

Meeting Minutes

Ontario Fire Service Advisory Committee (Section 21 Committee)

Thursday, December 4, 2025 – 12 pm – 4:30 pm

Friday, December 5, 2025 – 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Meeting Held In-Person at the Ajax Community Centre (75 Centennial Rd, Ajax ON L1S 4S4)

Attendance:

Rob Grimwood	O AFC – Committee Co-Chair
Dan Worrall	OPFFA – Committee Co-Chair
Jackie Roberson	OPFFA
John Plater	OPFFA
Luke Pedersen	OPFFA
Aaron Burridge	O AFC
Harry Baranik	O AFC
Jeff Kirk	O AFC
Mark Pankhurst	AMO
Doug Kellam	Volunteer Firefighter
John Mcbeth	Office of the Fire Marshal (Observer)
Chris Boccinfuso	MLITSD
Amber Sayed	MLITSD (Prevention) (Observer) (Virtual)
Jon Lee	MLITSD (Prevention) (Observer)
Tasha Pinkerton	MNR – Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES)
Chris Plater	MNR – Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES)
Ricardo Romero	PSHSA (Consultant/Facilitator)
Kayla Thomson	PSHSA (Minutes)

Regrets:

Andrew King	Volunteer Firefighter
David Winter	MLITSD
Ronald Landry	MLITSD
Patricia Clausen	PSHSA (Alternate facilitator)

Guests:

Minister Piccini	MLITSD (Friday)
Dr. Joel Moody	MLITSD (Friday)
Genna McMillan	OPFFA (Friday, Virtual)

Thursday, December 4, 2025 – 12 pm – 4:30 pm

Greetings – D. Worrall and R. Grimwood

- The committee did a roundtable of introductions for T. Pinkerton.
- R. Grimwood gave an overview of the volunteer firefighter position on the committee that has just opened. A. King's 2-year term is almost over, and the committee will need a replacement.
- R. Grimwood asked M. Pankhurst for an update on who is filing the other AMO vacancy since Cathy Hoffman's retirement. There is no update at this time.

ACTION: M. Pankhurst to send C. Boccinfuso information regarding the position recommendation from AMO and he will look into where they are at in the review on the ministry side.

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

- The minutes were approved.

ACTION: K. Thomson to send the previous meeting minutes to OAFC for posting.

Guidance Notes – C. Boccinfuso

Update on guidance note date issue – C. Boccinfuso

- Ontario.ca has an update that messed up guidance notes. It's being worked on.

Cyclical review – C. Boccinfuso

2-1 Incident command

- There were a few changes to the guidance note including grammar and word changes.
- Some bullet points were changed to add more details.
- NFPA standards were added.

2-2 Crew integrity

- There were a few changes to the guidance note including grammar and word changes.
- Some bullet points were changed to add more details.
- NFPA standards were added.

2-3 Radio communications

- There were a few changes to the guidance note including grammar and word changes.
- Some bullet points were changed to add more details.
- The committee talked about how Bell is mostly what is used for communications and during an outage, they lose complete communication.
- It was added to the guidance note about the need for a backup in case there is a communications failure, no matter what provider a service is using.
- NFPA standards were added.

2-4 Incident safety officer

- There were a few changes to the guidance note including grammar and word changes.
- Some bullet points were changed to add more details.
- NFPA standards were added.

2-7 Reporting exposures to biological, chemical and physical agents

- The title of the guidance note was simplified to "Reporting exposures".
- There were a few changes to the guidance note including grammar and word changes.
- Some bullet points were changed to add more details.
- NFPA standards were added.
- The committee talked about exposure reports and what data they collect. They also discussed cancer prevention.
- The committee discussed heat exposure to firefighters.

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

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

- C. Boccinfuso gave an overview of the life cycle of a guidance note to the committee from committee creation to posting and all of the 9 steps.
- C. Boccinfuso provided an update on where the guidance notes currently are within the ministry process. The majority of guidance notes are still waiting for different levels of approvals.

