

Meeting Minutes

Ontario Fire Service Advisory Committee (Section 21 Committee)

Monday, September 15, 2025 – 12 pm – 4:30 pm
Tuesday, September 16, 2025 – 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Meeting Held In-Person at Ministry Offices, 301 St Paul St, St Catharines

Attendance:

Rob Grimwood	OAFC – Committee Co-Chair
Dan Worrall	OPFFA – Committee Co-Chair
Jackie Roberson	OPFFA
John Plater	OPFFA
Luke Pedersen	OPFFA
Aaron BurrIDGE	OAFC
Harry Baranik	OAFC
Jeff Kirk	OAFC
Mark Pankhurst	AMO
John Mcbeth	Office of the Fire Marshal (Observer)
Chris Boccinfuso	MLITSD
David Winter	MLITSD
Amber Sayed	MLITSD (Prevention) (Observer)
Jon Lee	MLITSD (Prevention) (Observer)
Ricardo Romero	PSHSA (Consultant/Facilitator)
Kayla Thomson	PSHSA (Minutes)

Regrets:

Andrew King	Volunteer Firefighter
Doug Kellam	Volunteer Firefighter
Jason Eyres	MNR – Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES)
Stephanie Maragna	MNR – Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES)
Ronald Landry	MLITSD
Patricia Clausen	PSHSA (Alternate facilitator)

Guests:

Chris Plater	MNR – Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES)
Jackie Sam	PSHSA

Monday, September 15, 2025 – 12 pm – 4:30 pm

Greetings – D. Worrall and R. Grimwood

- D. Worrall and R. Grimwood welcomed the committee to the meeting.
- The committee and guests participated in a round table of introductions.

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

- No changes.

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

Guidance Notes

Guidance notes date errors

- The committee flagged that all guidance notes on the ministry website now state they were all updated in August 2025, this is incorrect.

ACTION: C. Boccinfuso will look into the issue.

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

- Waiting for approvals
 - GN-3-03 Heat and Cold Stress
 - 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 Line
 - GN 6-54 Rail Emergencies
 - GN 6-55 Supplementary Support Vehicles
 - GN 7-08 Live Fire Training
- R. Grimwood asked if it would be possible to get this moving before the OAFIC event in November so that way the update isn't the same as last year.

Review guidance notes comments

- GN 6-19 Alternative Powered Vehicles
 - Comment forms reviewed and approved.
- GN 6-53 Energy Storage Systems
 - No comments received.
- Final committee review
 - C. Boccinfuso went through the guidance notes with the committee one last time to confirm they are still approved or require changes requested by committee members.
 - A terminology change from the committee was discussed and updated in the final version of GN 6-19 Alternative Powered Vehicles.
 - A terminology change from the MLITSD was discussed and changed in the final version of GN 6-53 Energy Storage Systems.

ACTION: C. Boccinfuso to send guidance notes through ministry process.

Review new/revised guidance notes:

- GN #-## Pipeline Emergencies – M. Pankhurst and J. Kirk
 - D. Worrall shared that he has a connection who would be interested in reviewing this draft guidance note with M. Pankhurst and J. Kirk.

ACTION: D. Worrall to reach out to M. Pankhurst and J. Kirk to connect them with the guidance note reviewer.

ACTION: Move to next meeting.

MLITSD Policy Update – C. Boccinfuso

- The policy team was unable to attend this meeting. C. Boccinfuso provided an update for the committee on their behalf.
- There is finally some political drive behind updates to Ontario Regulation 714/94.
- There will be some news coming forward in the next few months, the co-chairs will receive an update ahead of the next meeting.

OPFFA Update – D. Worrall

- The modernization of O Reg. 714 was discussed and how it's a necessity for this to be updated as we've discussed during a majority of the past committee meetings.
- D. Worrall talked about the OPFFA seminar coming up and the planned activities happening during the seminar.
- D. Worrall thanked the two new committee members for joining us (J. Roberson and L. Pedersen) and is looking forward to working with them. He also spoke about how Tim Sparks and Adam Neal will be missed.
- D. Worrall shared that he will be attending the OAFC Annual General Meeting this November.

OAFC Update – R. Grimwood

- R. Grimwood talked about the OAFC Annual General Meeting happening in November including the agenda and speakers.
- R. Grimwood shared that the OPFFA previously had Dave Van de Laar speak about electric vehicles at a previous event and it was well received.
- The OAFC Fire Con event in Thunder Bay happened last week with a great turnout.
- R. Grimwood shared with the committee that he attended the AMO conference. He spoke with a few notable individuals about mental health, slow down move over, emergency response, abandoned gas wells, building code changes, funding and other common interests.
- R. Grimwood shared that the Fire Protection Grant is being doubled as announced by the government back in August.
 - [You can read more about the grant by clicking here.](#)
- There are three new working groups at OAFC:
 - Teared response
 - Abandoned gas wells
 - Northern and Northern Fire Protection Program fire departmentsMore to come on this.
- R. Grimwood spoke about how the OAFC and MNR are working together on interoperability (training, equipment, procedures etc.) between wildland and structural firefighters.

