

Health and Safety Advisory Committee (HSAC)
Society of United Professionals

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Health and Safety Advisory Committee (HSAC)

Society of United Professionals

Executive Summary

The Society of United Professionals is committed to advocating for the health, safety, and well-being of its members in an ever-evolving workplace environment. With new challenges arising from remote work, technological advances, and increasing awareness of mental health, the Society recognizes the need for a proactive, comprehensive approach to workplace health and safety. To this end, the establishment of a Health and Safety Advisory Committee (HSAC) will enhance the Society's efforts in addressing both physical and mental health risks while fostering a culture of well-being within its bargaining units.

The HSAC will serve as an advisory body to the Executive Board, providing expert guidance and recommendations for policy development, legislative compliance, and health and safety strategies. The committee's core objectives will include the creation of health and safety proposals, advocacy for improved workplace safety measures, support for the development of educational programs, and the implementation of preventive strategies in response to emerging workplace trends. The committee will also play a key role in supporting mental health initiatives, reflecting the growing recognition of the importance of psychological well-being in the modern workplace.

A key feature of the committee's work will be the collaboration with external safety organizations, regulators, and safety advocates, ensuring that the Society remains at the forefront of industry standards and legislative changes. The HSAC will also actively engage with elected representatives and certified safety representatives, empowering them to promote the health and safety of all Society represented members and ensuring that our collective voices are heard in decision-making processes.

In keeping with its commitment to continuous improvement, the HSAC will meet quarterly, with additional sessions held as necessary, and will provide regular reports to the Executive Board. The committee's work will be evaluated annually to ensure its effectiveness and alignment with the evolving needs of the membership and legislative landscape. The establishment of the Health and Safety Advisory Committee positions the Society as a leader in safeguarding the health, safety, and well-being of its members, ensuring that both physical and mental health are prioritized in every work environment.

Background

The Society of United Professionals has long been committed to advocating for the well-being and rights of its members. As workplaces evolve and new challenges arise, maintaining a proactive approach to health and safety becomes essential to ensure a safe and the supportive environment for all professionals. Given the changing nature of work environments—including the increased reliance on remote work, advancements in technology, and heightened awareness of mental health the Society recognizes the need to enhance its commitment to workplace health and safety.

The creation of a Health and Safety Advisory Committee will reinforce the organization's dedication to providing its members with the tools, resources, and advocacy necessary to promote and maintain health and safety across all work environments. The committee will play a pivotal role in establishing comprehensive strategies to address both physical and mental health risks, with a focus on the Society supporting a culture of well-being within the Society bargaining units.

Evolving Work Environment

As workplaces continue to adapt to the modern landscape, new health and safety challenges have emerged. From remote work environments, hybrid work models, and technological innovations to the impact of pandemics, environmental changes, and shifts in workplace culture, these transformations necessitate a more structured approach to health and safety. The committee will help the Society address these evolving dynamics by developing tailored strategies that safeguard both physical and psychological well-being for members across all industries.

Legal and Regulatory Compliance

Legislation and regulation are continuing to evolve in both Federally and Provincially regulated workplaces. These legislations and regulations address issues ranging from occupational health hazards to mental health protections and workplace ergonomics. The Health and Safety Advisory Committee will ensure that the Society remains informed of these regulatory changes and works to maintain compliance on behalf of its members, reducing risk of harm and the supporting member advocacy efforts.

Mental Health and Well-being

Mental health has become an increasingly important focus in the conversation about workplace well-being. The pandemic underscored the need for a robust approach to mental health the support in professional environments. The committee will specifically address the mental health challenges facing workers, creating initiatives that raise awareness, reduce stigma, and promote the adoption of mental health the Society support programs in workplaces.

Workplace Safety

Ensuring the physical safety of workers remains a cornerstone of any health and safety program. The committee will assess and address occupational hazards that could jeopardize the health of the Society members, whether these hazards are physical (e.g., equipment safety, hazardous materials) or environmental (e.g., ergonomic design, lighting, air quality). It will also monitor new trends in safety risks, including the influence of emerging technologies such as artificial intelligence and automation on worker safety.

Member Engagement and Support

Society members today are increasingly concerned with their health and safety, and they expect their organizations to respond in a meaningful way. The creation of the Health and Safety Advisory Committee reflects the Society's dedication to listening to and the supporting its members' needs. The committee members will be engaged to involve members in discussions around health and safety through their elected

representatives and certified safety members, the committee will foster a culture of engagement, where members feel empowered and supported in promoting their well-being.