ACTION: C. Boccinfuso to send the spreadsheet to the committee

- The committee talked about the process delays and what they can do to get guidance notes moving along. These notes are greatly needed.
- R. Grimwood talked about the last time there was a delay like this. Having these delays effects members, the people the committee is trying to protect.
- M. Pankhurst asked if we can provide drafts to members.
 - It's a mixed reaction. It allows early intervention but we don't want to overstep the ministry, especially the legal review of guidance notes.

ACTION: C. Boccinfuso to look into this idea

Review new/revised Guidance Notes:

GN #-## Pipeline emergencies (M. Pankhurst and J. Kirk)

- M. Pankhurst and J. Kirk went through the guidance note with the committee line by line.
- There were a few changes that were made including the organization of the must and should sections.

ACTION: K. Thomson to send the guidance note out for comment through O AFC.

Cancer Prevention Checklist – R. Grimwood and D. Worrall

- R. Grimwood and D. Worrall went through the checklist with the committee.
- Since their last update, there were a few changes to grammar and word use as well as additions to add details.
- The committee discussed fire wipes being used post-fire on the head and neck. There is now a brand called “Fire wipes” and the term needs to change so they aren't giving an advantage to one specific company.
- The committee discussed bunker gear cleaning requirements and extractors.
- C. Boccinfuso noted that he pulled stats on occupational hygiene reports with the ministry in the past 18 months and only 18 services had reports. It seems like there is a lot of data not being reported. The numbers may just be going to the WSIB.

ACTION: R. Grimwood to send out the checklist to the committee, any comments need to be in before end of year.

ACTION: C. Boccinfuso to send the checklist to the hygienists for their take once the committee has reviewed.

MLITSD Policy Update

- No update.

MLITSD Prevention Update – J. Lee

- J. Lee thanked everyone for filling out the survey following his presentation during the last meeting.

- They has about 1,000 participants during stakeholder engagement and are taking that data and working on the next step: Strategic actions and plan.
- J. Lee gave an overview of prevention's review of the current JHSC standard.
- The last JHSC standard was from 2016, with a 5-year review in 2021.
- There are 3 main pillars of focus:
 1. Increase accessibility.
 2. Improve processes.
 3. Enhance quality of learning.
- The timeline has approved content starting July 2, 2026.

ACTION: J. Lee to send slides to K. Thomson and K. Thomson to send to the committee

- The committee had questions regarding content changes to the certification and asked if part 2 related to fire safety will change. At this moment, J. Lee is unsure of what changes will come.
- The committee flagged that it would be nice to be involved in discussion regarding sector specific part 2. J. Lee and A. Sayed to bring that feedback to the team working on the training update.

OPFFA Update – D. Worrall

- D. Worrall gave an overview of events that recently happened at the OPFFA.
- D. Worrall spoke about lobbying surrounding slow down move over that he is a part of.
- D. Worrall heard about a number of suicides that happened this year, perhaps more than he is aware of. They're trying to get to the bottom of this with the coroner's inquest.
- Year over year, tractor trailer incidents are up in his area.
- D. Worrall is continuing to work with Minister Piccini on exposure reporting tools.
- There is a bill going through the house that aims to protect fire fighters from assault.
 - Learn more: <https://www.iaff.org/news/parliament-advances-iaff-backed-legislation-to-deter-assaults-on-fire-fighters-and-paramedics/>
- D. Worrall spoke about catastrophic acute exposure.

O AFC Update – R. Grimwood

- R. Grimwood gave an overview of events that recently happened at the O AFC.
- R. Grimwood announced that M. Pankhurst won an award for his 35+ years of service.
- R. Grimwood also announced that he has stepped down as president of the O AFC.
- A. Burrige has joined the board of directors.
- In November of 2026, there will be a relaunch of the AGM to also include the tradeshow and health and safety seminar. They will be putting all of these events together for 8 days.
- R. Grimwood spoke about lobbying currently happening for department financial support, early cancer detection, and slow down move over.

