

# Health and Safety Committee Member Orientation

Office of Risk Management

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## INTRODUCTION

This short document is intended to acclimate new health and safety committee members to their roles, responsibilities and duties while serving as a health and safety committee member at uOttawa. Throughout this document, we will cover the health and safety committee structure at the University of Ottawa, the membership of the committee, its main functions, an introduction to the *Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act* and its Regulations, investigations, workplace inspections and work refusals.

Before beginning, ask yourself a few basic questions...

- Who do you represent on the committee? As we will see later, there are several groups represented on all health and safety committees; all of whom play varying roles.
- Why did you join a health and safety committee?
- What is your goal as a committee member?

## DEFINITIONS

**Worker:** means any of the following:

- a person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation. This means a University employee and includes a person who performs work or supplies services for monetary compensation. Students hired by the University to perform paid work-study program duties or co-operative education placement duties for the University are considered workers
- a high school student who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a work experience program authorized by the school board that operates the school in which the student is enrolled
- a person who performs work or supplies services for no monetary compensation under a program approved by a college of applied arts and technology, university or other post-secondary institution.
- such other persons as may be prescribed who perform work or supply services to an employer for no monetary compensation.

**Supervisor:** means a person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker or another person. Depending on the workplace relationship, a supervisor may include, for example, the president, vice-presidents, directors, deans, managers or principle investigators. The determination as to whether a person is a supervisor does not depend on that person's job title. It depends on whether the person is responsible for a location (for example, an office or laboratory) where the work is performed on a paid or unpaid basis or whether the person gives direction to complete the work performed by workers, students, visitors, volunteers or learners.

**Employer:** means the University or a person who employs a worker or contracts for the services of a worker, and includes a contractor or subcontractor who performs work or supplies services. Examples of individuals who may be considered an employer under applicable health and safety legislation are the Board of Governors, the president, deans or directors.

**Certified Member:** A certified member means a committee member who is certified under section 7.6 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. A certified member has taken further, accredited training and has fulfilled the training requirements set forth by the Ministry of Labour. The University must have at least one worker and one management certified member. This is additional training and consists of two parts – an accredited theory-based health and safety training with Part 2 being an accredited sector-specific health and safety training. Any health and safety committee member may become a certified member. Speak with Risk Management for additional details on this process.

**Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MOL):** means the regulating body for health and safety in Ontario. The MOL is also responsible for injury prevention strategies in the province; these were formerly conducted by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

**Internal Responsibility System (IRS):** refers to the structure that everyone at the University of Ottawa is, in some way, responsible for health and safety. From the President to you who is taking this training, you have a role to play. Your role will obviously differ from others, but never forget that your part is an integral part of the University's health and safety system. Refer to [Procedure 14-1 – Internal Responsibility Procedure for Health and Safety Issues](#)

**Critical Injury:** means an injury of a serious nature that,

- Places life in jeopardy,
- Produces unconsciousness,
- Results in substantial loss of blood,
- Involves the fracture of a leg or arm but not a finger or toe,
- Involves the amputation of a leg, arm, hand or foot but not a finger or toe,
- Consists of burns to a major portion of the body, or
- Causes the loss of sight in an eye.

**Occupational Illness:** a condition that results from exposure in a workplace to a physical, chemical or biological agent to the extent that the normal physiological mechanisms are affected and the health of the worker is impaired.

**Dangerous Circumstances:** means a situation in which,

- A provision of the of the Occupational Health and Safety Act or the regulations is being contravened;
- The contravention poses a danger or a hazard to a worker, and
- The danger or hazard is such that any delay in controlling it may seriously endanger a worker.

