

# Health and Safety Committee Member Handbook

Office of the Chief Risk Officer

[uOttawa.ca](http://uOttawa.ca)



uOttawa

## Contents

INTRODUCTION .....	4
DEFINITIONS.....	5
SECTION 1 – LEGISLATION.....	5
1.1 – Ontario <i>Occupational Health and Safety Act</i> .....	5
1.2 – The <i>Criminal Code of Canada</i> .....	5
1.3 – Worker rights .....	6
SECTION 2 – TERMS OF REFERENCE.....	7
2.1 – Framework.....	7
2.2 – Purpose.....	7
2.3 – Functions of the Committee .....	7
2.4 – Committee Member Responsibilities .....	8
SECTION 3 – COMMITTEES .....	9
3.1 – Composition.....	9
3.2 – Committees at uOttawa .....	9
3.3 – Committee Meetings .....	10
3.4 – Quorum .....	11
3.5 – Meeting Process .....	11
3.6 – Certified Members .....	12
SECTION 4 – WORKPLACE INSPECTIONS .....	13
4.1 – Background .....	13
4.2 – Inspection Preparation.....	13
4.3 – Types of Hazards .....	14
4.4 – Conducting an Inspection .....	14
4.5 – Common Findings .....	15
4.6 – Corrective Measures .....	15
4.7 – What Happens After the Inspection? .....	15
SECTION 5 – ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE INVOLVEMENT .....	17
5.1 – Work Refusals .....	17
5.2 – Critical Injuries .....	17
5.3 – Follow-up Investigations .....	18
SECTION 6 – PRACTICAL EXERCISE AND QUIZ .....	20
6.1 – Practical Exercise .....	20
6.2 – Additional Resources .....	20

6.3 – Quiz ..... 20

SECTION 7 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ..... 21

## INTRODUCTION

This document aims to inform new health and safety committee members of their roles, responsibilities and duties while serving as a health and safety committee member at uOttawa. This document will cover the health and safety committee structure at the University of Ottawa, the membership of the committee and its main functions, and will also introduce the Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and its regulations as well as 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, several groups are represented on all health and safety committees, each of which play varying roles.
- Why did you join a health and safety committee?
- What is your goal as a committee member?

## DEFINITIONS

Refer to the [Occupational Health and Safety Management System glossary](#).

## SECTION 1 – LEGISLATION

### 1.1 – Ontario *Occupational Health and Safety Act*

The Ontario's *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 refer to its sections and requirements. There are also several **Regulations** specific to certain sectors, such as healthcare, or oil and gas. Although these particular regulations will not apply at uOttawa, you may want to look at them when considering best practices. Here are the regulations that committee members should be familiar with:

- [Regulation 851 – Industrial Establishments](#)
- [Regulation 490 – Designated Substances](#)
- [Regulation 860 – WHMIS](#)
- [Regulation 420 – Notices and Reports Under Sections 51 to 53.1 of the Act](#)
- [Regulation 858 – University Academics and Teaching Assistants](#)
- [Regulation 833 – Control of Exposure to Biological or Chemical Agents](#)
- [Regulation 632 – Confined Spaces](#)

If you can't find a specific reference to a particular problem or concern, section 25(2)(h) contains a "general duty clause" that probably applies. 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; search it by keyword to find what you're looking for. You can also look up the OHSA or any regulation on [eLaws, a database of Ontario's consolidated laws](#).

Try it yourself! Use the OHS and regulations green book, or online resources such as [eLaws](#), to find and note the sections that refer 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 – The *Criminal Code of Canada*

In 2004, the Bill C-45 amended the *Criminal Code of Canada* by adding added section **217.1**, 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 or safety of other persons in the workplace.

A criminal charge is typically reserved for the most serious types of offences related to health and safety, 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 them or another worker.

Additionally, employers are prohibited by law from taking reprisals against employees who exercise any of these rights. Such reprisals include disciplinary action (suspension, penalties, etc.), intimidation, threats of dismissal, etc. If a reprisal is believed to have occurred, contact the Office of the Chief Risk Officer.

## SECTION 2 – TERMS OF REFERENCE

### 2.1 – Framework

Although the requirements to establish a health and safety committee in Ontario may vary, all health and safety committees aim to assist in preventing work-related accidents, incidents, illnesses and deaths. Moreover, a health and safety committee is a legal requirement of most workplaces in Ontario, including the University of Ottawa.