PSHSA Update – R. Romero

The electrical safety handbook for emergency responders (5th edition, 2013) is now undergoing a full update

This work is being led by the Office of the Fire Marshal, in partnership with ESA, Hydro One, and PSHSA. Our mandate is straightforward: modernize the handbook, enhance clarity, and ensure it delivers operational value where it matters most—on the fireground.

As we map out the next edition, we're looking for direct feedback from the field. Specifically, we'd appreciate your input on:

- Which sections of the current handbook you use most often—and why.
- How and where the handbook is actually being used (e.g., field reference, training, onboarding).
- Whether knowledge retention is critical and if incorporating testing or validation would help ensure competency.
- What devices your teams typically have access to—mobile, tablets, laptops, LMS platforms—so we can optimize format and accessibility.

BC Hydro resources include:

- Outdoor Electrical Hazards Brochure
- Firefighters Guide
- First Responder Training – Quick Reference Card (3.5)

Please send your feedback to Ricardo Romero at rromero@pshsa.ca. We'll also engage the committee for input at the next meeting.

- Dan shared that it's a huge issue in the fire services
- Shared instances where firefighters were unsafe around electrical. That handbook is severely outdated

Fire representative for the sector advisory committee

We are currently seeking recommendations for a Fire representative to join our Sector Advisory Committee. Our previous representative from Guelph Fire has moved on from municipal fire services, leaving a vacancy that we want to fill with the right leader from the fire sector.

A few quick details:

The Advisory Committee includes representation from rural, medium, and large municipalities, ORFA, OGRA, Police, Paramedics, IWH, and MLITSD. The Advisory Council exists to provide sector-specific expertise that supports PSHSA in achieving its mission of creating safer workplaces. The council serves as a forum for collaboration, innovation, and knowledge transfer, ensuring that PSHSA's programs, services, and priorities are informed by real-world sector needs and emerging trends.

- Fire representation is currently vacant, and your insight into strong candidates is invaluable.
- The commitment is approximately 1–1.5 days per year, which includes three 2-hour virtual meetings (March, June, November) and the AGM in September (optional in-person attendance).
- The role is strategic—ensuring Fire's voice directly shapes sector-wide health and safety priorities.
- If you have someone in mind who embodies leadership, operational credibility, and a commitment to advancing safety culture, please let me know.

ACTION: R. Romero to send R. Grimwood and D. Worrall a letter and they will look into it.

Friday, December 5, 2025 – 8 am – 12 pm

Cancer Prevention Sub-Committee

- Hold until checklist is complete.

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

- No update at this time.

ACTION: OPFFA, OAFC and OFM meet with K. Thomson to discuss in the new year.

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

- C. Plater gave an overview of what's happening currently within government and forest firefighting.
- Out of 300 communities in the wildfire zone, maybe under 100 have an action plan.
- Wildland woodland interface is going to be introduced. They're looking into what they need. Is there a way we can provide communities access to funding for their protection?
- Biggest pressure right now is external partners looking for training. Everyone wants forest firefighters right now.
- C. Plater spoke about forest firefighting partnerships including the consideration of Costa Rica.
- Predictive services are coming. Can we dabble into the future a bit using the past to see what resources we will need?
- D. Worrall spoke about how it would be beneficial for us to work together. He asked if there's a need or us to be prepared health and safety wise as a committee for the forest firefighting community?
- The committee discussed costs to get a waterbomber to help put out a house fire up north.
- C. Plater spoke about how it might be worthwhile in the future to have something like a guidance note about working around waterbombers.
- C. Plater and D. Worrall discussed how both sides sometimes end up in unknown territories, each others area, and are not sure about processes on either side.

ACTION: J. Roberson, R. Grimwood, C. Plater and T. Pinkerton to form a working group to create a new guidance note.

- H. Baranik spoke about how there are areas out there who work well and closely with forest firefighters.
- T. Pinkerton spoke about the studies they are doing that were spoken about at previous meetings (Exposure and heat stress monitoring)

ACTION: The MNR to send data to the committee so everyone is aware of the findings.