## SECTION 1 – LEGISLATION

### 1.1 – Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act

The *Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act*, or the OHS Act, is one of the primary sources for legislative health and safety information; keep it close by to reference particular sections and requirements. There are also several Regulations specific to certain industries, such as Oil and Gas, or Healthcare. These particular Regulations will not apply at uOttawa; however, may be looked at as a best practice. The most pertinent Regulations that a committee member should be familiar with include the following:

- [Regulation 851 – Industrial Establishments](#)
- [Regulation 490 – Designated Substances](#)
- [Regulation 860 – WHMIS](#)
- [Regulation 834 – Critical Injury](#)
- [Regulation 858 – University Academics and Teaching Assistants](#)
- [Regulation 833 – Control of Exposure to Biological or Chemical Agents](#)
- [Regulation 632 – Confined Spaces](#)

If you're not able to find a specific reference for a specific problem or concern, there is a "general duty clause" in section 25(2)(h). The general duty clause means that the employer (uOttawa) must "take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker". Supervisors also have similar responsibilities.

The hardcopy of the "green book" also features an index at the back of the book. You can search by keywords to find what you're looking for. You can also look up the OHSA or any Regulation by going to [www.e-laws.gov.on.ca](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca).

Try it yourself! Using the OHS Act & Regulations green book or using online resources such as [eLaws](#), find and note the sections referring to:

1. The powers of the joint health and safety committee;
2. Exercising a work refusal;
3. The duties of workers; and
4. The definition of a critical injury

### 1.2 – Criminal Code of Canada

In 2004, the Criminal Code of Canada was amended under Bill C-45. This Bill added section **217.1** to the Criminal Code of Canada which reads:

**"Everyone who undertakes, or has the authority, to direct how another person does work or performs a task is under a legal duty to take reasonable steps to prevent bodily harm to that person, or any other person, arising from that work or task."**

This means that individuals may be charged with criminal negligence for the wanton and reckless disregard for the life / safety of other persons in the workplace.

A criminal charge is typically reserved for the most serious types of health and safety related offences, therefore it's not tested on a regular basis; nonetheless, there have been several examples, including [recent charges](#).

### **1.3 – Worker Rights**

All workers in Ontario have core rights. These rights form the basis of the occupational health and safety system in Ontario.

- The right to know about hazards (either actual or potential) that the worker may encounter in the work activities.
- The right to participate; for example, as a member of the health and safety committee, or to become a certified member, etc.
- The right to refuse work that the worker believes may endanger him/herself or another worker.

Additionally, reprisals on the part of the employer for enacting any of these rights are prohibited by law. An example of a reprisal could include disciplinary action (suspension, penalties, etc.), intimidation, threats of dismissal, etc. If a reprisal is believed to have occurred, contact Risk Management.

## SECTION 2 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

### 2.1 – Framework

There are varying requirements to establish a health and safety committee in Ontario; however, health and safety committees aid in the protection against work-related accidents, incidents, illnesses and deaths. Additionally, a health and safety committee is a legal requirement for most workplaces in Ontario, including the University of Ottawa.

uOttawa has developed health and safety committee [Terms of Reference](#), which outline the function of the health and safety committees.

### 2.2 – Purpose

A health and safety committee is composed of people who represent the **workers** and the **employer** functioning as a cohesive unit who are committed to improving health and safety conditions in the workplace. The committee serves as an advisory body to the employer that helps to stimulate awareness of health and safety issues, aid in recognizing workplace risks and recommending solutions to the employer. To achieve its goal, the health and safety committee holds regular meetings and conducts regular inspections of the workplace. The recommendations put forth must be acknowledged by the employer; however, the employer is not obligated to implement them.

Think of the committee as a review mechanism of management health and safety practices. It is management's responsibility to ensure a healthy and safe workplace; the committee is there to provide input, review the health and safety programs, and recommend (as required).

When encountering an issue or a problem that is brought to a health and safety committee member or committee, the issue must be validated – is it really a health and safety concern? If yes, what is the best solution for all parties involved?

