

**Queen's University Joint Health and Safety Committees**  
**Terms of Reference**  
**April 2026**

**Preamble**

Queen's University (hereinafter referred to as the "Employer") as represented by the Department of Environmental Health & Safety is responsible for establishing and maintaining joint health and safety committees (hereinafter referred to as "Committee"), in accordance with the Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA), to help raise awareness of health and safety conditions in the workplace, as well as identify health and safety issues that need to be brought to the attention of the employer.

It is acknowledged that a joint health and safety committee program can only be successful if everyone is committed to the responsibilities outlined in these Terms of Reference. Therefore, all parties involved with the Committees and the University undertake to co-operate in ensuring that the Terms of Reference and the full intent of the OHSA are implemented and adhered to.

**Committee Jurisdiction**

1.1 The jurisdiction of each Committee is detailed in Appendix 1. If at any time there is a workplace, as defined by the OHSA, not covered by Appendix 1, the employer will, based on the requirement of the OHSA, determine which committee the workplace should fall under. The appendix will be revised to reflect these changes, distributed to the Co-chairs of the committee and posted on the Department of Environmental Health and Safety website.

**Committee Structure**

2.1 The Committee shall consist of members as detailed in Appendix 2, with up to half the members selected by the Employer and at least half the members selected by the Bargaining Agents/Worker Representatives of affected workers. Committee members will be selected from an area under the jurisdiction of the committee. In the event that a committee member cannot be found from the area, the Bargaining Agent/Worker Representatives can appoint a member of another area of the university. The member selected must have demonstrated experience in Occupational Health & Safety matters that is relevant to the areas in respect of which the applicable Committee will have jurisdiction. Under this circumstance, the appointment is considered to be temporary while the Bargaining Agent/Worker Representatives continue to actively search for a representative from an area under the jurisdiction of the committee.

2.2 In addition to the Committee membership outlined in Appendix 2, each member may designate an alternate member to act on behalf of an absent committee member at

- meetings and perform tasks as requested by the Committee.
- 2.3 Committee members will serve a term of two (2) years term that is renewable, if the member remains eligible to be on the committee.
  - 2.4 There shall be two (2) Co-Chairs on the Committee. One (1) Co-Chair shall be selected through consensus by the worker members. The other Co-Chair shall be selected through consensus by the employer members. The Co-Chairs shall alternate the chair at meetings. Co-Chairs will serve a two (2) year term that is renewable or a length of time that is consistent with their term as a member of the committee if that is shorter.
  - 2.5 The Committee shall have a minimum of two (2) certified members; one (1) representing the Employer and one (1) representing workers. The Employer will endeavour to provide certification training to all interested members of the committee.
  - 2.6 The Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) regulates the content of certification training and the timeframe required for completion. Training will be offered on an annual basis or as needed to ensure the committee has the required number of certified members. The training will be organized considering the availability of the members requiring training, the operational requirements of their departments and the availability of trainers in the local area.
  - 2.7 The Committee will be supplied a secretary by the Employer. Duties of the Secretary will include coordinating inspections, taking meeting minutes, circulating minutes and other Committee documents as required, and any other duties as directed by the Co-chairs. EHS will ensure minutes are posted online once they have been received.
  - 2.8 A list of members, with their affiliation and contact information, shall be posted on Departmental Safety Bulletin Boards.
  - 2.9 A representative from the Department of Environmental Health and Safety will attend meetings as a resource to the committee but will not be a member of the Committee.

### **Committee Functions**

- 3.1 To achieve the spirit of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the functions of the Committee shall be:
  - a) To identify situations that may be sources of danger or hazard to employees;
  - b) To make recommendations to the employer for the improvement of health and safety of employees;
  - c) Recommend to the employer the establishment, maintenance and monitoring of programs, measures and procedures respecting the health and safety of employees.
  - d) To receive information relating to health and safety as outlined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

## **Committee Members**

- 4.1 Committee members shall be given, by the Employer, adequate release time from their job duties to participate in activities associated with carrying out their duties as members of the Committee. All time spent in attendance at Committee meetings or in activities relating to the function of the Committee will be paid for at the member's appropriate rate of pay for performing work, and the time spent is to be considered as time at work.
- 4.2 Committee members shall be entitled to a minimum of one (1) hour or such longer period of time as the Committee determines is necessary to prepare for the Committee meeting.
- 4.3 If committee members are required to travel off campus to perform their duties the University's travel policy, with regard to mode of transport and the claiming of expenses incurred, should be followed.
- 4.4 The names of new committee members will be provided by the Bargaining Agent/Worker Representatives to the Department of Environmental Health & Safety, who will in turn notify the applicable committee. The new member will be contacted by the Department of Environmental Health & Safety and be given an introduction to the committee. This introduction will include the rights and duties of Committee members, the function of the committee, an introduction to workplace inspections and incident investigations.
- 4.5 New members will be paired with a senior member of the committee during the first set of workplace inspections
- 4.6 It is expected that new members will have completed the mandatory health and safety awareness training and WHMIS2015.