ACTION: When they are ready, the MNR to present findings to the committee.

New business

Minister Piccini's visit

- R. Grimwood welcomed Minister Piccini and Dr. Moody and thanked them for joining the committee meeting today.
- The committee did a roundtable of introductions.
- R. Grimwood talked about the inclusion of the MNR with the committee and its benefits.
- Dr. Moody talked about health and safety and the importance of the work that this committee does.
- The minister thanked us for having him. He spoke about how much of a family the fire services are and how important that is. He spent a lot of time on latency periods, cancers, etc. and wants to shift that conversation to prevention and how they can support firefighters. He spoke about awareness and how it's more widespread now, especially

with the type of work the committee does to support its members. He spoke about how the committee has a support in him. He's looking forward to hearing our discussions today

O. Reg. 7/14

- Ontario regulation 7/14 is in dire need of an update. This has been a conversation throughout most past committee meetings.
- D. Worrall gave an overview of the differences between o. reg. 7/14 and how work is currently being done. They have a checklist available that people are using but it isn't enforceable because it isn't in the reg. With an outdated reg, people get hurt, sick and we lose them. It's also expensive for municipalities.

Guidance notes

- R. Grimwood spoke about our discussion yesterday regarding the life cycle of a guidance note and how it needs to change.
- If something takes a year or more to get posted, people get hurt. With no guidance, no one knows what to do, there isn't a commonly known solution.
- R. Grimwood also spoke about how people may use draft guidance notes that go out for comment and use that in their work, the concern is that after a guidance note goes for comment, it's not final.
- Getting these guidance notes through faster will help substantially. It's recognized that there are competing demands, people that work on the committee guidance notes also work on legislation.
- D. Worrall shared C. Boccinfuso's update on where current guidance notes are in the process.
 - Minister Piccini spoke about the speed of things in the economy. The top issue is this going to cost money to municipalities. He will look into the delays
- R. Grimwood spoke about how guidance notes don't come with additional costs. AMO is on the committee and hasn't had concerns. O. Reg. on the other hand would have costs associated, therefore it needs a careful review.

Lithium-ion guidance note

- In the absence of guidance notes, they use google. Google has so many different tactics, which can be helpful, but it's dangerous. Chiefs are asking OFM but the OFM doesn't have answers. It's been in the processes for a long time.

Encampments guidance note

- This has been in the process for a long time. This is a common issue that many fire services experience. R. Grimwood gave an overview of the guidance note for the Minister.

Slow down, move over

- D. Worrall spoke about the amount of fire truck vehicle strikes in regard to slow down move over.

Some positives to share

- R. Grimwood spoke about how WSIB support for firefighters has been great.
- They are seeing a lot of great work between members and management towards protecting firefighters.
- Charcoal based soaps were noted and how it's revolutionary for the fire services.

- There are lots of great things happening.

Firefighter cancer

- The average age of cancers in firefighters is 63. 50% of cancers are testicular and skin cancer.
 - Minister Piccini is interested in direction from the committee on this. A lot of what he has seen has costs associated with it. Some item in our guidance notes need to have a piece on costs (At home remedies also for cost saving).
 - For screenings, if we prioritized this what are the top 3 cancers and what screenings could be done? The Minister wants it to be evidence based and come from committee experience. What are the leading bodies saying? Who does the screening? What is the cost? Do we reimburse and how, to who? Lots of services are working with American companies, can we change that? The Minister wants to create an equality of opportunity for everyone wearing a uniform in Ontario.
 - R. Grimwood spoke about how there is a scan currently on what other provinces are doing and he will send to Dr. Moody.

ACTION: R. Grimwood to send Dr. Moody provincial scan information.