PSHSA Update –J. Sam

PTSD prevention plans

Slides presented:



PSHSA Updates -
Prevention plan pro.

- J. Sam gave an overview of the history of prevention plan requirements and what's happening currently in that space.
- J. Sam reminded everyone on what PSHSA has been working on in regards to prevention plans in line with what she presented last time to the committee.

Committee discussion points

- D. Worrall noted if organizations are investing, are they getting anything in return? “We spent [blank dollars] on our programs, it’s working, we get some incentive”.
- R. Grimwood followed up with that this wasn’t an enforcement, it was just a recommendation with no consequences or incentives. Current programs do not match submissions from 2017 with staff and/or individual plan changes. This really needs to be part of the OHSA.
- The committee flagged that there is a lot going on in the mental health space right now.
- The committee discussed the Warrior Health grant.
 - [You can click here to learn more about Warrior Health.](#)

Anti-stigma

Slides presented:



PSHSA Update -
Anti-Stigma Campaign

- J. Sam gave an overview of the anti-stigma project and presented creative assets to accompany the campaign.

Committee discussion points

- The committee discussed their thoughts on the campaign assets including copy and design mood boards.
- There were a mix of thoughts on the campaign but overall, the committee enjoyed all options.

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

- No update at this time due to summer vacations and conflicting schedules.
- The committee discussed a variety of marketing strategies.

ACTION: D. Worrall, R. Grimwood and J. Mcbeth will connect K. Thomson and their marketing teams to talk about strategy.

Prevention Strategy Presentation – J. Lee

- J. Lee gave an overview of his work within prevention and his roles previous as well as his connection to the prevention work.
- J. Lee presented a draft OHS strategy for 2026-2031, they are seeking feedback.

Committee discussion points

- Guiding principles
 - C. Boccinfuso flagged that the term “Partnership” is vague and needs some explanation on what kind of business would fall under that category.
 - J. Lee noted that the internal responsibility system section is important here, not a lot of people understand it.
 - Strengthening the Internal Responsibility System (IRS) keeps people safe.
 - C. Plater shared instances where a strong IRS would have benefitted a situation in wildland firefighting.
 - H. Baranik talked about lack of communication and how strong communication is necessary.
- Objective 1: Control the highest risk hazards’

- J. Roberson asked how these general hazard recognitions will be specific to fire services?
 - J. Lee shared that it's all about collaboration. This helps us all work together to find general solutions that can be tailored to any specific sector.
- D. Worrall talked about medical surveillance, testing and screening. We need something more robust in written guidance.
- H. Baranik flagged that a lot of the younger firefighters need more information on what may come down the road for them health wise. Again, communications with the younger generation is greatly needed.
- C. Boccinfuso flagged the term "control" as a poor choice. Focus, address, etc. would be a better choice. There are instances that are hard to control, but they can be focussed.
- C. Boccinfuso also flagged that there needs to be more defining.
- Objective 2: Cultivate a culture of prevention in workplaces
 - It was asked how the ministry would do this considering workplace culture is specific to the workplace, it's internal.
 - J. Lee said it may be something like incentive and or making something a requirement/legal.
 - D. Worrall flagged that the fire services are often times not understood, which means they don't receive the proper help causing incidents to happen.
 - C. Boccinfuso talked about reactive vs proactive work and creating a culture where you can be incentivised if you are accredited, if you have workplace fatalities, you lose the accreditation.
- Objective 3: Improve OHS compliance and strive for excellence
 - R. Grimwood flagged that this is a bit vague but getting a low performer up to standard compliant expectation is essential.
 - The term "Excellence" is unclear. Most businesses want to be compliant, but compliance is a waveform for most businesses, especially for small businesses.
 - R. Grimwood flagged that they want performance improvement. Those that are already compliant can always get better, there is always room for improvement, but those below the minimum need to improve. What really is excellence?
- Objective 4: Cross jurisdiction integration and harmonization
 - D. Worrall talked about differences between types of firefighters and then even more of a difference once you leave the province, harmonization is needed. Fire crews from Ontario might go to Quebec to help with fires. Resources can be brought in from other provinces and we can help each other but the training and equipment is just different which is a roadblock.
 - C. Boccinfuso flagged that this is a legislative issue and organizations like the health and safety associations (HSAs) cannot help here. No system partners can make it happen. It's less about health and safety, more about the ability to do the work. Not a system issue, a prevention issue. He would consider a different fourth objective, this may not be relevant in a year or two.
 - J. Lee talked about how he can understand where C. Boccinfuso is coming from, but prevention still needs support from the HSAs to work directly with their sectors. It's not just prevention, harmony is needed. It takes everyone working together to create and continue the harmony.
 - NFPA has an international standard now because of this harmonization point. It's working well across a lot of emergency services. Right now, we are probably beginning to be ahead of the game.