Proactive Health and Safety Strategies

By establishing an advisory committee, the Society takes a proactive stance in addressing potential health and safety concerns before they escalate into more significant issues. The committee will work to advocate for preventive measures, health and wellness initiatives, and best practices for risk management, ensuring that members have access to safe work environments that enhance their overall quality of life.

Holistic Approach to Well-being

A focus on health and safety goes beyond physical safety. The committee will adopt a holistic approach, addressing issues such as work-life balance, burnout prevention, stress management, and the promotion of healthy lifestyle choices. This well-rounded approach will support the Society's overarching goal of promoting the health and well-being of professionals.

The establishment of the Health and Safety Advisory Committee will position the Society of United Professionals as a leader in advocating for the safety, health, and well-being of its members and within the broad labour movement. The committee will serve as a collaborative platform to identify challenges, share best practices, and develop initiatives that empower members to navigate and thrive in a changing work environment. Through its efforts, the Society will ensure that workplace health and safety will remain a priority, safeguarding the physical and mental well-being of its members while fostering a healthier, more resilient professional community.

Scope

The HSAC is focused on its mandate to enhance workplace health and safety for all members of the Society of United Professionals. The HSAC acts as an advisory body to the Executive Board, Local Vice Presidents and Society Certified Safety Representatives. It does not have decision-making power and will provide advice, recommendations and guidance.

Purpose

The Health and Safety Advisory Committee (HSAC) of the Society of United Professionals aims to promote and advocate for the health, safety, and well-being of all members in their workplaces. The committee provides advice, guidance, resources, and recommendations to ensure compliance with legislative requirements, address workplace hazards, and foster a culture of proactive safety practices.

Terms of Reference

Objectives

Policy and Proposal Development:

- Develop and recommend health and safety proposals that align with union strategy and workplace best practices.
- Support bargaining units by ensuring policies and procedures comply with provincial and federal health and safety legislation.

Advocacy and Representation:

- Advocate for member concerns related to health and safety with employers and regulatory bodies.
- Advocate for improved workplace safety measures and resources.

Education, Training and Awareness:

- In collaboration with the education committee facilitate the development and delivery of training sessions and workshops for members on health and safety topics.
- Develop materials to raise awareness of workplace hazards, rights, and responsibilities.

Incident Review and Prevention:

- Review workplace trends including incidents and near-misses to recommend preventative measures.
- Collaborate with a cross-section of safety partners to implement corrective actions.

Union Collaboration:

- Provide guidance to elected union representatives and Certified Joint Health and Safety Committee members on health and safety matters.
- Share learnings and best practices across all bargaining units of the Society of United Professionals.

Membership

Membership Criteria:

- Members must have a demonstrated commitment to health and safety.
- Representatives should have knowledge of workplace health and safety legislation and practices.

The HSAC will consist of:

- Chairperson: Appointed by the Society's Executive Board.
- At least one member representatives from each sector as follows:
 - Generation Nuclear
 - Generation Renewable
 - Transmission and Distribution
 - Regulatory
 - Engineering Services
 - Judicial and Legal
- Staff Advisor(s): Appointed as required to provide logistical and government relations support.
- Subject matter experts (i.e. Industrial Hygienists).
- Ad Hoc Members: members with specific concerns may be invited as needed.
- Administrative Staff for support

Term:

- Members will serve a renewable term of two years, subject to review by the Chairperson and Executive Board.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Roles and Responsibilities

Chairperson:

- Schedule and preside over meetings.
- Set the agenda in consultation with committee members.
- Report committee activities to the Executive Board.

Member Representatives:

- Attend and actively participate in meetings.

- Share insights, concerns, and best practices from their respective locals.
- Assist in developing and delivering training materials and initiatives.

Staff Advisors:

- Provide technical expertise and legislative updates.
- The support the development of policies and educational materials.

Subject matter experts:

- Provide specific support to the committee on an as needed basis.

Ad Hoc Members:

- Members with specific concerns may be invited as required.

Administrative Staff The support

Governance

Authority

The HSAC operates as an advisory body under the governance of the Society of United Professionals' Executive Board. It has the authority to:

- Provide guidance and make recommendations on health and safety policies and practices.
- Review and analyze workplace health and safety issues.
- Advise local health and safety committees and representatives.