- R. Grimwood spoke about colonoscopies and how they are already part of OHIP healthcare.
- The schedule of benefits are later in life, how can we get it sooner for firefighters?
- D. Worrall spoke about a presentation given to the committee a few years back with a company using AI to detect cancer. It's easily accessible for most people to get it because everyone has a mobile phone nowadays.
- R. Grimwood said the committee can present to Dr. Moody in the coming months with detailed data with our recommendations.
- The Minister stated that it isn't just him that can change OHIP. The committee should provide info on screening, literature around screening and what can be done in conjunction with WSIB.

Fire protection grant.

- D. Worrall spoke about the fire protection grant.
- Minister Piccini spoke about how there is a societal benefit for funding going to first responders.

Roundtable discussion

- C. Plater spoke about how great it is that the MNR is involved now and spoke about some of the issues that they are currently experiencing now that have been presented to the committee in past meetings.
- C. Plater talked about how wildland firefighters got onto presumptive legislation about 2 years ago. There's a culture change which is significant, especially the past few years.
- J. Kirk shared that over his time, firefighter health and safety has come a lot further, especially with first responder mental health. He also remembers the push back on decontamination from veteran firefighters. The goal is to get people to retirement healthy.
- H. Baranik spoke about funding and delays. He gave an example of a member suicide and how it was deemed not work related so the municipality has to pay the insurance.
 - Minister Piccini said he will connect H. Baranik with SOLGEN. R. Grimwood flagged that it's been shared with them. There is a deadline to spend money by March 31, if they don't they lose it. It's a great idea, the funding, but its tough

with the tight timeline. Successful people were told mid November and only have a few months to spend. They need flexibility.

- D. Worrall shared that we are appreciative of support.

ACTION: D. Worrall and R. Grimwood to send a direction for the screening and Minster Piccini will look into o. reg. and guidance notes.

- Minister Piccini thanked the committee for having him and spoke about an upcoming visit up north with C. Plater.

February 2026 meeting location

- Our next meeting will be in Waterloo and organized by L. Pedersen.

ACTION: L. Pedersen to send K. Thomson meeting details so the meeting invite can be updated.

Working at heights (WAH) guidance note

- Follow up to our conversation last meeting about WAH related issues.
- The committee talked about WAH training and how it's specific to construction, but its still relevant to the fire services.
- C. Plater talked about how they worked on tower specific training because WAH didn't fit their needs.
- Don't call it WAH, call it fall protection.

ACTION: L. Pedersen and J. Kirk to work on the new guidance note.

Fire pole guidance note

- Committee agreed it's relevant to some fire stations.

ACTION: J. Plater, A. Burrige and M. Pankhurst to work on the new guidance note.

Manage of human biological remains guidance note

- A. Burrige showed the Ajax resource on this and everyone agrees it's useful.

ACTION: D. Worrall and A. Burrige to work on the new guidance note.

Female firefighter health and safety - G. McMillan

- Genna presented issues facing female firefighters to the committee and the committee participated in a roundtable discussion:
- What's the policy for continuing to work while pregnant and when the firefighter should be off firefighting duties?
 - Infographics are going out to all members regarding the risks at all stages of pregnancy.
 - PPE would need to be updated quite frequently if a pregnant firefighter stays on active duty which is costly.
 - Most women want to stay under a 24- hour shift. It's helpful with them being able to make a decision to move to light duties. [NFPA 1580](#) has information on pregnancy.
- C. Plater spoke about research on gender specific sizing with wildland firefighting coming out of Australia .

ACTION: C Plater to send G. McMillan the research.

- Issues like miscarriages are not talked about but systemic. Dr. Moody said if there are things that need to be done, he can help. Maybe he can help determine exactly how big the issue is. Contamination can have a long-term effect on pregnancy.
 - G. McMillan will share resources they use.
- The committee asked if there is anything they can help with and G. McMillan said she would reach out with any questions or if help is needed.

ACTION: G. McMillan to share resources with the committee.

2026 meetings:

- February 5 and 6 – Waterloo
- June 4 and 5 – Springwater/Midhurst
- September 28 and 29 – North York (PSHSA)
- December 3 and 4 – Ajax