The University of Ottawa has developed [terms of reference for its health and safety committees](#) that outline their respective functions.

### 2.2 – Purpose

A health and safety committee functions as a cohesive unit and is composed of people who represent the **workers** and the **employer** and who are committed to improving health and safety conditions in the workplace. The committee serves as an advisory body to the employer; it helps raise awareness of health and safety issues, assists in identifying workplace risks, and recommends solutions to the employer. To achieve its goal, the health and safety committee holds regular meetings and conducts regular inspections of the workplace. The employer is obligated to acknowledge the committee's recommendations but is not obligated to implement them.

Think of the committee as a review mechanism for management health and safety practices. Management is responsible for ensuring that the workplace is healthy and safe; the committee is there to provide input, review the health and safety programs, and make recommendations (as required).

When an issue or a problem 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

Every health and safety committee at uOttawa has the following functions and powers:

- a) Identify and evaluate any matter pertaining to health and safety in the workplace and recommend a resolution to appropriate management representatives;
- b) Recommend to management and workers the establishment, maintenance and monitoring of programs, measures and procedures respecting the health and safety of University employees;
- c) Obtain information from management respecting
  - i. the identification of potential or existing hazards of materials, processes or equipment, and
  - ii. health and safety experience and work practices and standards in other institutions of which management has knowledge;
- d) Obtain information from management on the use or testing of any equipment or machine or of any biological, chemical or physical agent in or about a workplace for the purpose of health and safety;
- e) Be consulted about, and have a designated member representing workers be present during, any testing referred to in clause (d) that is conducted in or about the workplace, if the

designated member believes their presence is required to ensure that the test results will be valid;

- f) 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*;
- g) Address matters related to Designated Substance Regulations and the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), where applicable;
- h) 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 Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

## **2.4 – Committee Member Responsibilities**

It is 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 between your union or association and 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, the duties of committee members are various and important. Being a committee member is serious business...you're making a difference in your workplace!



## SECTION 3 – COMMITTEES

### 3.1 – Composition

The University's health and safety committees involve representatives from all levels of the organization, particularly 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);
- University of Ottawa IT Professionals (UOITP);
- Support Staff University of Ottawa (SSUO);
- Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU); 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 or association representative for all committees. There is no pre-set format for appointing a member to a committee; each union or association is free to name a member as they see fit. The union or association may:

- Hold an election internal to the union
- Have the executive committee appoint a member
- Select the holder of a specific position within the union to attend

As noted, the union or association is free to name whomever they see fit to represent their members. In all cases, committee members are appointed for 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 of Article 9 (conducting inspections and critical injury investigations).

### 3.2 – Committees at uOttawa

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

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

- Protection and Facilities Functional Occupational Health and Safety Committee
- Alta Vista Functional Occupational Health and Safety Committee
- Psychological Functional Health and Safety Committee

The UJOHSC is primarily concerned with university-wide issues, with emphasis on policy recommendations, activities that concern several subcommittees, and coordination of information received from the subcommittees.

The subcommittees are concerned with the functional activities of their sectors, namely:

- **Office Functional Occupational Health and Safety Committee** – represents employees working in computer laboratories, dry laboratories, offices, classrooms, pools, common areas, kitchens, arenas, libraries, auditoriums, etc.
- **Laboratory Functional Occupational Health and Safety Committee** – represents specialized and technical employees from areas where scientific research, scientific experiments or preparation for scientific experiments are taking place, including all areas that support laboratories, such as metal shops, woodworking shops, etc.
- **Facilities and Protection Functional Occupational Health and Safety Committee** – represents 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 that are not within a specific building, such as parking lots and University-owned roadways, etc.
- **Alta Vista Functional Occupational Health and Safety Committee** – represents all employees whose principal work location is in Roger Guindon and Peter Morand buildings.
- **Psychological Functional Health and Safety Committee** – represents all employees with regard to psychological health and safety; its broad mandate allows for direct input and member participation on mental health and wellness issues at the University and identification of best practices for such matters for all employee groups.

Each committee sits members from the respective unions and associations within the functional workplace; the [Terms of Reference](#) lists the unions and associations for each committee (as well as the number of representatives). Resource personnel, as well as non-voting personnel, also attend the meetings. Guests may attend a committee meeting so long as the co-chairs agree to this attendance in advance.