### 2.3 – Functions of the Committee

Each of the health and safety committees at uOttawa has the following functions and powers:

- Identify and evaluate any matter pertaining to health and safety in the workplace and recommend a resolution to appropriate management representatives;
- Recommend to management and workers the establishment, maintenance and monitoring of programs, measures and procedures respecting the health and safety of University employees;
- Obtain information from management respecting
  - the identification of potential or existing hazards of materials, processes or equipment, and
  - health and safety experience and work practices and standards in other institutions of which management has knowledge;
- Obtain information from management concerning the conducting or taking of tests of any equipment, machine or biological, chemical or physical agent in or about a workplace for the purpose of health and safety;
- Be consulted about, and have a designated member representing workers be present during any testing referred to in clause (d) conducted in or about the workplace, if the designated member believes his or her presence is required to ensure that the test results will be valid;

- Recommend adequate education and training programs in order that all employees be informed in their rights, restrictions, responsibilities and duties under the Ontario *Occupational Health and Safety Act*;
- Address matters related to Designated Substance Regulations and the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) where applicable;
- Deal with any health and safety matter that the Committee deems appropriate or required under the Act.

The above information appears in section 9(18) of the *Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

## **2.4 – Committee Member Responsibilities**

It's not enough to simply attend the meetings; members must be engaged and participate. This could include:

- Reviewing documentation relevant to the committee's mandate;
- Attending workplace sampling activities;
- Sharing and distributing health and safety-related information to your colleagues / union / association;
- Acting as a conduit from your union / association to the health and safety committee;
- Conducting health and safety inspections;
- Following-up on accident reports received;
- Investigating health and safety-related complaints, etc.

As you can see, there are several different (and important) parts to committee members' duties. Being a committee member is serious business...you're making a difference in your workplace!

## SECTION 3 – COMMITTEES

### 3.1 – Composition

The health and safety committee involves representatives from all levels of the organization including management and workers (via unions and associations) including the:

- Association of Professors of the University of Ottawa (APUO);
- Association of Part-time Professors of the University of Ottawa (APTPUO);
- Association of Part-time Professors of the University of Ottawa ILOB (APTPUO ILOB);
- Association of Part-time Professors of the University of Ottawa (APTPUO Faculté de droit));
- Association of Part-time Professors of the University of Ottawa (APTPUO Toronto/Windsor);
- Local 772A of the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE);
- Local 772B of the International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE);
- Lifeguards of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE);
- Local 2626 of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE);
- Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC);
- Ontario Secondary School Teacher's Federation (OSSTF); and
- Non-Unionized Employee Association (NUEA - APNS).

Each union or association is responsible for appointing a representative to the various committees. It is possible that a single individual may be the union / association's representative for all committees. There is no pre-set format that is required to name a member to a committee; each union or association is free to name a member as they see fit. The union / association may:

- Hold an election internal to the union;
- Have the executive committee appoint a member;
- Have a specific position within the union may attend

As noted, the union / association is free to name whomever they see fit to represent their membership. In all cases, a member's appointment is one calendar year (renewable).

Members attending health and safety committee meetings are considered to be at work and are entitled to

- one hour or such longer period of time as the committee determines is necessary to prepare for each committee meeting;
- such time as is necessary to attend meetings of the committee; and
- such time as is necessary to carry out the member's duties under subsections 26, 27 and 31 (conducting inspections and critical injury investigations).

### 3.2 – Committees at uOttawa

The University has six (6) health and safety committees, with the **University Multisite Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee** (known as the University Committee) serving as the overarching health and safety committee for the University. The five (5) functional, sub committees are the:

- Office Occupational Health and Safety Committee,
- Laboratory Occupational Health and Safety Committee,

- Protection and Facilities Occupational Health and Safety Committee,
- Alta Vista Occupational Health and Safety Committee, and
- Psychological Health and Safety Committee.

The University committee is primarily concerned with university-wide issues, with emphasis on policy recommendations, activities which concern several sub committees and coordination of information received from the sub committees.

