

St. Francis Xavier University
Science Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee
Terms of Reference

Preamble

The Occupational Health and Safety Act of Nova Scotia requires that employers have at least one Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC). Due to the number of employees at StFX and the diversity of occupations and relative hazards, the University (employer) has chosen to implement three JOHSC to meet the requirement of The Act and the safety needs on and off campus. The committees are University JOHSC, Facilities Management JOHSC, and Science JOHSC.

Mandate

The Science Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee ('The Committee') provides an Employee/Employer forum to address issues related to prevention of illness and injury, promotion of health and safety of employees and protection of employees from hazards in the workplaces within the Faculty of Science and the Department of Psychology in the Faculty of Arts.

The Committee will provide a forum to collaborate on similar health and safety topics, and the records and processes produced during Committee activities will be kept in a central repository of institutional knowledge for everyone to contribute to and share.

1.0 Membership

- I. There will be one Employee member (faculty and staff who do not exercise managerial functions) representing each department listed in Appendix A (Employee Membership section) on the Committee. The Employee members will be chosen by St. Francis Xavier University Association of University Teachers (StFX AUT). There should also be one Alternate named for each member. Selection of members, as much as possible, should maintain a balance of the Committee in terms of a) Faculty, Lab Instructors, Nurse Educators, and Dietetic Educators b) Gender/Diversity c) Rank.
- II. The Employee members and alternates (who should attend the meeting if a member is unable to attend) shall be elected for a three (3) year term. The terms of the elected members shall be staggered to provide continuity of membership on the Committee.
- III. There will be three Employer members (Employer members are those who exercise managerial functions).
- IV. The Manager, Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) will act as the administrator for the committee and will be referred to as the Administrator.

2.0 Rotation of Members

- I. The Committee membership shall be reviewed annually.
- II. Any Committee member (and Alternate) shall be eligible for re-appointment.
- III. Alternate members may replace outgoing members, and new Alternate members will be chosen.

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- IV. Rotation should be no more than fifty percent of the Committee at any one time to ensure continuity and effectiveness of the Committee.

4.0 Duties of Science Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee Members:

4.1 General

Within the workplaces of the Faculty of Science and the Department of Psychology, it is the function of the Committee to:

- I. Identify, evaluate and make recommendations to Employer concerning workplace health and safety issues;
- II. Ensure workplaces and laboratories are inspected on a regular basis;
- III. Be consulted about and provide input into workplace health and safety programs; and
- IV. Discuss other workplace health and safety issues and reports as appropriate.

4.2 The Committee Chair (Co-Chairs) will:

- I. Preside over the meeting of the Committee and ensure it is conducted in a democratic and orderly manner.
- II. Require the review and analysis of reported incidents, investigations, inspections and recommendations from the Committee.
- III. Ensure written recommendations by the Committee are sent to the President of the University or Designate for a response and advise the Committee of the written response to the recommendations within 21 days.
- IV. Perform any other tasks assigned by the Committee or required by legislation.

4.3 The Committee members (and Alternates-when required or invited) will:

- I. Attend Committee meetings.
- II. Notify the Administrator if unable to attend.
- III. Receive and bring forward health and safety issues from areas of representation.
- IV. Set examples to fellow workers by observing healthy and safe work practices and procedures.
- V. Promote and support health and safety activities throughout area of representation.
- VI. Contribute ideas and make suggestions to improve health and safety in the workplace.
- VII. Participate in Committee inspections and investigations as required and directed by the Committee.
- VIII. Participate in Committee activities and on task forces as required.
- IX. Acquire a level of knowledge and education about health and safety issues in the workplace (training will be provided).
- X. Maintain confidentiality regarding Committee proceedings and documents that are identified to be confidential.
- XI. If a member of the Committee is unable to attend a meeting, they will ask their alternate to attend. If neither can attend, they will advise the Administrator.
- XII. Any other duties as directed by the Committee or required by legislation.

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4.4 *The Manager of Occupational Health and Safety will act as the Administrator and will:*

- I. Attend all meetings as a non-voting ex-officio member and OH&S resource.
- II. Record and prepare the minutes of all meetings.
- III. Provide a written draft of meeting minutes to the Chair (or Co-Chairs) within ten (10) working days following any meeting.
- IV. Send draft minutes to Committee at least one week prior to the following meeting.
- V. Finalize minutes following meeting and post final copy on the Science JOHSC website.
- VI. In consultation with the Committee Chair (or Co-Chairs), develop and distribute an agenda for meetings at least one week prior to the following meeting.
- VII. Distribute information concerning the activities of the Committee as directed by the Committee Chair (or Co-Chairs).
- VIII. Maintain Committee records including attendance, all minutes and other records as noted in *Section 6.0, Record Keeping*.
- IX. Any other duties as directed by the Committee.

