



## **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY**

**DATE ADOPTED BY COUNCIL: September 26, 2023**

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### **1. POLICY STATEMENT**

The Town of Lunenburg is committed to providing a healthy and safe workplace for its employees and believes that the safety of employees is essential for accomplishing organizational success and sustainability.

Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) is the direct responsibility of all employees to the extent of each person's authority and ability to act. Therefore, the Town is committed to working collaboratively with employees, their representatives, and the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) to realize an effective Occupational Health and Safety Program (OHS Program).

### **2. PURPOSE**

This policy is a commitment by the Town of Lunenburg to cooperate with its employees to provide a workplace where each employee's health and safety are of primary concern and importance. The objective of this commitment is to minimize the number of workplace injuries and illnesses through effective health and safety programs, policies and procedures.

### **3. APPLICABILITY**

This policy applies to all Town of Lunenburg employees. This policy also applies to outside contractors and volunteers conducting work with or on behalf of the Town.

### **4. SCOPE**

The Occupational Health and Safety Act, accompanying regulations of the Province of Nova Scotia, and acceptable occupational practices will describe the minimum standard expected for health and safety for Town employees. Where it is in the interest of occupational health and safety or program delivery, the Town may exceed the requirements prescribed by legislation.

### **5. RESPONSIBILITIES**

Council will:

- Approve required health and safety policies.
- Approve funding to support the Town's health and safety needs.
- Will cooperate with the JOHSC and Town staff to help create a healthy and safe work environment.

The Town as an Employer will:

- Provide appropriate training, equipment and facilities to all employees to ensure they can work safely and identify all potential hazards in the workplace.
- Ensure that all employees at all levels of the organization understand the importance of internalizing safe work practices to protect themselves, their co-workers and the public at all times.
- Have conflict resolution practices in place.

Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) will:

- Designate roles to staff to help administer this policy and procedures.
- Establish and maintain the Town of Lunenburg's JOHSC.
- Approve the Terms of Reference for the JOHSC.
- Ensure systems are in place to monitor compliance with the terms of this policy and other OHS guidelines and procedures.
- Provide leadership to ensure all employees meet their health and safety obligations and responsibilities under the Occupational Health & Safety Act, other applicable regulations and this policy.
- Support health and safety education and initiatives.

## **6. STATISTICS AND RECORDS**

The Town will maintain records and statistics relating to health and safety. At each JOHSC meeting, the Committee will review and record monthly safety statistics.

## **7. REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed annually.

## **8. SCHEDULES**

The Terms of Reference of the JOHSC are attached as a schedule for reference. The CAO must approve the Terms of Reference and any future amendments.

**TOWN OF LUNENBURG**

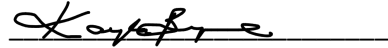
**Clerk's Annotation for Official Policy Book**

Policy: Occupational Health and Safety Policy

Date of Notice to Council: September 12, 2023

Date of Adoption: September 26, 2023

I certify that this Policy was adopted by Council as indicated above.



Municipal Clerk

Date: September 27, 2023



## ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

### OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Date approved by the CAO: September 26, 2023

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#### 1. STAFF ROLES

Directors, Managers and Supervisors will:

- Understand and implement this policy, any associated administrative procedures, guidelines, protocols and safe work practices.
- Ensure employees understand their health and safety obligations and responsibilities under the Occupational Health & Safety Act, other applicable regulations and this policy.
- Provide support in health and safety training to workers in their daily tasks.
- Ensure all new employees receive a safety orientation and safety manual.
- Cooperate with the JOHSC when required.

All Employees will:

- Follow this policy and all applicable acts and regulations.
- Report any hazardous conditions, injury, accident, or illness related to the workplace to their manager or director.
- Use safety equipment, clothing, devices and materials for personal protection when required.
- Play an active role in identifying hazards and offer suggestions or ideas to improve the health and safety practices of the Town.

Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) will:

- Conduct regular workplace inspections.
- Investigate accidents and incidents.
- Communicate any work process or environment changes that may impact worksite health and safety to management.
- Attend to worker concerns about worksite health and safety.
- Identify potential safety hazards.
- Inform management of corrections to potential hazards.
- Consult and liaise with workers and management on all workplace health and safety matters.
- Maintain records and minutes of Committee meetings.
- Create Terms of Reference for the Committee.



