

Ontario Fire Service Advisory Committee on Occupational Health & Safety Under Section 21 of the Occupational Health & Safety Act

TERMS OF REFERENCE

OBJECTIVE

The Ontario Fire Service Section 21 Advisory Committee (the “committee”) will advise and make recommendations to the Minister and Chief Prevention Officer on matters relating to the occupational health and safety of all firefighters in the Province of Ontario.

The committee will achieve this objective by:

1. Engaging in bipartite (employer and labour) discussions on health and safety issues within the fire sector;
2. Reviewing fire service health and safety issues of provincial scope;
3. Supporting the development of industry best practices; and
4. Developing and maintaining guidance material for workplace parties as needed to protect workers within fire services in Ontario. This guidance material may outline recommended best practices and acceptable standards to be used by workers in the fire service to prevent injury or illness and will comply with the intent and provisions outlined in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and related regulations.

SCOPE

The committee will review occupational health and safety issues related to firefighters that have provincial impact.

As the committee’s focus is on occupational health and safety issues, its mandate will not address or intervene in:

- Situations or issues related to ongoing investigations, legal proceedings or a specific MLITSD inspection of a workplace.
- Issues related to the administration of fire service workplaces normally under the mandate of other ministries or municipalities (e.g. funding, provision of services or programs, human resources, etc.).
- Labour relations or employment standards issues (e.g. hours of work, overtime, leaves of absence, labour-management relationships, collective agreements, etc.).
- Issues covered by the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997* or addressed by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).

MEMBERSHIP

Committee members are appointed by the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. The committee will be composed of an equal number of representatives from Labour and Employers, as outlined below. The committee will have one labour, and one employer co-chair selected by and from amongst the committee members.

Members for Labour:

- Ontario Professional Fire Fighter's Association 4
- Volunteer¹ firefighters 2

Members for Employers:

- Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs 4
- Association of Municipalities of Ontario 2

Only members appointed by the Minister may attend the meeting for decision-making purposes. In the event a member requires a temporary leave of absence (up to 1 year), a designated alternate is permitted subject to the agreement of the co-chairs. Alternates are not permitted for one-off meetings.

If a co-chair is unable to attend a meeting, they may appoint a co-chair from among the members.

ATTENDANCE

With the exception of leaves of absences or long-term illness, there is an expectation that committee members maintain regular attendance. Should a committee member fail to maintain regular attendance, upon agreement of the co-chairs the position may be declared vacant.

FACILITATOR

Public Services Health and Safety Association (PSHSA) will facilitate the committee by:

- Providing administrative support to the committee, including:
 - setting the agenda for each meeting, in consultation with the committee co-chairs, one month before each meeting
 - sending out meeting invites with the agenda and meeting materials, two weeks before each meeting
 - taking minutes during the meeting and distributing draft minutes for approval prior to finalization
 - distributing the draft minutes and any additional materials within 2 weeks following the meeting

MLITSD will arrange and pay for the meeting location and refreshments.

¹ Volunteer firefighter as defined in the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act*,

RESOURCES

The following are resources to the committee:

- MLITSD – Occupational Health and Safety Branch
- MLITSD – Prevention Branch
- Ministry of the Solicitor General – Office of the Ontario Fire Marshal
- Ministry of Natural Resources – Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services

Resources to the committee will:

- Attend meetings and provide input but have no voice in the consensus process.
- Act as technical resources to the committee to ensure that the committee's recommendations or guidance material align with legislation administered by their respective Ministry.
- Provide information or clarification on issues that may directly impact or pertain to their respective Ministry.

MEETING PROCESS

1. Decisions will be by consensus² of the members in attendance, rather than by voting.
2. Matters for which no consensus can be achieved will be deferred for further discussion at the next meeting. If consensus is still not achieved, the issue will be fully reported, with explanation to the MLITSD through the Senior Manager, Industrial Health and Safety Program.
3. Guests may attend committee meetings to discuss pre-determined topics only at the invitation of MLITSD or at the invitation of the co-chairs.
4. Matters for inclusion on the agenda will be submitted to the co-chairs one month before a scheduled meeting of the committee. Either co-chair may include matters on the agenda. The MLITSD may include matters on the agenda.
5. Items not on the agenda may be discussed at the meeting only with the co-chairs' approval.
6. The committee shall appoint any required task force and/or technical committee by way of consensus. Approval shall be obtained from MLITSD with respect to their anticipated expenses.
7. Quorum for committee meetings will be 6 members, with at least 2 members for labour and 2 members for employers. At least one co-chair must be present. Where no quorum is reached, the committee may discuss matters, but no decisions may be made.

² Consensus: substantial agreement reached by the members of the committee in attendance; consensus includes an attempt to resolve all objections; it implies much more than the concept of a simple majority, but not necessarily unanimity.

GUIDANCE NOTE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD):

The MLITSD will...

- Make live changes to guidance notes during meetings as the committee reviews and finalizes the note with the committee. Make necessary formatting, grammar, and any other required changes.
 - Send to PSHSA for posting for comment when required to go out for public review.
 - Facilitate Ministry review and approval process.
 - Facilitate translations and ensure compliance with accessibility requirements.
 - Post guidance notes on the Ontario.ca website and inform committee once posted.
 - Provide links to newly published guidance notes to the committee co-chairs.
 - Answer questions regarding ministry reimbursements for committee expenses.
- Note: If there are issues with Ministry computers, the review of guidance notes will be paused and resume when the issue is resolved.

Public Services Health and Safety Association (PSHSA):

PSHSA will...

- Work with the co-chairs and the ministry on finalizing the agenda through an agenda setting meeting one month in advance of all meetings. Once finalized, PSHSA will then send the agenda to the committee through the meeting invite.
- Take high level minutes of committee meetings, format and edit the minutes and send to the co-chairs and the ministry for comment within two (2) weeks. Once final draft is complete, send to the committee prior to the next meeting through the meeting invite for comment.
- Send final, approved meeting minutes from previous meeting to Ontario Association of Fire Chiefs (O AFC) for posting.
- Send draft guidance notes to the O AFC for posting for comment. Guidance note should be posted for a minimum of six (6) weeks.
- Own the meeting invite and update accordingly with the agenda, minutes, comment forms submitted, venue, hotel, time, and date changes.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

Regular meetings of the Section 21 Committee will be on a quarterly basis. Any proposed additional meetings must be pre-approved by the MLITSD.

REMUNERATION AND EXPENSES

Per subsection 21(2) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, appointed members may be paid such remuneration and expenses as may be from time to time fixed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council.

Approved alternates and members of task forces and/or technical committees are entitled to be paid the same remuneration and expenses as appointed members.

REVIEW OF THE TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference are established and revised as necessary by the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, under the authority of Section 21 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

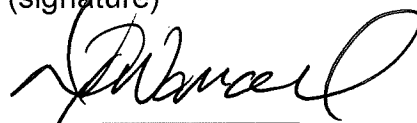
Signed, this 5th day of May, 2025.

Co-chair: _____
 Rob Grimwood
 (print name)



(signature)

Co-chair: _____
 Dan Worrall
 (print name)



(signature)

This document will be reviewed and signed when there are new co-chairs.