ACTION: K. Thomson shared a survey message and link from J. Lee with the committee. Committee members are encouraged to participate.

Tuesday, September 16, 2025 – 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

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

- The committee went over updates the working group completed to the cancer prevention checklist including their reasoning behind certain changes after reviewing similar checklists from other provinces.
- There were more updates to grammar and word choices while the committee did a read through. They were completed by C. Boccinfuso live.

ACTION: C. Boccinfuso to send R. Grimwood and D. Worrall the current checklist after this read through.

ACTION: R. Grimwood and D. Worrall to finalize and send the checklist back to the committee in a few weeks. The final checklist to be completed by the next meeting.

Cancer Prevention Sub-Committee – R. Grimwood, D. Worrall, M. Pankhurst, and K. Thomson

- The sub-committee was unable to meet due to schedule conflicts and summer vacations.

ACTION: K. Thomson to send out a poll to the sub-committee and try again in the fall to schedule a meeting.

PSHSA Cancer Prevention Update –J. Sam

- There is a Health Canada grant that PSHSA is applying for to go towards cancer prevention resources.
- J. Sam is looking for support from OAFC and the OPFFA on the application. She is looking for signatures on their letter.
- R. Grimwood and D. Worrall shared that PSHSA is not the only organization to ask them. They would need to go to their respective boards for approvals which is timely. They have not replied to any of the requests yet.
- R. Grimwood and D. Worrall gave permission to mention that PSHSA works with the Section 21 Committee in acknowledgement of their work with committee, they will share a similar response with the other organizations requesting support.

MNR – Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES) – C. Plater

- C. Plater spoke about the Bill 27 (Forest fire prevention act) movement, not much to update on at this moment.
- It was a busy fire season, roughly 540 fires, 400,000 hectares burned above the average.
- Everyone was busy at the same time. A lot of international partners weren't able to help since they were also busy themselves and could not afford to send help.
- Kanora, Fort Frances, Thunder Bay and Red Lake were notable fires. Large spread damage, cottage areas and populated areas that needed evacuation.
- Fire behaviour is nothing like it was in the past. It's moving at night and taking long runs quickly. They were more cautious with communities this year given the unpredictability.
- Some flooding evacuation happened this year as well, people had to be moved by helicopter.

- In total, 10 communities evacuated. Some were asking to get back home faster but because of erratic fire behaviour, they couldn't.
- A small group from Alberta and Wisconsin early on in the season came to help.
- They've sent help to Saskatchewan, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and BC once they were in a better place.
- They're trying to see if there are other areas they could pull help from (Alberta pulls from Costa Rica for example). They haven't helped with the Western US before because of the type of fires and the style of firefighting which they don't really have the experience in. They are considering a partnership with BC on some sort of assistance when needed.
- C. Plater spoke about a type of technology that can go into detail using environmental information on if fires will start, when and how bad they could be.
- There were few safety concerns this year. One involved an investigation and they're just getting to the root cause now. A pit coil ended up on a tent and setting it on fire. There were also medical evacuations for heat illness.
- There were a couple helicopter issues, a few went down. There's fatigue happening with long hours and continual deployment. They're trying to find mitigating factors for that.
- Smoke and dermal exposure are major concerns, and they just aren't there with knowledge on the issue.
- They got extra PPE and are teaching firefighters how to stay safe from particulates.
- There is a culture of "Looking cool" covered in soot as a wildland firefighter, this needs to end, it's a health and safety concern.
- The committee received another overview of the projects with Laurentian and CROSH as mentioned in previous meetings. He updated that they are just getting into the reports now. Once reviewed, it will help in designing programs they need to protect their firefighters.
- There are some high levels of silica, CO and benzene. They're looking into it with the hygienist who also want to talk to staff about the findings, so that they are aware. Levels being high isn't good, but they've identified issues and are working on finding solutions to protect their firefighters.
- They're partnering with universities to teach wildland firefighting to get more recruits. If they simplify training and make it more accessible, they could get more younger firefighters.
- WSIB came to speak with them. They asked about what positions would be a concern with wildland firefighting and what the individual job concerns are. This is a tough question to answer as they don't have specific roles as jobs fluctuate from desk to in the field fighting fires, to evacuation, etc.
- An organizational assessment is happening. They are assessing if the current model holds up or if they need to make changes.