## **JOINT OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Approved by the CAO on: September 26, 2023

Last updated:

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#### **1. Name of Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee**

This Committee is called the Town of Lunenburg Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC).

#### **2. Purpose of Committee**

The purpose of the joint committee is to work cooperatively with the Town of Lunenburg, as an employer, in identifying and resolving safety and health issues in support of occupational safety and health procedures and to prevent occupational injuries in the workplace.

#### **3. Duties and Responsibilities**

The Committee's duties and functions include, but are not limited to:

- Identifying workplace hazards to health and safety and developing and implementing effective systems to address any hazards.
- Auditing compliance with health and safety requirements in the workplace.
- Receiving, investigating and promptly handling inquiries, questions and complaints regarding workplace health and safety.
- Participating in inspections and investigations concerning workplace health and safety and, when required, accompanying the Provincial Occupational Health and Safety Officer during workplace inspections.
- Advising on individual protective devices and equipment best suited to the needs of the employees.
- Making recommendations regarding the development and annual review of WHMIS, first aid and other relevant provincial regulations and standards.
- Advising the Town about policies, training, programs and other initiatives to improve health and safety in the workplace.

- Maintaining and distributing records and minutes of Committee meetings.
- Perform any other duties assigned to it by the Town or as established by policy, legislation or regulation.

#### **4. Committee Membership**

The Committee will consist of the following seven representatives:

- Two Public Works Department employees, one being an employee of the Town's Waste Water Treatment Plant or Water Treatment Plant.
- One Corporate Services employee.
- Two Community Development employees, one being someone who works in Recreation.
- The Fire Hall Superintendent (representing the Fire Department)
- One management employee representing the Town, either the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or a designate of the CAO.

Department Directors appoint Committee members from their departments.

Committee member appointments are for one-year terms. However, members may be considered for re-appointment by the Director of their department.

When a committee member cannot attend a Committee meeting, their Director may select an interim department representative with all Committee voting privileges and responsibilities during the regular Committee member's absence.

The department Director will select another Committee representative if a committee member cannot complete their term due to an extended absence.

Committee members will fill the Committee roles of co-chair and secretary.

All committee members are voting members, including the co-chairs and secretary.

#### **5. Departmental Committee Representatives**

Each departmental representative of the Committee must ensure that their department and/or workplace have specific health and safety protocols, practices, and guidelines. A physical copy of these workplace protocols must be accessible to all employees of that department or workplace.

Departmental protocols and guidelines will be reviewed by the Committee annually.

Departmental representatives will ensure new employees receive a copy of departmental workplace protocols and guidelines as a part of the new employee's onboarding.

Committee representatives will also ensure that all employees within the department are familiar with the Workplace Safety Incident Report Form and how to file a report.

## **6. Committee Co-Chairs**

The Committee will elect two co-chairs at the beginning of the first committee meeting of each year.

The co-chairs will:

- Alternate meeting chairing responsibilities.
- Work with the secretary to prepare meeting agendas.
- Review and approve meeting agendas before being circulated.
- Prepare Committee meeting recommendation(s) and forward all recommendations to the employer for a response or action.
- Carry out any other chair-related duties as requested by the Committee.

## **7. Committee Secretary**

The Committee will elect a Committee secretary at the beginning of the first Committee meeting of each year.

The Committee secretary will record meeting minutes and work with the co-chairs to prepare and circulate agendas and reports.

## **8. Committee Meetings**

The Committee will meet bi-monthly on a regularly scheduled workday or more often as required.

Special Committee meetings, when required, may be called by the co-chairs or the CAO.

A Committee meeting quorum is a majority of committee members.

Committee meetings are open to all employees. However, only appointed Committee members may participate in decision-making during a meeting.

## **9. Decisions of the Committee**

The Committee will attempt to reach a consensus on each decision it makes. A vote may be taken if the Committee cannot reach a consensus. The Committee will go with the majority vote when a vote is needed.

## **10. Committee agendas and meeting reports**

Before any meeting, the Committee secretary will prepare and circulate a meeting agenda.

The Committee secretary will prepare draft meeting minutes within one week following a meeting. Draft minutes will be circulated to all Town employees.

Each departmental Committee representative will promptly post a copy of the most recent meeting minutes on the department's safety bulletin board, accessible to all department employees.

When a Committee member disputes the accuracy of the minutes of a meeting, the matter will be raised at the next meeting, and corrections can be noted in the minutes.

