JOINT OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE POLICY

[Organization Name] is committed to providing a healthy and safe workplace for all employees. This policy outlines the roles, responsibilities, and guidelines for establishing and maintaining a Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and General Regulations of Prince Edward Island.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all [Organization Name] workplaces where a Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) is required by legislation, typically where 20 or more workers are regularly employed.

POLICY

[Organization Name] is committed to the health and safety of its employees and will establish a Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) at all workplaces where 20 or more workers are regularly employed, in accordance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations of Prince Edward Island.

A JOHSC is a group of worker and employer representatives who work together to address health and safety issues in their workplace.

Employer Responsibilities

[Organization Name] is committed to supporting the JOHSC in fulfilling its duties under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and General Regulations (the “Act”).

[Organization Name] (the “Employer”) will:

* Consult and cooperate with the JOHSC on all matters relating to workplace health and safety.
* Provide the committee with reasonable access to relevant health and safety information and documentation.
* Respond in writing to committee recommendations within 30 days, as required by legislation.
* Ensure committee members are provided with paid time to attend meetings, participate in training, conduct inspections, and carry out other committee-related functions.
* Provide adequate space, tools, and administrative support to enable the committee to function effectively.
* Act on urgent recommendations that involve serious hazards without delay.
* Collaborate with the committee on the development, implementation, and annual review of health and safety policies, programs, and procedures.

Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee Responsibilities

The Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee will:

* Work with the employer to identify hazards in the workplace and recommend effective systems to control or eliminate them.
* Receive, investigate, and address health and safety concerns raised by workers.
* Participate in regular workplace inspections, inquiries, and incident investigations (excluding workplace harassment investigations).
* Advise the employer on the selection and use of appropriate personal protective equipment, safety devices, and engineering controls.
* Provide input and guidance to the employer regarding health and safety policies and programs required under the Act.
* Make written recommendations to the employer, workers, or others for the improvement of occupational health and safety.
* Maintain accurate records and minutes of all committee meetings and provide these to an occupational health and safety officer upon request.
* Meet at least once per month or at another interval as determined in the Rules of Procedure, and ensure that minutes are promptly posted in an accessible location.
* Establish and follow Rules of Procedure outlining how the committee will carry out its duties.
* Encourage workers to report hazards and concerns to their supervisor as a first step.
* Participate in the annual review of the workplace health and safety program and consult on any updates to safety policies and procedures.

Committee Membership

In accordance with the Prince Edward Island *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, the membership of the JOHSC shall be determined as follows:

* One-half of the committee members shall be selected by the workers they represent; and
* One-half of the committee members shall be selected by the employer.

Training

[Organization Name] will ensure that all JOHSC members receive occupational health and safety training to familiarize themselves with their roles and responsibilities, including accident and incident investigations and the right to refuse unsafe work.

This training will be provided at no cost to the committee members. Participation in training is considered part of each member’s responsibilities, and members will be compensated for all time spent in training.

Training must include:

* The Occupational Health and Safety Act and its Regulations
* The general content of the regulations and the role of the committee
* The company’s safety policy and program, and how to evaluate each
* First Aid and reporting procedures
* Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)
* The Internal Responsibility System
* The committee’s rules of procedure
* The role of the committee in relation to:
	+ Performing workplace inspections
	+ Identifying hazards
	+ Investigating incidents
	+ Addressing health and safety complaints
	+ Handling work refusal situations

Rules of Procedure

In accordance with Section 25 of the Prince Edward Island Occupational Health and Safety Act (the “Act”), [Organization Name]'s JOHSC will establish a Rules of Procedure document-also referred to as the Terms of Reference-which outlines how the committee will carry out its duties and functions. This document will be workplace-specific and designed to support the effective operation and mandate of the committee.

The Rules of Procedure will include the following components:

* Name of Committee

The committee will adopt a name that is easily recognizable within the workplace to ensure clarity and visibility among all staff.
* Statement of Purpose

This section will outline the purpose of the committee and briefly describe its primary goals, such as promoting health and safety awareness, identifying workplace hazards, and supporting the Internal Responsibility System.