5.0 Committee Meeting Procedures

- I. The Committee will meet three times per year, during the 3rd week of the months of January, May, and October. The Chair (or Co-Chairs) may call special meetings as needed.
- II. The Committee should reach agreement on all general matters through consensus. The Chair will ask if there are any objections to agreements made through consensus.
- III. If a consensus cannot be reached, a simple majority vote shall take place, with the results recorded in the minutes of the meeting.
- IV. A Motion can take place as deemed appropriate by the Committee.
- V. The Administrator will arrange for a suitable meeting place and notify Committee members of the location.

5.1 Committee Agenda

- I. The agenda shall be developed by the Administrator in consultation with the Committee Chair (or Co-Chairs) and distributed to Committee members at least one week prior to the meeting.
- II. Any members who have an issue for discussion at the meeting should notify the Administrator prior to the date for finalizing the agenda.
- III. The Committee can amend the agenda at the meeting, if necessary, to address last minute issues.

Agenda Outline

1. Roll Call
2. Approval of Agenda
3. Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting
4. Outstanding Items from Previous Meeting

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5. Health and Safety Concerns
6. Review of Incidents
7. Review of Inspections
8. Health and Safety Training
9. Emergency Management
10. New Business
11. Date and Time of Next Meeting
12. Adjournment

5.2 Minutes

- I. A draft of the minutes from the previous meeting are circulated in writing to members at least one week prior to the meeting.
- II. Approved minutes and other relevant correspondence shall be posted by the Administrator on the FoS JOHSC Website within ten (10) working days following a meeting.
- III. The Committee will formally approve all minutes at the first meeting following the meeting for which minutes were produced.
- IV. Any changes to the minutes shall be made by the Administrator and noted in the following meeting's minutes.

6.0 Record Keeping

The following reports, records and information shall be maintained for the Committee by the Administrator:

1. Meeting Minutes
2. Written concerns/complaints reports
3. Incident investigation reports
4. Records of workplace inspections
5. Correspondence
6. Department of Labour written orders/warnings
7. Work refusal report
8. Written recommendations
9. University's response to recommendations
10. Any other relevant information

7.0 Emergency Meetings

- I. An emergency meeting of the Committee may be called by the Chair (or Co-Chairs) without minimum notice.
- II. Where the Chair (or Co-Chairs) is (are) not available or Committee members cannot agree on the need for an emergency meeting, an emergency meeting can be called

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where four (4) members of the Committee agree to the meeting. See quorum requirements below (8.0(II)).

8.0 Quorum

- I. A quorum for Committee at a **regular** meeting shall be five (5) members of the Committee or alternate(s), with at least fifty percent (50%) being Employee representatives and at least two (2) Employer representatives.
- II. A quorum for the Committee at an **emergency** meeting including for work refusal investigation purposes, shall be four (4) members of the Committee or alternate(s), with at least fifty percent (50%) being Employee representatives and at least two (2) Employer representatives.

9.0 Attendance

- I. Members are expected to attend meetings on a regular basis. If they cannot attend a meeting, they will ask their alternate to attend. If neither can attend, they will advise the Administrator.

10.0 General

- I. It is agreed that all employees are to be encouraged to report health and safety concerns to their immediate supervisor before bringing it to a Committee member. The OH&S Act requires that all employees report any workplace hazard or contravention of the legislation to their supervisor.
- II. It is understood and agreed that all personal and medical information is to be kept confidential. Any references to such information in Committee minutes must be done in a manner that prevents any identification of an individual's personal or medical information.
- III. The Committee may amend these terms of reference at any time, as deemed necessary to facilitate the ongoing effective operation of the Committee.
- V. Issues can be dealt with by email between meetings, as deemed necessary by the Committee.

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Appendix A

Proposed Membership

Employer Membership

Dean of Science
Associate Vice President Research and Graduate Studies
Dean of Arts

Employee Membership (one from each department or unit(s))

Biology (including Aquatic Resources, Animal Care Facility)
Chemistry
Computer Science (**optional**)
Earth and Environmental Sciences (including CLEN)
Engineering
Human Kinetics
Human Nutrition
Mathematics and Statistics (**optional**)
Nursing
Physics
Psychology [Sherry Neville-MacLean]

Advisory (ex-officio, non-voting) Members

Manager of Occupational Health and Safety (Administrator)
Advisor, Health and Wellness
Facilities Management

Training

Four-hour in-person JOHSC training will be provided to all members (and more as required).