The sub committees are concerned with functional activities of that sector, namely:

- **Office Occupational Health and Safety Committee** – comprises computer laboratories, offices, classrooms, pools, common areas, kitchens, arenas, libraries, auditoriums, etc.
- **Laboratory Occupational Health and Safety Committee** – comprises specialized and technical employees from areas where scientific research, scientific experiments or preparation for scientific experiments are taking place. This will also include all areas which support laboratories.
- **Facilities and Protection Occupational Health and Safety Committee** – comprises all employees employed in Facilities and all employees employed in Protection Services, regardless of their principal work locations. The Facilities and Protection Committee is concerned with health and safety matters affecting the workplace of the employees employed in this sector, as well as those affecting University of Ottawa premises which are not within a specific building (for instance, parking lots and University-owned roadways, etc.).
- **Alta Vista Occupational Health and Safety Committee** – represents all employees whose principal work location is in Roger Guindon and Peter Morand buildings.
- **Psychological Health and Safety Committee** – The broad mandate of the Psychological Functional Health and Safety Committee will be to allow for direct input and participation of the members concerning mental health and wellness at the University, and to identify best practices concerning such matters for all employee groups.

Each committee has members appointed from the respective unions / associations within the functional workplace; the unions / associations for each committee (as well as the number of representatives) are listed in the [Terms of Reference](#). Resource personnel as well as non-voting personnel also attend the meetings. Guests may attend a committee meeting with advance consent from the co-chairs.

### 3.3 – Committee Meetings

Each committee is expected to have regular meetings at not less frequent than once every three months. This is a defined frequency under section 9; subsection 33 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Meetings may be more frequent; if the committee desires. In many cases, a committee will have 5 or 6 scheduled meetings per year, set at the beginning of calendar year; this allows for members to plan being in attendance. It is recommended that the day, time and location of the meeting is kept as consistent as possible. The Outlook calendar tool may be used to send invitations and schedule the meetings for the calendar year. Members personal email addresses may be used; however, the generic email addresses for all unions and associations are also to be included in all health and safety related communications. Generic emails may be obtained from Risk Management.

Each meeting is chaired by one of the two co-chairs and is alternated from one meeting to the next. The worker co-chair is selected by, and from among the, worker members of the committee while the management co-chair is selected by management. A co-chair's term is one calendar year (renewable).

In advance of the meeting, an agenda is prepared by the two co-chairs and sent to the members for feedback at least seven (7) days in advance of the meeting. Items may be added for discussion at the request of committee members. The agenda will be approved prior to the start of the meeting. If additional items come up during the meeting, they may be added at the end of the meeting, time permitting. An agenda example is [available online](#).

Each meeting will have minutes written by an elected secretary or the management co-chair. The minutes will be approved in advance of the subsequent meeting. The minutes will serve as a record of attendance and items discussed at the committee. The minutes should be written and circulated at the earliest convenience, which provides for an accurate description of items discussed. Members are encouraged to share minutes and engage their colleagues in health and safety matters. A template is available online. The minutes from the health and safety committees are available on the [Office of Risk Management website](#) and on the [health and safety bulletin boards on campus](#).

### **3.4 – Quorum**

Before a meeting can begin, a quorum needs to be achieved. At uOttawa, quorum for a health and safety committee meeting is defined as the following:

- At least 50% of the appointed / elected worker positions
- 1 member of management
- 1 co-chair

Additionally, there are other considerations that may affect quorum. For example, a position that has not been filled by the respective union / association (i.e. vacant position) is not counted towards quorum. In situations where a member is appointed, however has not attended for three consecutive meetings, their position will not count towards quorum. If this occurs, the union / association in default will be formally notified by the Office of Risk Management that the appointed individual has not attended for three consecutive meetings. If the situation persists for 3 additional meetings, the union / association will be asked to reduce its number of representatives on the committee.

### **3.5 – Meeting Process**

Once a quorum has been achieved, the presiding co-chair calls the meeting to order. Approval of the agenda will be requested, with one member moving for approval and a second member supporting the motion. If there are no objections or subsequent additions, the agenda is approved.

Next, the past meeting's minutes are approved. Again, one member moves for approval and a second member supports the motion. If there are no objections or subsequent additions, the minutes are approved. If modifications to the previous minutes are required, they are noted on the current meeting minutes.

Any outstanding business is then addressed – this could include feedback on a matter from the minutes, an update on a specific situation, or follow-up from a particular event.