* Composition and Membership

Committee membership will follow the requirements of the Act and as outlined in this policy. The Rules of Procedure will also define:

	+ The number of members and their terms of service
	+ The process for selecting members and appointing alternates
	+ The method for replacing a committee member when necessary
* Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities will comply with the minimum standards set out in the Act and include:
	+ The process for making written recommendations to the employer
	+ The process for workers to submit health and safety concerns to committee members
	+ The identification of the committee member responsible for follow-up on outstanding issues or complaints
	+ How the committee will monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the workplace safety program
	+ The role of committee members in inspections, investigations, hazard identification, and complaint resolution
* Member Training

All committee members will be required to receive occupational health and safety training relevant to their duties, as outlined in the training section of this policy.

* Committee Meetings

The Rules of Procedure will specify:

* The frequency and schedule of meetings (e.g., monthly or quarterly)
* The quorum required to conduct official business
* The process for preparing and distributing meeting agendas and minutes
* The process for developing and maintaining records of all meetings

Committee Meetings

The JOHSC will meet at least once per month, unless otherwise outlined in the committee’s Rules of Procedure.

* Meetings will be scheduled in consideration of members’ work schedules to ensure maximum participation. Committee members will be notified of upcoming meetings at least two (2) days in advance.
* A quorum must be established for any meeting to proceed. The Rules of Procedure document will define the minimum number of members required for quorum and should ensure equal representation from both worker and employer representatives when decisions are made.
* As per the Act, worker members are entitled to take paid time off from their regular duties to:
	+ Attend committee meetings
	+ Participate in prescribed training
	+ Carry out functions as a committee member
* A structured agenda will be used to guide meetings and promote organized, effective discussion. Committee members are encouraged to submit agenda items in advance. A committee member will distribute the draft agenda and previous meeting minutes at least one week prior to the scheduled meeting.
* A typical meeting agenda may include:
	+ Roll call
	+ Review and approval of previous meeting minutes
	+ Discussion of current workplace health and safety issues
	+ Review of incidents, complaints, and near misses
	+ Review of workplace inspection reports
	+ Health and safety education or training updates
	+ New business brought forward by members
	+ Confirmation of the next meeting’s date and time
	+ Adjournment

Other important topics may include personal protective equipment, safe work practices, action items, and unfinished business from previous meetings.

Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes are used to record committee discussions and decisions. A committee member who has been selected as the secretary is responsible for preparing concise minutes that summarize key topics and outcomes. Each set of minutes will include:

* Date, time, and location of the meeting
* Names of attendees
* Summary of discussions, including complaints, incidents, investigations, education, training, and work refusals
* Any recommendations made to the employer
* Action items assigned, including the responsible member and follow-up deadlines
* Date, time, and location of the next meeting
* Once approved, minutes will be promptly posted in an accessible area where all workers can review them.

Workplace Inspections

The Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee will conduct or participate in formal inspections to identify hazards, unsafe conditions, or unsafe work practices that may pose a risk to workers.

Inspections will be scheduled according to the workplace’s Rules of Procedure, with frequency based on the nature of the work, equipment used, and potential hazards present. Inspections may focus on specific work areas, tools, equipment, or tasks.

Committee members will use inspection checklists where appropriate and ensure all identified hazards are documented and reported. Inspection findings will be discussed by the committee, and appropriate corrective actions will be recommended to the employer. The committee will follow up to ensure that identified hazards are addressed in a timely manner.

All inspection reports will be stored securely and made accessible to workers. The employer will support committee members in performing inspections by allowing reasonable paid time and providing any necessary training.

Committee Recommendations

The JOHSC will establish and follow a formal process for making health and safety recommendations to the employer. When a recommendation is required, a selected chairperson(s) or a delegated committee member will submit a written recommendation that clearly explains the issue and outlines the suggested course of action to address the concern.

The employer must respond to the recommendation within 30 days of receiving it. The response should indicate whether the recommendation is accepted and, if so, include a timeline for implementation. If the recommendation is rejected, the employer must provide written reasons for the decision.

Recommendations related to urgent risks or serious hazards should be addressed immediately to protect the health and safety of all individuals in the workplace.

Committee Records

The committee will maintain clear and accurate records of all meeting agendas, meeting minutes, lists of committee members, committee recommendations, concerns raised, incident and hazard reports, risk assessment results, any corrective actions taken, annual reports (if applicable), inspection and investigation records, and training records. These records will be stored securely and made available upon request to relevant parties, including workplace parties and regulatory authorities.

Records should be accessible and may be maintained in either paper or electronic format. The committee and the employer will work together to determine the appropriate method for recordkeeping and the duration of storage. Records are generally retained for five (5) years, unless a longer retention period is required by legislation or organizational policy.