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**Science Safety Sub-committee**

**Terms of Reference**

1. **Mandate**

The Science Safety OH&S (Occupational Health and Safety) Sub-committee will assist the Saint Mary’s Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) to monitor the University’s compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act. Also, the sub-committee will foster cooperation between employees, students, faculty, and management to achieve and maintain a safe working environment within the Faculty of Science.

1. **Membership**

* The Committee will be comprised of members of the Faculty of Science who have proficiency in hazard areas relevant to current and planned science activities: chemical hazards, biological hazards, radioactive hazards, field trip (ex-campus activities) hazards, laser/optical hazards, (etc.). The maximum size of the committee will normally be six (6) to eight (8) members, not including the Chair, the Science Safety Advisor, nor advisory participants.
* Alternate members for each of the listed proficiencies above will be chosen at the start of the Academic term to substitute for when regular members are unable to attend meetings.
* The membership will include both professors and technicians, and include representation from several different units from across the Faculty of Science.
* The committee will be chaired by the Dean of Science, who shall nominate for approval by the committee a Vice-Chair. In the event of the Dean’s absence, a Vice-Chair will take over the running of the meeting. The Vice-Chair will be appointed at the start of the academic year from the current committee membership and will report on the meeting to the Chair at a later date preceding the next meeting;
* Representatives from other Faculties may request membership if they have overlapping safety concerns with the Faculty of Science; these representatives would be non-voting, advisory members; Membership requests would be granted by the Chair;
* The Science Safety Advisor is an ex-officio non-voting member of the Faculty of Science Safety Committee;
* The Recording Secretary shall be appointed by the Dean of Science;
* Advisory members shall include:
  + OHS & Wellness Consultant
  + Manager, Risk & Insurance Services
  + Senior Director, Facilities Management (or designate)

All Committee members’ and alternates’ names and current contact information shall be made available to all employees in the Faculty of Science and posted on the Science Safety website.

1. **Functions of the Committee**

The function of the Science Safety Sub-committee is to assist the University’s JOHSC to involve representatives of employees and the employer in the identification and resolution of health and safety issues in the workplace and in the production of healthy and safe work practices, including:

* The co-operative identification of hazards to health and safety, and effective systems to respond to the hazards;
* The development of policies, procedures, work practices, and guidelines that will improve health and safety performance;
* Identifying of facility and equipment changes that will improve health and safety;
* The cooperative auditing of compliance with health and safety requirements in the workplace;
* Receipt, investigation, and prompt disposition of matters and complaints with respect to workplace health and safety;
* Participation in inspections, inquiries, and investigations concerning health and safety; in particular, participation in an inspection referred to in Section 50 of the NS OHS Act;
* Participating in investigating and reporting on refusals to perform work, in conjunction with the JOHSC, under the procedures defined in the Act under Section 43 – Right to Refuse Work;
* Advising on individual protective devices, equipment and clothing that, complying with the OHS Act and the regulations, are best adapted to the needs of the employees;
* Advising the employer regarding the OHS program, including the requirements under OHS Act and its regulations and making recommendations to the employer, the employees and any person for the improvement of the health and safety of persons at the workplace;
* Maintaining records and minutes of Committee Meetings in a form and manner approved by the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration, and providing an OHS officer with a copy of these records or minutes upon request;
* Establish sub-committees as required;
* Advising on training requirements for Faculty of Science employees and Safety Sub-Committee Members;
* Any other related occupational health and safety function assigned by agreement between the University and/or the JOHSC and the Science Safety sub-committee;
* Review all incident reports that apply to science-specific workplace hazards and, if needed, address them.

1. **Committee Procedures**

**4.1 Membership Term**

* Voting members will serve a three-year term and may be reappointed to serve subsequent terms. Employee groups and the University may name alternates who, in the appointed member's absence, will have voting privileges and may fully participate in Committee activities.
* Terms of membership for voting members should be staggered; no more than one half of the committee should be new at any given time.
* Appointment of voting members shall occur in September of each year, or as needed. The Chair or a designate of the Committee is responsible for soliciting nominees for membership.