## **Committee Meetings**

- 5.1 The Committee shall meet at least quarterly. The Committee will endeavour to determine the meeting schedule near the beginning of every academic term after the teaching duties have been assigned and class schedules are known. The Committee will further endeavour to ensure member conflicts with meeting times are minimized. It is the responsibility of members with class and teaching commitments to make their schedules available when the meeting schedule is being determined. Any changes to the meeting schedule must be approved by the Co-Chairs.

- 5.2 The Co-Chairs may call a special emergency meeting to deal with issues of an urgent matter at any time with joint agreement of the Chairs.
- 5.3 A Co-Chair may, with the consent and approval of his/her counterpart, invite any additional person(s) to attend the meeting to provide additional information and comment, but such invited persons shall not participate in the regular business of the meeting.
- 5.4 The Committee shall have a quorum of fifty percent plus one (50%+1) members present in order to conduct business. One Co-Chair must be present in order to conduct business and chair the meeting. The number of Employer members present shall not be greater than the number of Worker members present.
- 5.5 The Co-Chairs and Secretary will jointly prepare an agenda and the Secretary will forward it to all members and the Department of Environmental Health & Safety at least one (1) week in advance of the meeting.
- 5.6 All items raised from the agenda will be dealt with on the basis of consensus rather than by voting. Consensus is defined as meaning the collective opinion and general agreement of the members of the Committee in attendance.
- 5.7 Prior to the meeting, or at the beginning of the meeting, new health and safety issues from members may be added to New Business on the Agenda.
- 5.8 If the agenda of a meeting is not completed, all outstanding items will be added to the agenda of the next meeting.
- 5.9 Minutes should contain at a minimum details of all matters discussed, as well as a full description of issues raised, any action recommended by the committee members and the employer response to the recommendation(s). Names of Committee members will not be used in the minutes except to record attendance, or for the specific purpose of identifying specific action items from the committee meeting.
- 5.10 The secretary will type and circulate draft minutes to the Committee within one (1) calendar week. If no errors or omissions are noted, the secretary will provide the drafted minutes to the Department of Environmental Health and Safety (for posting on their website) and to the Departmental Safety Officers in the areas covered by the committee for posting on the departmental safety bulletin board(s) and to EHS for posting on the website within one (1) week of being received. At the next scheduled meeting the minutes will be approved by the committee and updated as such.

## **Committee Recommendations**

- 6.1 Recommendations made by the Committee will be submitted by the Co-Chairs on the recommendation form available on the Department of Environmental Health and Safety's website ([https://www.queensu.ca/risk/sites/rsswww/files/uploaded\\_files/EHS/Forms/JHSC%20Recommendation%20Form.pdf](https://www.queensu.ca/risk/sites/rsswww/files/uploaded_files/EHS/Forms/JHSC%20Recommendation%20Form.pdf)).
- 6.2 The signed recommendation will be forwarded within three (3) days to the Director of Environmental Health and Safety and the person in charge of the area(s) affected by the recommendation. The Department of Environmental Health & Safety will endeavour to maintain the list of department/unit heads available on their website.
- 6.3 When a committee recommendation relates to the same issue identified in a workplace inspection, the committee's recommendation will take precedence over the inspector's recommendation as outlined in Section 8.0.
- 6.4 The Employer shall respond within twenty-one (21) days of receipt of the recommendation. The written response shall indicate the employer's assessment of the recommendation and specify what action will or will not (with explanations) be implemented. Any proposed action by the employer shall include details of who will be responsible for such action and a proposed time frame.
- 6.5 The response shall be included on the agenda of the next scheduled meeting where it will be discussed by the committee.
- 6.6 Items unresolved by the Committee after two (2) regular scheduled meetings will be referred to the Director of the Department of Environmental Health and Safety for resolution.

## **Dispute Resolution**

- 7.1 As per the OHSA, either Co-Chair may send a recommendation of the disputed item to the Director of the Department of Environmental Health and Safety for resolution.
- 7.3 A written response as to the outcome of the review will be provided to the committee by the next scheduled meeting.

## **Workplace Inspections**

- 8.1 The Committee members who represent workers shall designate members to inspect the physical condition of the workplace. A management member should accompany the worker representatives. The members inspecting need not be a certified member.
- 8.2 The Committee will establish a schedule of inspections in accordance with the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. (I.e. a portion of the workplace must be inspected monthly, and the entire workplace inspected annually.)

Committees, with the exception of areas under the sole jurisdiction of Facilities, will inspect the areas under the control of the departments that fall under that Committee. Common area, classrooms, study areas, building entrances, lobbies, washrooms, grounds surrounding the building, etc., that are not under the control of the departments will be inspected by the committee that has the most departments within the building. The need to inspect these areas will be noted in Appendix 1. Occupational health and safety items noted in these areas will be forwarded to the Department of Environmental Health & Safety, who will distribute them to the most appropriate department for resolution within the 21 day timeframe outlined in the OHSA.