The HSAC does not have decision-making powers but provides advice and guidance through its recommendations to the Executive Board, Local Vice Presidents and Certified Health and Safety Representatives. The HSAC is a central function to support the bargaining units and does not have the authority to act on behalf of a bargaining unit. The HSAC does not interact directly with members and is intended to support the Board, elected representatives and certified committee members of JHSC's.

Objectives

- Develop and advocate for health and safety policies and proposals that address workplace hazards and ensure compliance with legal standards.
- Support and guide local health and safety committees in implementing best practices.
- Promote awareness and education regarding health and safety rights and responsibilities of workers and employers.
- Advocate for members' health and safety concerns with safety partners and regulatory bodies.
- Analyze workplace trends and incidents and recommend preventative measures.

Meeting Frequency:

Convene quarterly or as required to review issues and progress.

Reporting:

The HSAC will provide:

- Quarterly updates to the Executive Board.
- An annual report summarizing its activities, key findings, and recommendations.
 - Provide at council
- Updates to the Executive Board

Specifically, the HSAC will submit an annual report to the Executive Board summarizing activities, challenges, and recommendations. The Annual report will be reviewed and endorsed by the Executive Board in advance of it being shared at Society Council. The quarterly minutes provided to Executive Board will provide information and review of progress on existing issues, emerging issues and updates on legislative and regulatory matters. The Chair of the HSAC will provide health and safety updates at Board meetings as required for issues that are time sensitive or require decisions of the Board.

Collaboration:

Work with external safety organizations, regulators, and employers to address systemic issues. Consult with elected representatives to ensure their needs are met in supporting the members on health and safety related matters. Engage with certified members of JHSC's on health and safety issues that have broad impacts on the workplace.

Key Deliverables:

1. Annual health and safety report with recommendations for improvements.
2. Templates and guidelines for elected representatives and certified health and safety committee members.
3. Support for training programs and materials for union representatives and certified members.
 - a. Ensure that all JHSC members are trained and certified.
 - b. Ensure all members understand their rights as workers.
 - c. Ensure Society represented supervisors are aware of their responsibilities
 - d. Enable elected representatives and certified members in determining that employers meet their responsibilities under the OH&S Act.
4. Development and periodic review of health and safety proposals.
5. Trend and Incident analysis with actionable recommendations.
6. Legislative updates and compliance guidelines for elected representatives and certified members.

Review and Evaluation:

The Scope and Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the HSAC and Executive Board to ensure they remain aligned with the Society's goals, member needs, and legislative changes. Amendments may be proposed by the HSAC and must be approved by the Executive Board and to ensure alignment with strategic outcomes.

Evaluation Criteria for the Health and Safety Advisory Committee (HSAC)

The following criteria headings will serve as a framework for evaluating the effectiveness of the Health and Safety Advisory Committee. By assessing these various dimensions committee structure, proposal development, engagement, effectiveness, mental health initiatives, and more the Society can ensure that the HSAC is successfully fulfilling its mandate and contributing to the well-being and safety of its members across diverse work environments.

The specific criteria will be reviewed annually to ensure they remain aligned with evolving health and safety needs, legal requirements, and the Society's overall objectives.

The following headings will be used for evaluation:

- Committee Structure and Governance
- Health and Safety Advocacy
- Awareness, and Education
- Trend and Incident Analysis and Recommendations
- Mental Health and Well-being
- Collaboration and External Relationships
- Communication and Reporting

- Impact on Workplace Health and Safety Culture
- Effectiveness of Health and Safety Strategies
- Resource Allocation and Support

Note: A sample criteria is provided in Appendix A

Meetings

Frequency:

- The HSAC will meet quarterly, with additional meetings as required.

Quorum:

- A quorum shall consist of at least 50% of members, including the Chairperson or their delegate.

Minutes and Records:

- Meeting minutes will be recorded and circulated to all HSAC members and Executive Board.
- A summary of activities will be submitted annually to the Executive Board.

Confidentiality

All matters discussed within the HSAC are confidential unless authorized for disclosure. Members must respect the sensitivity of workplace and personal information.

Conclusion

These Terms of Reference provide a governance framework to ensure the HSAC functions effectively and consistently within the Society of United Professionals' mandate

Appendix

Appendix A – Sample Criteria for the Evaluation of the Health and Safety Advisory Committee

Committee Structure and Governance

- Role Clarity and Leadership:
 - Are roles and responsibilities of the committee members, including the Chairperson, subject matter experts, and staff advisors, clearly defined and adhered to?
 - Is there clear leadership and communication between the Chairperson, committee members, and the Executive Board?
 - Is the frequency of meetings appropriate to address emerging issues, with a quorum consistently met?
- Diversity and Expertise:
 - Does the committee represent all relevant sectors within the Society (e.g., Generation Nuclear, Engineering Services, Judicial and Legal, etc.)?
 - Are subject matter experts effectively consulted, and do they provide valuable input on health and safety matters?