### **11. Committee meeting records**

The Committee will keep accurate records of all matters that come before it. The Committee will maintain copies of its minutes for at least six years from the date of each meeting.

All committee records will be digitized and filed in the shared Safety Files folder on the Town's M365 platform. Employees who do not have access to computers may request copies of documents by contacting their departmental Committee representative, the co-chairs, or the Committee secretary.

### **12. Annual Department Occupational Health and Safety Hazard Identification Inspections**

Committee members will annually complete and submit their departmental Workplace Safety Inspection Checklist to the Town's Safety Officer.

Inspection teams will be annually appointed per building or department by the Committee. Inspection teams will consist of three members:

- One employee from the department.
- One employee from another department.
- The Safety Officer.

Checklists may be completed more frequently if the committee directs.

Completed checklists must be returned to the Safety Officer, who will file electronic copies and log any reported deficiencies into the Safety Items and Concerns Master List spreadsheet in the shared Safety Files folder on the Town's M365 platform. Inspection sheets and the spreadsheet will be circulated to the Committee and relevant Directors for response back to the Committee to ensure any deficiencies are corrected.

### **13. Occupational Health and Safety Investigations**

The Committee has the authority to investigate all Town safety matters as deemed necessary. The Committee may appoint an investigation team consisting of three committee members, as required. The investigation team will report to the Committee, which may make a report and recommendation to the relevant Director or CAO.

#### **14. Occupational Health and Safety Complaints and Reports**

All occupational health and safety complaints Town employees make must be documented through the Workplace Safety Incident Report Form. Without releasing the employee's name or any other confidential information, including medical information, the Committee will receive Workplace Safety Incident Report Forms for review. After the review, the Committee may determine whether a report and/or recommendation(s) to the relevant director and/or CAO is required.

#### **15. Refusal of Work**

When any employee refuses work because they believe it is likely to endanger their health or safety or the health or safety of another person, the Committee will investigate the work refusal. When possible, the refusing employee will accompany the Committee during a physical inspection related to the refusal. If all Committee members find the work safe and healthy, the Committee will advise the employee to return to work. A quorum of the entire Committee must make a unanimous decision to advise the employee to return to work.

If one or more Committee members find the work unsafe or unhealthy, the Committee will recommend that the employer fix the problem.

If the Committee cannot reach a unanimous decision on a recommendation to return to work, or if the problem is not resolved to the employee's satisfaction, the employee should contact a Department of Labour and Workforce Development Occupational Health and Safety Officer and indicate that they have refused to work.

#### **16. Confidentiality**

Committee members are permitted access to information required to fulfil committee duties. However, as per the Occupational Health and Safety Act, committee members are not allowed to disclose medical information, confidential trade, or confidential business information. Information can be disclosed where specifically allowed by the Act or as required by law.

#### **17. Recommendations to the Employer**

When the Committee or Committee members have identified any occupational health and safety recommendations for the employer, the Committee must reach a consensus or vote on the recommendation(s) before moving forward with the recommendation process.

Once the Committee has approved recommendations, the Committee must make all recommendations to the CAO in writing with a request for a response within 21 days of the day the recommendations were submitted. When the recommendation is solely for a specific department, the recommendations must also be sent to the relevant director.

The CAO and relevant Director (when required) must respond in writing by:

- Indicating acceptance of the recommendation; or
- Giving the employer's reasons for not accepting the recommendation.

If the CAO and/or relevant director cannot respond by the end of the 21 days, they must explain the delay and indicate when the response will be provided.

Should the CAO and/or relevant director not accept the Committee's recommendations, the co-chairs may report this to a Department of Labour and Workforce Development Occupational Health and Safety Officer.

Any recommendations made by the Committee and any follow-up documents will be included in the most relevant Committee meeting agenda package.

### **18. Educational Leave Entitlement**

Each Committee member is entitled to an annual educational leave totalling eight hours, or a longer period if prescribed by regulation, to attend occupational health and safety training courses. The Town must provide the educational leave without loss of pay or other benefits and must pay for, or reimburse the worker for, the training course costs and the reasonable costs of attending the course.

### **19. Amendments to the Terms of Reference**

Any Committee member at any meeting may suggest amendments to the Terms of Reference. Amendments will be agreed upon by consensus or a majority vote when required.

Amendments to the Terms of Reference must be approved by the CAO.