- 8.3 All occupational health and safety concerns and recommended resolution raised during the inspection will be recorded on a workplace inspection form and signed by the members performing the inspection.
- 8.5 Recommendations by the inspectors are deemed to be those of the committee, subject to Section 6.3. The inspectors are under no obligation to make a recommendation in the report, especially if they are unsure as to what corrective actions may be warranted.
- 8.6 A copy of the workplace inspection form will be provided by the inspectors to the person in charge of the area inspected. Dangerous circumstances shall be communicated to the person in charge of the area immediately. The workplace inspection form will also be forwarded by the inspectors to the Co-Chairs of the Committee, and the Director, Environmental Health and Safety within seven (7) days of the workplace inspection. The Department of Environmental Health & Safety will endeavour to maintain the list of department/unit heads available on their website.
- 8.7 The person in charge of the area inspected shall respond within the twenty-one (21) days defined by the OHSA as to the status of all items on the inspection report. For items that require more than twenty-one (21) days to resolve, a time line will be given with status updates on a regular basis until completion.

- 8.8 The Department of Environmental Health & Safety will act as a resource to assist persons in charge of an area that has been inspected with the review and response to the recommendations
- 8.9 The workplace inspection, and the items arising from the inspections, will be part of the Committee meeting agenda. Workplace inspection reports will remain on the agenda until the items noted are resolved to the committee's satisfaction.

### **Accidents and Accompaniment**

- 9.1 The members of the Committee representing workers will designate a certified worker member who will investigate serious workplace accidents. A member representing management may also investigate these incidents. Notification will be as per Section 9.6.
- 9.2 The members of the Committee representing workers will designate a certified worker member who may investigate all critical injuries and/or fatalities. A member representing management may also investigate these incidents. Notification will be as per Section 9.6.
- 9.3 The members of the Committee representing workers will designate a certified worker member to accompany the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) Inspector during Ministry inspections of the workplace. The Department of Environmental Health & Safety will contact the designated member, as per Section 9.6, after meeting with the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) and determining the area the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) is inspecting.
- 9.4 The members of the Committee representing workers shall designate a certified worker member to investigate work refusals. The Department of Environmental Health and Safety will contact the designated member, as per Section 9.6, as soon as possible after learning of a work refusal. If the work refusal goes to the Second Stage the Department of Environmental Health & Safety will contact the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD).
- 9.5 The members of the Committee representing workers shall designate a certified worker member who shall be notified of proposed workplace testing strategies related to industrial hygiene, and shall be entitled to be present at the beginning of such testing. Notification will be as per Section 9.6.
- 9.6 For the member notifications listed above, the Department of Environmental Health & Safety will first contact the designated member, and if unable to reach the designated member, they will attempt to contact other worker members beginning with those that are

certified. The Department of Environmental Health and Safety is responsible of contacting any external agency if required (Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD), Ministry of the Environment, Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission, etc.).

## **Work Stoppage**

- 10.1 A certified member who believes that a dangerous circumstance exists may request that a supervisor investigate the matter. The Department of Environmental Health and Safety then must be contacted by the certified member or the supervisor. The supervisor, with support of the Department of Environmental Health and Safety, shall investigate the matter promptly in the presence of the certified member.
- 10.2 The certified member may request that a second certified member representing the other workplace party investigate the matter if the first certified member has reason to believe that dangerous circumstances continue after the investigation conducted under Section 10.1 and after any remedial action if any has been taken.
- 10.3 The second certified member shall promptly investigate the matter in the presence of the first certified member.
- 10.4 If both certified members find that the dangerous circumstance exist, the certified members may direct the employer to stop the work, or to stop the use of any part of the workplace or of any equipment, machine, device, article, or thing. The employer will immediately comply with the direction and shall ensure that compliance is affected in a way that does not endanger a person.
- 10.5 If the certified members do not agree whether dangerous circumstances exist, either certified member may request that an MOL inspector investigate the matter and the inspector shall do so and provide the certified members with a written decision.
- 10.6 After taking steps to remedy the dangerous circumstances, the employer may request the certified members or an MOL inspector to cancel the direction.

## **General**

- 11.1 All employees shall discuss their occupational health and safety concerns with their immediate supervisor before bringing it to the attention of the Committee. This supports the [Internal Responsibility System](#) (IRS).
- 11.2 The Co-chairs of the Committee will be provided with incident reports by the Department of Environmental Health and Safety as per the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

- 11.3 The Co-chairs of the Committee will be provided with the injury statistics by the Department of Environmental Health and Safety for their area on an annual basis.
- 11.4 The Committee will be provided other health and safety information, as defined by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, on a regular basis, by the Department of Environmental Health and Safety, so that issues can be addressed in a timely manner.
- 11.5 Medical, personal or trade secret information will be kept confidential by all Committee members.
- 11.7 From time to time, but at least every three years, these Terms of Reference will be reviewed in consultation with the Committees with revisions being made as required and to ensure continued compliance with the OHSA.

## **Evaluation**

- 12.1 At least annually the Committee shall conduct an evaluation on their effectiveness. The evaluation should at a minimum include:
  - 1. Number of meetings held
  - 2. Attendance at the meetings (did everyone contribute)
  - 3. How many workplace inspections were conducted
  - 4. Was the entire workplace inspectedWhether there are any outstanding recommendations or issues.
- 12.2 The evaluation report should be included in the minutes and be posted on the Department of Environmental Health and Safety's website.