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1. Introduction

The Joint Health & Safety Committee (JHSC) Workplace Inspection Standard Operating Procedure was developed by the Department of Environmental Health & Safety in accordance with the University's Policy Statement on Health & Safety and to ensure compliance with the Ontario Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSa) and Regulations.

Workplace inspections are an important aspect of preventing injury and illness on the Queen's University Campus. Through critical examination of the campus environment, inspections identify and record hazards that require corrective action.

All members of the University community, as part of their daily routine and active participation in the Internal Responsibility System, are responsible for identifying, reporting and correcting hazardous conditions.

Workplace inspections by JHSC members are prescribed by the OHSa to help ensure that that the internal responsibility system is functioning and to maintain safety as a priority in all workplaces on campus. JHSC inspections should identify safety concerns that have not been resolved by employees and supervisors. Inspections also confirm that hazard controls are effective and operational and provide an opportunity to commend employees and supervisors for successful safety efforts

2. Applicable Legislation and Guidelines

- Ontario Occupational Health & Safety Act (RSO 1990)
- Queen's University Guidelines for a Multi-Workplace Joint Health & Safety Committee.

3. Role and Responsibilities

Directors, Department Heads & Managers

- Ensure that all employees and students exercise appropriate due diligence to minimize risks in the workplace.
- Ensure supervisors, employees and students engage in on-going inspections of the workplace on a day-to-day basis to help identify and correct hazardous conditions.



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- In accordance with the Ontario OHSA, respond, in writing, to recommendations made by the JHSC within 21 days.
- Ensure that JHSC members are provided with the resources they require to conduct workplace inspections in the area(s) under his/her authority.

Supervisors

- Exercise appropriate due diligence to minimize risks in the workplaces under their supervision.
- Conduct day-to-day inspections of the workplace to identify and eliminate hazards.
- Cooperate with employee and students to eliminate hazards and resolve safety issues and concerns.
- Prioritize safety concerns that need to be reported to the department head, director or manager for corrective action.
- Cooperate with JHSC members during workplace inspections.

Employees and Students

- Engage in on-going inspections of the workplace on a day-to-day basis.
- Take action to correct hazardous situations or report hazardous situations to a supervisor.
- Cooperate with JHSC members during workplace inspections.

Joint Health & Safety Committees

- Comply with the requirements of the JHSCs outlined in the Ontario Occupational Health & Safety Act and the Queen's University Guidelines for a Multi-Workplace Joint Health and Safety Committee.
- Cooperate with department, employees and students to help eliminate hazards in the workplace.

Department of Environmental Health & Safety

- Provide support to the JHSCs.
- Follow up on issues, determined to be outstanding by the Joint Health & Safety Committees, in accordance with the Internal Responsibility System outlined in the Queen's University Health and Safety Management System.



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4. Inspection Frequency

In accordance with the OHSA and the conditions of the Queen's University Guidelines for a Multi-Workplace Joint Health and Safety Committee, the work environment shall be inspected yearly with part of the workplace being inspected monthly according to a written schedule determined by the JHSC.

5. Inspection Process

Inspection Teams

In accordance with the OHSA, inspections must be performed by an employee member of the committee. A management representative of the committee may accompany the employee representative and inspect the work environment as a team.

Inspections by the JHSC should be conducted with the Safety Officer for the respective department.

Whenever possible, the supervisor of the area(s) being inspected should be invited to participate in the inspection process. The supervisor of the area will have important information for the inspection team. However, the supervisor should not act as a tour guide and the inspection team must remain independent, visit locations of interest to them and make uninfluenced observations and recommendations.

Inspection Principals

When conducting inspections, the following basic principles can be applied:

- Draw attention to the presence of any immediate danger -- other items can await the final report.
- Shut down and "lock out" any hazardous items which cannot be brought to a safe operating standard until repaired.
- Do not operate equipment. Ask the operator for a demonstration. If the operator of any piece of equipment does not know what dangers may be present, this is cause for concern.



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- Never ignore any item because you do not have knowledge to make an accurate judgment of safety. Consult with other committee members or the Department of Environmental Health & Safety.
- Look up, down, around and inside. Be methodical and thorough. Do not spoil the inspection with a "once - over - lightly" approach.
- Clearly describe each hazard and its exact location in your rough notes. Allow "on-the-spot" recording of all findings before they are forgotten. Record what you have or have not examined in case the inspection is interrupted.
- Ask questions, but do not unnecessarily disrupt work activities. This may interfere with efficient assessment of the job function and may also create a potentially hazardous situation.
- Consider the static (stop position) and dynamic (in motion) conditions of the item you are inspecting. If a machine is shut down, consider postponing the inspection until it is functioning again.
- Discuss as a group, "Can any problem, hazard or accident generate from this situation when looking at the equipment, the process or the environment?" Determine what corrections or controls are appropriate.
- Do not try to detect all hazards simply by relying on your senses or by looking at them during the inspection. It may be necessary to recommend that monitor equipment be used to measure the levels of exposure to chemicals, noise, radiation or biological agents.

Take immediate action as needed. When permanent correction takes time, take any temporary measures you can, such as roping off the area, tagging out equipment or posting warning signs.

Even though a supervisor may interpret reporting as a criticism, committee members cannot fail to report hazards. Inspections are fact-finding, not fault-finding. Retain objectivity and maintain an attitude that is firm, friendly, and fair.

An employee, student or supervisor may request the committee members to recommend new equipment, and changes in workload and jobs. Record any recommendation that deals with worker health and safety in the notes and consider them for inclusion in the report. Be careful not to promise employees, students or supervisors more than can be delivered.

If an inspection team member sees a person who seems to be working unsafely, ask the supervisor to have the action stopped. Ask the employee or student and supervisor why the task is done that way and for possible alternatives. The person could be working as the supervisor instructed and may be defensive. Or the inspection team member's assumption may be incorrect. It is the supervisor's job to require compliance with workplace rules and it is the inspection team member's job to inspect and report.



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JHSC members should have a clipboard or note pad, and checklists for the area or items they are inspecting. They also should be allowed to proceed at their own pace.

For inspections, wear the PPE required. If you do not have PPE and cannot get any, do not enter the area. List this as a deficiency during the inspection. Re-inspect the area when PPE is provided.

6. Reporting

After inspections are completed, an inspection report must be completed. The report must include the Department name or area inspected, the date, the names of the inspection team, and the name(s) of the Departmental representative the team on the inspection.

The report must also itemize the health and safety issues identified during the inspection. The report must include a description of the issue and the mitigative measures or actions recommended by the inspection team.

Reports should be submitted to the Department as soon as possible and a copy must also be sent to the Department of Environmental Health & Safety for information purposes.

7. Follow-up/Monitoring

In accordance with the Ontario OHSA, management is required to respond to recommendations made by the JHSC within 21 days. Management can respond by indicating that the item noted has been corrected, the item will be corrected using an indicated timeline or the management disagrees with the recommendation and would like to discuss the issue further.

The responses and inspection follow-up sheets submitted by management should be reviewed by the JHSC at their next meeting and a copy sent to the Department of Environmental Health & Safety for information purposes.

Items from the inspection that have not been addressed and are outstanding should be forwarded to the Director of Environmental Health & Safety. In addition, a letter indicating the inspection items that are outstanding should be sent to the Department Head, Director or Manager with a request that action be taken.



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Revision History

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