A brief summary of the recent accidents / incidents occurring within the committees' realm of responsibility will be presented by the elected worker member. The summary is meant to report on the accidents / incidents that occurred and provide feedback on the corrective action that was instituted (as required). Particular time is devoted to critical injuries, occupational illnesses and intervention from the Ministry of Labour.

Next, a summary of the recent workplace inspections is provided to the committee. As part of a committee's responsibility, the workplace is regularly inspected for hazards. An update is provided for the respective committees' realm of responsibility as well as the entire University; the figure is expressed as a percentage of the total area of responsibility.

Following, a brief report from the University Committee is provided to the Functional Committee by the elected worker member. The worker member details to the Functional Committee what was discussed at the most recent University Committee.

Finally, any new business or other agenda items are addressed and discussed.

As noted, committees have the power to make recommendations to the employer. If a recommendation follows from the committee, the recommendation should be made on consensus and specific. Using the "5 W's" helps to define the recommendation (why, who, what, where, when, etc.). Any recommendation has to be acknowledged by the employer in a reasonable timeframe; most responses require an answer within 21 days. If the committee has failed to reach a consensus about making recommendations, either co-chair of the committee has the power to make written recommendations to the employer.

It is the presiding co-chair's responsibility to keep the discussion pertinent to the agenda items; if additional time warrants, additional items may be discussed at the end of the meeting.

### **3.6 – Certified Members**

A certified member has additional rights and may institute a [bilateral work stoppage](#). This process is defined under section 45 of *Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act*. If a certified member has reason to believe that "dangerous circumstances" exist, the certified member would advise the supervisor of the area or worker who would conduct an investigation in the presence of the certified member. If the supervisor agrees that dangerous circumstances exist, corrective action is taken. If the supervisor does not agree, the opposite certified member is notified. If both members agree that dangerous circumstances exist, the certified members have the power to stop the work; corrective action is taken and the work stoppage is cancelled.

If both certified members do not agree, the Office of Risk Management must be notified who will contact the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development. The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development will issue a written decision on the matter, with corrective action following (if necessary).

Although uOttawa only requires two (2) certified members, the university has made efforts to ensure that there are several worker and management certified members. Contact information for certified members may be obtained on the [Office of Risk Management website](#) or by contacting the Office of Risk Management at ext. 5892.

## SECTION 4 – WORKPLACE INSPECTIONS

### 4.1 – Background

Workplace inspections are another part of a committee member's duties. Workplace inspections are required by law; a part of the workplace must be inspected once per month, so as to inspect the entirety of the campus once per year (i.e. annually). Any worker member may conduct a health and safety committee inspection; however, it is strongly recommended **not** to conduct a workplace inspection on your own. There are unknowns and potential hazards which you may not be aware of; always do workplace inspections with a competent person.

Additionally, the University has a Joint Health and Safety Committee inspector who assists (on the committee's behalf) with workplace inspections. The inspector represents workers on the health and safety committee. If you're interested in doing a workplace inspection, please contact the [Joint Health and Safety Committee Inspector](#) to verify outstanding areas that are required to be inspected.

Workplace inspections are a unique opportunity for the member to ask front-line workers about their concerns; after all, the end-users are the experts in what they do on a day-to-day basis. It also allows the committee member to gain knowledge about the worker's job and identify potential hazards that are possibly overlooked on a day-to-day basis. The committee member may be able to help identify the cause of a given event and may be able to recommend corrective action(s).

At times, health and safety inspectors can be thought of as "safety police". While an inspector does identify health and safety deficiencies, they serve as an invaluable resource to assist in making the campus a safer place for everyone. **As inspectors, you are not finding fault, you are finding a means of improvement from a health and safety perspective.** If you happen to see something that requires corrective action, ensure to note it down on the inspection report. If something requires immediate action, speak with a supervisor of the area to correct it. Do not correct the issue yourself.