Health and Safety Advocacy

- Proposal Development and Compliance:
 - Has the HSAC developed and recommended health and safety proposals aligned with union values and best practices?
 - Are these proposals consistently updated to comply with evolving provincial and federal health and safety regulations?
 - Does the committee ensure that all health and safety proposals promote a safe and supportive environment, particularly regarding physical and mental health?
- Advocacy for Members:
 - How effective is the HSAC in supporting elected representatives and certified members in advocating for members' health and safety concerns with employers and regulatory bodies?
 - Has the committee successfully advocated for improved health and safety measures and resources?

Training, Awareness, and Education

- Training Support:
 - Has the HSAC supported relevant and impactful training sessions or workshops for members on health and safety topics, including mental health awareness and emerging safety concerns?
 - Are the training materials easily accessible and impactful in raising awareness of members' rights and responsibilities in health and safety?
- Member Engagement:
 - How actively does the HSAC engage elected representatives and certified members in health and safety discussions and initiatives?
 - Are feedback mechanisms in place to ensure that the concerns and suggestions are being heard and acted upon?

Trend and Incident Analysis and Prevention

- Review Process:
 - Does the committee regularly review workplace trends, incidents and near-misses, providing relevant recommendations for preventative measures?

- Preventive Actions:
 - How successful has the committee been in advocating for proactive health and safety strategies?

Mental Health and Well-being

- Mental Health Initiatives:
 - Has the committee successfully promoted initiatives to raise awareness and reduce stigma surrounding mental health in the workplace?
 - How well does the committee address work-life balance, burnout prevention, and stress management for members?
- Integration of Mental Health into Policy:
 - Has the committee influenced for mental health incorporation into the overall health and safety policies?
 - Are there resources and strategies in place to support the mental well-being of members?

Collaboration and External Relationships

- Collaboration with External Bodies:
 - How effective is the HSAC in collaborating with external safety organizations, regulators, and safety partners to address systemic issues in workplace health and safety?
 - Is the committee actively engaged in consulting with elected union representatives and other stakeholders to ensure that health and safety needs are met?
- Union Collaboration and Best Practices:
 - How well does the HSAC support local health and safety committees in implementing best practices across various bargaining units?
 - Are there clear and useful guidelines, templates, and resources developed and shared with local committees to enhance their operations?

Communication and Reporting

- Transparency and Information Sharing:
 - Are the HSAC's activities, progress, and outcomes clearly communicated to the Executive Board?
 - Is there regular reporting of committee activities, including quarterly updates and an annual report that summarizes key findings, challenges, and recommendations?
- Follow-up and Accountability:
 - Does the HSAC track the outcomes of its recommendations and ensure follow-up on actions taken by employers, the Society's Board, elected representatives and certified members?
 - How well does the committee hold itself accountable for achieving its goals and commitments?

Impact on Workplace Health and Safety Culture

- Cultural Shift in Health and Safety:
 - To what extent has the committee contributed to fostering a culture of health, safety, and well-being within the workplace?
 - Are elected representatives and certified members empowered to raise health and safety concerns, and do they feel supported by the committee's efforts?
- Satisfaction and Feedback:
 - What is the general sentiment regarding the effectiveness of the committee's health and safety initiatives?
 - What is the level of satisfaction with the support, resources, and advocacy provided by the HSAC?

Effectiveness of Health and Safety Strategies

- Proactive Measures and Risk Management:
 - Are the strategies put in place by the HSAC preventive, and do they address current and emerging risks (e.g., technology impacts, pandemics)?
 - Are these strategies leading to improved safety outcomes and member well-being in the long term?
- Evaluation of Health and Safety Actions:
 - Are existing actions evaluated regularly to ensure they meet the needs of members and reflect the most current best practices?
 - How adaptable are the committee's strategies to changes in the workplace environment or regulatory landscape?

Resource Allocation and Support

- Resource Availability and Utilization:
 - Does the HSAC have the necessary resources (staff, funding, technical support) to effectively carry out its responsibilities?
 - Are these resources used efficiently to maximize the impact of health and safety initiatives?