**4.2 Chairperson**

* The Chairperson will be the current sitting Dean of Science;
* Meetings will be conducted by the Chairperson or the Vice-Chair; The vice-chair will be chosen from the active committee membership;
* The Chairperson shall have a vote in all matters;

**4.3 Schedule of Meetings**

* Meetings shall be held in September, October, November, December, January, February, March, April, May, and June.
* A schedule of committee meetings (except in cases of urgent or emergency meetings), shall be set at the beginning of each academic year. The preferred schedule is for the committee to meet the week following the monthly meeting of the University JOHSC committee.

**4.4 Agenda**

* The Recording Secretary shall prepare and distribute the agenda for regular meetings on behalf of the Chairperson. An agenda and any reference documents shall be available to members at least four days before a committee meeting, except in cases of urgent or emergency meetings. The documents will be posted on the Science Safety MS Teams group.
* Any member may place items on the agenda for discussion at a committee meeting by notifying the Secretary prior to the date of finalizing the agenda;
* Any member of the committee can amend the agenda at the meeting, if necessary to address last-minute issues, at the approval of the Chair;

**4.5 Attendance at Meetings**

* Members should make every effort to attend all meetings or send an alternate. The Recording Secretary should be informed with as much advance notice as possible if a member cannot attend a scheduled meeting. Alternates will be provided with access to the minutes of previous meetings to be apprised of current business.

**4.6 Managing Safety Concerns**

* The OHS Act requires reporting safety concerns to the person responsible for resolving the concern. The Saint Mary’s OHS Program requires the responsible persons, chairs, managers, etc., to ensure the appropriate report is completed and submitted to the OHS Office within 48 hours, with a copy of the report to the Science Safety Advisor. This will assist the Science Safety Committee in understanding the types of incidents/injuries specific to member of the Faculty of Science as well as the preventative measures that can be put in place in a timely manner to circumvent them happening again in the future.

**4.7 Decision-making**

* The Committee will normally seek to operate by consensus amongst the voting members, without the need for formal votes. Recommendations to the Dean of Science or the University JOHSC, and other significant decisions may, however, warrant a formal vote. Voting may also be necessary if the voting members cannot reach consensus on a matter.
* Any member may request a formal vote on a matter before the Sub-committee. Whenever practical, the intent to request a formal vote should be declared to the Secretary in advance of a meeting, so that members can prepare their position accordingly.
* When proper advance notice of a vote has been given, and when enough members are present to establish a quorum, a motion will be carried when supported by one-half plus one of the members present.

**4.8 Quorum**

* At regular meetings, a quorum will be 50% of all voting members.

**4.9 Minutes**

* Minutes of all Committee meetings will be kept by the Recording Secretary. Meeting minutes shall be sent to Committee members at least four days before a meeting, except in cases of urgent or emergency meetings.
* For each action item, the person responsible, the target date for completion, decisions reached, and actions of the committee shall be recorded.
* The Committee shall approve all minutes at the first meeting following the meeting for which the minutes were produced. If the minutes are not provided by the four-day requirement, then approval of the minutes may be moved to the subsequent meeting. Any changes necessary to the minutes shall be noted by the Recording Secretary in the following minutes.
* A copy of the minutes will be forwarded to the Dean of Science, Department Chairs, and the University OHS Consultant who will provide a copy to the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee members for review. Minutes from the most recent six meetings will be posted on the Science Safety website.

**4.10 Recording Keeping**

* The following reports, records, and information shall be maintained by the Science Safety Advisor for at least five years:
  + Meeting Minutes;
  + Written concerns/complaints reports;
  + Incident reports;
  + Investigation reports;
  + Inspection reports;
  + Correspondence;
  + Department of Labour, Skills, and Immigration Written Orders, pertaining to departments covered by the Science Safety Committee;
  + Right to Refuse Unsafe Work reports;
  + Written Recommendations;
  + Written Requests for Information;
  + University’s Response to Recommendations;
  + Any other relevant information.

**4.11 Training**

* All members and alternates shall be provided with basic training on the duties of being a member of the Sub-committee. The type of training required will be decided by the committee, in consultation with the Science Safety Advisor and the university OHS office.

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| **Revision history** | |
| 9-Feb-2024 | New ToR approval by Faculty of Science Safety Committee |
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