Inviting Stakeholders and Dignitaries to Future Meetings – All

- The meeting invite to Minister Picini has been revised. They are trying again to have him attend a meeting in December, but his attendance may have to be moved to 2026.
- The committee would like to have the Fire Marshal attend a meeting.
 - J. Mcbeth suggested Midhurst as an option for a meeting so the Fire Marshal can attend. We would stay in Barrie.
- SOLGEN wants to attend but they'd like Picini to attend first, then SOLGEN, out of respect since this is the Minister's committee.

OFM Update – J. Mcbeth

- J. Mcbeth spoke about recent events and how they have been great.

- Test your smoke alarm day is coming up which will have various events and a campaign.
- Fire prevention week will have a lithium-ion battery focus.
- Training and certifications:
 - There are lots of pilots happening for rope and confined spaces. These pilots are wrapping up and will be available in the 2026 calendar.
 - Mobile fire training pilot is also almost completed.
 - Lithium-ion battery VR scenarios are almost completed and will go to the fire college. More coming on that.

PFAS Discussion – All

- New bunker gear in Mississauga:
 - Mississauga has ordered new bunker gear that has gone through testing and is manufactured with no intentionally added PFAS. The challenge is that once it is exposed to PFAS, it (like any other object) will no longer be entirely PFAS free.
 - They are confident that the gear will perform well in thermal protection, one concern was repelling liquids. They're working on training for bunker gear performance and limitation. One thing they need to stress is if you kneel into, say, oil, it isn't going to repel as it used to, it will need to go out for advanced cleaning immediately. If they don't, and they go into a fire the next day, there is a possibility on the absorbed oil could catch fire.
 - They also don't know about the longevity of the gear.
 - They're only approximately 15% more in cost, which isn't a lot considering the last time they bought gear.
- The federal government is continuing to look into banning PFAS.
- The committee discussed increases to types of cancer reported and bunker gear wearing time.

New business

Fire service orders annual report – C. Boccinfuso

- C. Boccinfuso gave an overview of service orders from the fire services.
- The committee asked for clarification on the fatalities data.

ACTION: C. Boccinfuso and D. Winter to look into fatalities information and provide data to D. Worrall and R. Grimwood.

ACTION: C. Boccinfuso to pull full 2025 data for the February 2026 meeting.

Fire services section 21 guidance note page views report – C. Boccinfuso

- C. Boccinfuso gave an overview of users coming to the guidance note landing pages.

Section 21 emergency services committees joint meeting discussion – D. Worrall and R. Grimwood

- After the June joint meeting, it was discussed the kind of content that was presented. These events could be even more useful between all committees. The committees are all still interested in getting together as a group with a very specific agenda.
- This will take time to plan and figure out logistically so stay tuned.

Section 21 co-chair council – D. Worrall and R. Grimwood

- Police, fire, paramedic and healthcare co-chairs met to discuss common topics.

2026 meeting dates and locations – All

- **February 5 and 6:** Waterloo
- **June 4 and 5:** Springwater/Midhurst
- **September 28 and 29:** PSHSA
- **December 3 and 4:** Ajax

ACTION: K. Thomson to send out meeting invites for 2026 and coordinate with committee members from these areas on meeting locations and hotels.

Health and safety association survey – D. Worrall

- D. Worrall gave an overview of the ask from Dr. Moody regarding health and safety associations and our specific one (PSHSA) and encouraged the committee to complete the survey that was sent to them.

ACTION: Committee members to complete the HSA survey attached in the meeting invite.

Working at heights

- Hamilton fire came forward with questions regarding working at heights and protocols.
- WAH doesn't specify fire services and what they have to do. There isn't really any guidance on this.
- The committee discussed recommendations for the fire services to complete WAH training.
- It was flagged that technically, WAH is only required for construction, legally.
- It's a grey area for fire services, especially when crews are up more than 10 feet and performing non-emergency work.
- If a firefighter were to fall off the truck on a highway bridge and be seriously injured or worse, it wouldn't be a grey area. They should have had WAH training.
- Fire fighters are sometimes over risked for limited outcomes. Sometimes there is manufactured urgency because we are firefighters and are here to save lives, but their lives are important as well and safety is important which is forgotten about.

ACTION: K. Thomson to add a working at heights guidance note item to the agenda for the next meeting.

University of Alberta

- D. Worrall was contacted regarding EV damage to bunker gear from Toronto Fire.
- The University of Alberta is doing some work about EV effects on bunker gear.

Fire poles guidance note

- The committee discussed fire poles and how there has been outreach regarding the need for a guidance note. A lot of departments have had them removed but it's a safety concern for the areas that still have them installed.

ACTION: K. Thomson to add a fire pole guidance note item to the agenda for the next meeting.

2025 Meeting Dates

- December 4 and 5