### 4.2 – Inspection Preparation

Prior to conducting a workplace inspection, there are a few items that should be considered, such as:

- The history of the area – are there accidents, incidents, or near misses? Is there a defined trend or frequency?
- The type of equipment and work processes involved – is there heavy equipment, or unique procedures that require special training or knowledge?
- Shift work and the time or length of the shift.
- Has new machinery, equipment or procedures been introduced in the area?

In preparing for an inspection, it is generally advisable to consult

- Building plans
- Historical inspection reports
- Equipment inventories (if available);
- Chemical inventory for the area;
- [Example checklists](#) for the type of environment that you are intending on inspecting.

Some useful tools to consider prior to departing for a workplace inspection may include:

- Paper / writing instrument or recording tool. You will need something to write down your findings. Even situations where no hazard is observed must be documented as “no findings”.
- Protective equipment appropriate for the environment; this may include protective footwear, eyewear, hearing protection, etc.
- Appropriate clothing, such as long pants, closed toed shoes, etc.
- A flashlight for dark or small spaces.
- A camera, which is perhaps one of the most useful tools.

Speak with your inspection partner if you’re unsure what else may be required.

### 4.3 – Types of Hazards

A hazard is the inherent property of a substance, process, or activity that predisposes it to the potential for causing harm to health, safety or human welfare. A hazard can cause injury, illness, or both, depending on the specific situation(s).

Hazards to consider during inspections may include

- Biological hazards such as viruses, moulds, fungi
- Chemical hazards such as proper storage, labelling, etc.
- Biomechanical hazards such as awkward movements, repetitive motions, etc.
- Physical hazards such as noise, temperature, radiation, etc.
- Psychosocial hazards such as stress, violence, harassment, etc.

Most hazards identified will fit into one of these overarching categories; however, if there is something that you’re not sure of, you can always document and describe the issue to verify later.

It is important to note that no one is an expert in everything; you may have knowledge of particular processes and equipment, but you’re going to need help with unique situations and environments you’re not familiar with.

When conducting an inspection, you should have knowledge of the types of hazards in the environment; however, it is generally recommended **not** to inspect your own workplace due to the subconscious biases that may exist as well as the “acceptable” hazards that we live with on a regular basis. Instead, try a different, yet similar work location. As an example, if you regularly work in a workshop in the Faculty of Engineering, try a health and safety inspection in a workshop in the Faculty of Science or Arts. This practice will allow the workplace to be seen with a different, but competent, set of eyes.

### 4.4 – Conducting an Inspection

When actually doing the inspection, you need to be accompanied by a competent person who is familiar with the area you are inspecting. In most cases, the Facility Manager, Building Management Agent or Health, Safety and Risk Manager will be one of the best sources of information.

Some areas can be very large; it is advisable to divide such areas into sections and move through the sections systematically looking for potential hazards, while focusing on immediate danger. If other workers are in the area, ask questions about their workspace, equipment, etc. Do they have any health and safety-related concerns? What are their concerns?

If possible, take pictures or make drawings of the area – a picture of a potential hazard is much easier to explain. Finally, do not rely exclusively on checklists – a checklist provides a helpful prompt, but they simply cannot capture everything that may be present within the workplace.

Each finding will have a priority assigned to it, indicating the follow-up timeframe. The priority may range from “immediate action” to “action with 21 days”. It is the supervisor / facility manager / building management agent’s responsibility to respond to the finding(s).

#### 4.5 – Common Findings

Throughout the inspection process, there are some common findings that continue to manifest themselves in various environments.

For Offices, common hazards include unsecured filing cabinets, bookcases or wall units, electrical “daisy chains” where several cords or power bars are plugged in sequence, areas where lighting is insufficient for the tasks, and ergonomic concerns from workers.

For Labs, common hazards include the method of storage for chemical products, proper use of fume hoods, storage and inspection, evidence of food and drink within laboratory areas, access to emergency equipment, and unguarded equipment.

For Facilities and Protection, common hazards include damaged infrastructure, slippery surface conditions, and working with designated substances.