### 3.3 – Committee Meetings

Each committee is expected to hold regular meetings no less than once every three months. This frequency is defined under section 9; subsection 33 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Meetings may be held more frequently if the committee desires. In many cases, a committee will schedule five or six meetings per year, set at the beginning of calendar year, to allow members to plan their attendance. Ideally, the day, time and location of the meeting should remain consistent. The Outlook calendar tool may be used to send invitations and schedule the meetings for the calendar year. Although personal email addresses may be used, the generic email addresses for all unions and associations must be included in all communications related to health and safety. Generic emails may be obtained from the Office of the Chief Risk Officer.

Each meeting is chaired by one of the two co-chairs, who alternate this duty 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).

The two co-chairs prepare the meeting's agenda and sent it to the members for feedback at least seven days before the meeting. Committee members may request that discussion items be added. The agenda will be approved before 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. [The terms of reference present a sample of an agenda.](#)

The management co-chair or an elected secretary will take the minutes of the meeting, which will be approved before the following meeting. The minutes will serve to record attendance and the items discussed at the committee. The minutes should be written and circulated as soon as possible so that they accurately describe the discussions. 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 the Chief Risk Officer website](#) and on the [health and safety bulletin boards on campus](#).

### **3.4 – Quorum**

A quorum must be met before a meeting can begin. At uOttawa, quorum for a health and safety committee meetings is defined as:

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

Other considerations 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 has been appointed but has not attended three consecutive meetings, the position will not count towards quorum. If this occurs, the Office of the Chief Risk Officer will formally notify the union or association at fault will that the appointed individual has not attended three consecutive meetings. If the situation persists for three additional meetings, the union or 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 and request that the agenda be approved. One member will move for its approval and a second member will second the motion. If there are no objections or subsequent additions, the agenda is approved.

Next, the committee will approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Again, one member moves for approval and a second member will second the motion. If there are no objections or subsequent additions, the minutes are approved. If changes to the minutes are required, they are noted in the minutes of the current meeting.

Then the committee will address any outstanding business – this could include feedback on a matter from the minutes, an update on a specific situation, or follow-up from a particular event.

The elected worker member then presents a brief summary of the recent accidents and incidents occurring within the committees' realm of responsibility. This summary is meant to report on the accidents and incidents that occurred and provide feedback on the corrective action that was taken (as required). Particular time is devoted to critical injuries, occupational illnesses, and any actions undertaken by the Ministry of Labour.

Next, the committee will review a summary of the recent workplace inspections to detect hazards in the workplace, for which the committee is responsible. The summary covers the committee's realm of responsibility as well as the entire University; the figure is expressed as a percentage of the total area of responsibility.

Then, the elected worker member presents a brief report from the University Committee, including details of 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. Any such recommendation issued by the committee should be specific and achieve consensus. Using the "five W's" (why, who, what, where, when) helps to define the recommendation. The employer is required to acknowledge all recommendations within a reasonable timeframe; most recommendations require a response within 21 days. If the committee has failed to reach a consensus about a recommendation, either co-chair has the power to make written recommendations to the employer.

The presiding co-chair is responsible for keeping the discussion relevant to the agenda items; if more time is required, 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 the Ontario *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. If a certified member has reason to believe that "dangerous circumstances" exist, the certified member must notify the supervisor of the area or worker, who will then 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 the Chief Risk Officer must be notified. This office will contact the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, which will issue a written decision on the matter, with corrective action following (if necessary).

Although uOttawa only requires two certified members, the University has made efforts to ensure that there are several worker and management certified members. Contact the [Office of the Chief Risk Officer](#) for information on certified members.

## SECTION 4 – WORKPLACE INSPECTIONS

### 4.1 – Background

Workplace inspections are another aspect of a committee member's duties. Workplace inspections are required by law; a part of the workplace must be inspected once per month to ensure that the entire campus is inspected at least once per year. Any worker member may conduct a health and safety committee inspection; however, we strongly recommended that members **not** conduct a workplace inspection on their 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 with workplace inspections (on the committee's behalf). The inspector represents workers on the health and safety committee. If you're interested in conducting a workplace inspection, please contact the [Advisor, Occupational Health and Safety](#) to check which areas still need to be inspected.

Workplace inspections are a unique opportunity for members 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 committee members to learn about the worker's job and identify potential hazards that workers may have overlooked, due to their familiarity with the work and workplace. Committee members may be able to help identify the cause of a given event and 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 help make 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, be sure to note it on the inspection report. If something requires immediate action, speak with the area's supervisor to correct it. Do not correct the issue yourself.

