Free Monthly Learning Opportunity

First responders first website:

- The Public Services Health and Safety Association (PSHSA) is working to evolve and expand firstrespondersfirst.ca and develop a new campaign to reduce stigma and raise awareness around mental health for public safety personnel (PSP).

As part of this initiative, we're inviting you to complete a short digital survey. This is your chance to share your thoughts, experiences, and ideas to help guide how we communicate, support, and connect with the PSP community.

The survey takes about 10–15 minutes to complete, and your insights will directly inform the development of the new website and campaign.

While responses may be linked to individual participants, all feedback will be used anonymously and shared only in aggregate. Your voice matters, and we're committed to ensuring this work reflects the needs and realities of those it's built for.

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PSHSAPublicSurvey>

The survey will remain open until **June 6th, 2025** — feel free to share the link with others in your network who may want to participate as well!

Anti-stigma initiative

- PSHSA is supporting the Ministry of the Solicitor General's Anti-Stigma Strategy to address the stigma surrounding mental health among Ontario's Public Safety Personnel (PSP). PSHSA is supporting three parts of this initiative – 1) mental health training for PSP leaders; 2) redesigned resource website; and 3) provincial anti-stigma campaign.
 - Development of training is currently underway, tentative launch Fall 2025

- Development of the website and campaign currently underway, starting with sector engagement
- Engagement sessions with PSPs, employers, and families to inform the design of the website and campaign taking place May 20-28th through interviews and focus groups
- We are also launching a digital survey for those who couldn't participate in the interviews or focus groups. This survey will offer another opportunity for the PSP community to voice their thoughts and to ensure we capture a wide range of perspectives.

Prevention plans

- Join PSHSA's research team on June 24th from 12:00-1:00PM for an insightful webinar exploring the latest findings on post-traumatic stress injury (PTSI) prevention in public safety organizations. This session will provide an overview of the results of the study, highlight recommendations, and introduce new resources designed to support public safety organizations in strengthening their PTSI prevention efforts.

Registration: <https://www.pshsa.ca/ptsi-prevention-in-public-safety>

With the launch of the grant program of Warrior Health services, SOLGEN will be recommending Public Safety Organizations update their Prevention Plans. For organizations interested in updating their plans, PSHSA will be providing consulting and resources support (*funded under EMIP until March 31, 2026*). More information to come following the announcement from SOLGEN.

R2, MMH or OSIR continues to be offered to PSOs (*funded under EMIP until March 31, 2026*).

SOLGEN's Mental Health for PSP (MH4PSP) program via Warrior Health

- The MH4PSP program is a grant initiative from the Ministry of the Solicitor General (SOLGEN) in partnership with Warrior Health. It aims to provide specialized mental health supports for Ontario's trauma-exposed public safety personnel (PSP) and their families.

Application Details:

- Applications are now open.
- Funding is available to eligible Ontario municipal/regional and First Nation public safety organizations (PSOs).
- Up to \$25,000 per PSO, with a possible \$5,000 top-up for Northern Ontario and First Nation PSOs.
- Funds support fee-for-service mental health programs through Warrior Health.
- Application deadline: June 27, 2025.

Learn more on website: <https://warriorhealth.ca/en>

Workplace wellbeing webinar series – free monthly learning opportunity

- PSHSA is hosting a free, year-long webinar series aimed at integrating wellbeing into workplace practices. Each month, expert consultants deliver practical, evidence-based tools and strategies focused on organizational wellbeing.

Key Details:

- Who Should Attend? Health & safety professionals, HR leaders, supervisors, and wellness champions in public safety and municipal sectors.
- Format: Online webinars – one hour each, held monthly.
- Cost: Free for all participants.
- Upcoming Topics:
 - May 14: Strengthening Your Foundation – Seamlessly Integrating Wellbeing Practices
 - June 18: Assessing and Controlling Psychological Harm on the Job
 - July 16: Exploring a Shared Responsibility for Workplace Wellbeing
 - August 20: Workplace Wellbeing for Small Businesses
 - September 17: Understanding the Root Causes of Psychological Harm
 - October 15: Managing Psychosocial Factors for Injury Prevention
 - November 19: Mental Health Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work – The Basics
 - December 17: Building Your Mental Health Stay-at-Work/Return-to-Work Toolkit
- Register today at: <https://www.pshsa.ca/workplace-wellbeing-webinar-series>

MLITSD Update – C. Boccinfuso

- Inspectors are being empowered to find new ways to achieve compliance.
- “See it, cite it” is no more, they will aim to ensure employers will make promises to achieve compliance if something is missing which may lead to a check in from inspectors.
- The idea is that from an administrative side, they will document issues but not order.
- Looking for feedback on this:
 - D. Worrall shared that citing might be enforced more from an employer. Without enforcement, it may get ignored or deprioritized by employers.
 - It was noted that they will still cite orders but now there will be an option for inspectors to ask for compliance plans, which is essentially a timed order.
 - Helps with minor infringements to get corrected.
- This would be for very minor issues, more administrative, that can be easily fixed.

Committee Communications – K. Thomson, D. Kellam and A. King

ACTION: Moved to September

PFAS Discussion – All

- The committee discussed number of bunker gear sets per member.
- New bunker gear is flagged as needing to be replaced after maybe 5 years not 10 years. Funding will have to come from other programs.
- New, higher cost bunker gear wouldn’t necessarily be safer. A campaign of some sort is currently being worked on to help members understand that they need be looked after more regularly.

MNR – Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES) – J. Eyres

- J. Eyres talked about the wildfires happening across Canada and the evacuations within these communities.
- International resources will be needed; they are unable to handle the number of fires on their own.
- J. Eyres provided an updated on the CROSH projects S. Maragna spoke about during the last meeting.

- A mental health program has been implemented but still being updated.

Inviting Stakeholders and Dignitaries to Future Meeting

- There is an outstanding request to the minister.

ACTION: C. Boccinfuso to follow up and get a date.

- The committee discussed the cleaning of bunker gear.
- J. Lee asked if the committee has seen a vapour cloud from an EV fire vs. a house fire. The EV cloud isn't just smoke, it's heavy metals.
- It is unsure if the current cleaning regiment for gear works on EV fires given the metals that are in the smoke. This could be a good opportunity for a speaker or some research.

Finalize Locations for the Third and Fourth Quarter Meetings

- September – St. Catherines.
- December – Ajax.

ACTION: K. Thomson to update meeting invites.

New Business

Discussion about the previous day's joint meeting – All

- The committee discussed the previous day's joint meeting.
- D. Worrall and R. Grimwood will reach out to the other committee co-chairs to talk about slow down, move over.

Pipelines emergencies – D. Worrall

- D. Worrall brought the idea to the attention of the committee on how a guidance note for pipelines emergencies is greatly needed and the committee agreed.

ACTION: M. Pankhurst and J. Kirk to form working group and provide an update during the next meeting.

Guidance note template

ACTION: C. Boccinfuso to send the committee the current template for guidance notes.

OCC illness – J. Lee

- They are working on the prevention strategy, and the section 21 committees will be communicated on this soon.

2025 meeting dates:

- September 15 and 16 – St. Catherines
- December 4 and 5 – Ajax