#### 4.6 – Corrective Measures

The corrective action may be the correction of the hazard or the interim corrective action, with a plan to permanently address the hazard. When hazards are identified, there are varying means to correct them. There are preferred methods and are arranged in a hierarchy, with controls instituted at the source of the hazard being the most preferred. If controls at the source are not feasible (or reasonable), controls implemented along the path of transmission are the next most desirable. Finally, as a last resort, personal protective equipment can be provided in order to minimize the hazard at the receiver (or worker).

The types of control can vary; however, they are generally grouped into these categories:

**Engineering controls** – these protect the large majority of individuals by augmenting physical equipment or instituting physical barriers (such as guarding).

**Administrative controls** – these practices work to reduce exposure to the hazard via shorter exposure time (such as shorter shifts).

**Personal protective equipment** – these are the devices that individuals wear to protect themselves from hazards that cannot otherwise be controlled (such as a respirator, protective eyewear, hard hat, etc.). Personal protective equipment is considered the “last line of defense”.

#### 4.7 – What Happens After the Inspection?

Once an inspection is conducted, the inspection report is written. The report is sent to the facility manager, the building management agent, the committee co-chairs and the person(s) conducting the inspection. If the Joint Health and Safety Committee Inspector was not involved with the inspection, the report must also be sent to [blitz@uottawa.ca](mailto:blitz@uottawa.ca).

The facility manager or building management reviews the report and initiates the required corrective action (if any) within the priority timeframe. The inspection report (including the corrective action) is returned to the [Joint Health and Safety Committee Inspector](#). If the facility manager or building management agent disagrees with a recommendation, a response is still required and must give the reasons for disagreement. The response must be provided within the priority timeframe.

## SECTION 5 – ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT

### 5.1 – Work Refusals

Section 43 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act deals specifically with work refusals. A worker may refuse to work or do particular work where ***he or she has reason to believe that...***

- Any equipment...the worker is to use or operate is likely to endanger himself, herself or another worker;
- The physical condition of the workplace... is likely to endanger himself or herself; or
- Any equipment...he or she is to use or operate or the physical condition of the workplace...is in contravention of this Act or the regulations and such contravention is likely to endanger himself, herself or another worker.

All workers at uOttawa have a right to refuse unsafe work. In the event that work refusal occurs, this process will involve the health and safety committee too! The process is described below.

- A worker reports his/her refusal to the supervisor. The supervisor investigates the matter in the presence of a health and safety committee member.
- If the supervisor agrees with the refusal, then corrective action is taken and, if the worker is satisfied, the worker returns to work.
- If the supervisor does not agree or if the worker remains concerned about an actual or potential hazard, the supervisor notifies the Office of Risk Management, who will notify the Ministry of Labour. Reasonable, alternate work may be assigned by the supervisor until the situation is resolved. The refused work may be assigned to another worker, provided that the second worker is informed of the work refusal and the reasons for it in the presence of the committee member.
- Upon arrival of the Ministry of Labour inspector, all parties attend the scene and a written decision is provided by the Inspector. Necessary corrective action is implemented, if needed. The work refusal is then cancelled by the Inspector.

The process is visually depicted via the [work refusal flowchart](#).

### 5.2 – Critical Injuries

As was described in the definitions, a critical injury is an injury of a serious nature that

- places life in jeopardy,
- produces unconsciousness,
- results in substantial loss of blood,
- involves the fracture of a leg or arm but not a finger or toe,
- involves the amputation of a leg, arm, hand or foot but not a finger or toe,
- consists of burns to a major portion of the body, or
- causes the loss of sight in an eye.

In the event of a critical injury, Protection Services must be immediately notified (ext. 5411).

Protection will provide assistance to the caller and will attend the scene to secure it. Nothing should be touched, moved or otherwise obstructed unless it is for

- saving life or relieving human suffering;

- maintaining an essential public utility service or a public transportation system; or
- preventing unnecessary damage to equipment or other property.

In some cases, an injury may not be readily apparent at the time of the intervention; contact Protection Services nonetheless. The internal process will take over. All events are investigated; however, there are specific requirements for injuries meeting the definition of a critical injury.