### 4.2 – Inspection Preparation

Before conducting a workplace inspection, you should consider:

- 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.
- Have new machinery, equipment or procedures been introduced in the area?

To prepare for an inspection, we recommend that you review

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

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

- Paper and a writing instrument or a recording tool. You will need something to write down your findings. Even situations where you observe no hazards 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-toe shoes, etc.
- A flashlight for dark or small spaces.
- A camera, which may be 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 potentially causing harm to health, safety, or human welfare. A hazard can cause injury, illness, or both, depending on the specific situation. Hazards to consider during inspections may include:

- Biological hazards, such as viruses, moulds, fungi
- Chemical hazards, such as proper storage, labelling
- Biomechanical hazards, such as awkward movements, repetitive motions
- Physical hazards, such as noise, heat, cold, radiation
- Psychosocial hazards, such as stress, violence, harassment. These are considerably more difficult to identify and are often addressed through appropriate reporting and investigation procedures.

Most hazards you identify 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 and verify it 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, we recommend that you **not** 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. For example, if you normally work in a workshop in the Faculty of Engineering, try a health and safety inspection in a workshop in the Faculty of Science or Faculty of Arts. This will allow the workplace to be viewed by a different, but competent, set of eyes.

### 4.4 – Conducting an Inspection

When actually conducting 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 or Health, Safety and Risk Manager will be one of the best sources of information.

Some areas can be very large; we recommend that you divide such areas into sections and move through the sections while systematically looking for potential hazards and focusing on immediate danger. If other workers are in the area, ask questions about their workspace, equipment, etc. Do they have any concerns related to health and safety? 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 it simply cannot capture everything that may be present within the workplace.

Assign a priority to each finding to indicate the timeframe for follow-up. The priority may range from “immediate action” to “action with 21 days”. The supervisor, facility manager, or building management agent is responsible for responding to the finding.

#### 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 used to store chemical products; proper use of fume hoods; storage and inspection rates; 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 to address the hazard or to introduce 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 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) end.

The types of control can vary; however, they are 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 in 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 [Advisor, Occupational Health and Safety](#). If the facility manager disagrees with a recommendation, a response is still required and must provide 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 **they have 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 the 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. If a work refusal occurs, this process will involve the health and safety committee too! The process is described below.

- A worker reports their 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 the Chief Risk Officer, 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 Inspector will then cancel the work refusal.

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

### 5.2 – Critical Injuries

As 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 Services will provide assistance to the caller and will attend the scene to secure it. Nothing should be touched, moved or otherwise obstructed except to:

- save life or relieve human suffering

- maintain an essential public utility service or a public transportation system; or
- prevent 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 Office of the Chief Risk Officer will notify the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development by telephone; 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 connection 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 not normally considered “critical injuries”.

The Office of the Chief Risk Officer compiles a report and sends it to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development within 48 hours of the occurrence. The Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development may conduct additional follow-up with the worker, the supervisor, the University, the worker’s union, and the health and safety committee. The office of the Chief Risk Officer will coordinate the necessary activities; they will provide information on the follow-up actions taken to resolve any accident or incident to the health and safety committee.

### 5.3 – Follow-up Investigations

Incident follow-ups or investigations differ from criminal investigations. In a criminal investigation, the objective is to find the culprit, bring them 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 its recurrence, and monitor the effectiveness of implemented controls. Normally, incident follow-ups are conducted by the supervisor of the injured worker or, if no injury was sustained, the supervisor of the area where the incident occurred. The office of the Chief Risk Officer, the Faculty Health, Safety and Risk, Managers (HSRMs), and health and safety committee members may assist in conducting the follow-up, or the Occupational Health nurses may conduct medical follow-ups or investigations into extended absences from work.

For example, let’s say that a worker reports to their supervisor that they fell and injured their ankle on the sidewalk. The worker believes that they 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, you will probably reduce the number of major incidents.

The committee then helps analyze the collected data and assists 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 meetings 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, participants have the opportunity to participate in a workplace inspection. Participants completing online training are strongly encouraged to contact the [Advisor, Occupational Health and Safety](#) or the [Office of the Chief Risk Officer](#) to participate in an upcoming inspection to supplement their training.

### 6.2 – Additional Resources

You're not alone! You can always contact [Office of the Chief Risk Officer](#) 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. Your mark will only be recorded in the LRS system upon successful completion of the [knowledge assessment](#).

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

## **SECTION 7 – ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

For more information on occupational health and safety, contact:

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