If the injury is confirmed to be a critical injury, the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development is notified by telephone by Office Risk Management; the scene may or may not be released to the University. If the scene continues to be held, no one is permitted to enter this space. It is important to note that there needs to be a reasonable nexus between the injury and the workplace; in other words, injuries occurring during a sporting activity or as a result of a personal medical condition are usually not considered as "critical injuries".

A written report is created by Risk Management and sent to the Ministry of Labour Training and Skills Development within 48 hours of the occurrence. Additional follow-up may be conducted by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development with the worker, the supervisor, the University, the worker's union, and / or the health and safety committee. Risk Management will coordinate the necessary activities; follow-up for any accident / incident is provided to the health and safety committee.

### 5.3 – Follow-up Investigations

Incident follow-ups, or investigations, are not the same as a criminal investigation. In a criminal investigation, the objective is to find the culprit, bring him/her to justice, provide society with deterrence etc.

In a safety investigation, or follow-up, the objective is to find the root cause of the incident, prevent a recurrence, and monitor the effectiveness of implemented controls. The incident follow-ups are generally conducted by the supervisor of the injured worker or, if no injury was sustained, the supervisor of the area where the incident occurred. The follow-up may be assisted by the Office of Risk Management, the Faculty Health, Safety and Risk, Managers (HSRMs), health and safety committee members, or the Occupational Health Nurses for medical follow-ups or extended absences from work. As an example, assume a worker reports to his/her supervisor that he/she fell and injured his/her ankle on the sidewalk. The worker believes that he/she suffered a minor sprain, but nothing more. Should the supervisor investigate and follow-up further?

Of course! The supervisor should ask questions about this incident and try to determine why the worker fell. Some example of questions may include:

- How did the incident occur?
- Why did the worker fall?
- Where was the worker standing?
- What was the worker doing at the time?
- What / who was around the worker?
- Did anyone witness the incident?
- Is anything wrong with the ground / floor / stairs?
- What kind of footwear was the worker wearing (flip-flops / heels / sandals)?

- Was it wet / snowy / icy? If yes why?
- Are there any other situationally dependent factors?

In some cases, a site visit with the individual involved may be needed to better understand what happened and what might be able to be done to prevent a recurrence.

As mentioned, all events (including minor incidents) are investigated. Why is this done? The theory is that there are going to be several times more minor incidents than there will be major incidents. By addressing hazards that contribute to minor incidents, it is likely that you'll reduce the number of major incidents.

The committee then helps analyze the collected data and assist in determining root causes. If additional action is needed, the committee may recommend additional control measures. The discussion and/or recommendations are included in the minutes of the committee and the situation is revisited at the next meeting. In determining a cause for an incident, it is important to note that there are several potential ways that an accident can occur; rarely does one single occurrence trigger an accident. Similarly, rarely does one accident yield one outcome.

## SECTION 6 – PRACTICAL EXERCISE AND QUIZ

### 6.1 – Practical Exercise

At this point during the in-class version of this training, the participants have the opportunity to participate in a workplace inspection. Participants completing online training are strongly encouraged to contact the [Joint Health and Safety Committee Inspector](#) or the [Office of Risk Management](#) to participate in an upcoming inspection to supplement their training.

### 6.2 – Additional Resources

You're not alone! You can always contact [Office of Risk Management](#) for assistance, or consult any of the following references:

- [Guide for Joint Health and Safety Committees](#)
- [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](#)
- [Workplace Safety and Prevention Services](#)

### 6.3 – Quiz

Successful completion of the orientation training requires that you log in and complete the knowledge assessment. Only successful completion of the [knowledge assessment](#) will log your mark in the LRS system.

Upon passing the quiz, you'll receive an email with your proof of completion attached.

## **SECTION 7 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For additional information related to occupational health and safety, contact:

- Your supervisor
- Your union office
- Health, Safety and Risk Manager
- [Health and safety committee](#)
- [Office of Risk Management](#)