

Meeting Minutes

Ontario Fire Service Advisory Committee (Section 21 Committee)

Thursday, June 13, 2024 – 12:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Friday, June 14, 2024 – 8:00 am - 12:00 pm

Meeting Held In-Person in Ajax at the Fire Department Headquarters

Attendance:

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| Rob Grimwood | O AFC – Committee Co-Chair |
| Dan Worrall | OPFFA – Committee Co-Chair |
| John Plater | OPFFA |
| Adam Neal | OPFFA |
| Harry Baranik | O AFC (Absent day one. Present day two) |
| Aaron Burr ridge | O AFC |
| Jeff Kirk | O AFC |
| Cathy Hoffman | AMO |
| Mark Pankhurst | AMO |
| Andrew King | Volunteer Firefighter |
| John Snider | Office of the Fire Marshal (observer) (Last meeting, retiring) |
| Erica Arsenault | MLITSD |
| Ricardo Romero | PSHSA (Consultant) |
| Kayla Thomson | PSHSA (Minutes) |

Regrets:

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| Doug Kellam | Volunteer Firefighter |
| Tim Sparks | OPFFA |
| Patricia Clausen | PSHSA (Facilitator) |

Guests:

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| Rebecca Mukuna | MLITSD (Policy Advisor) (Last meeting) |
| Nancy Bradshaw | MLITSD |
| Natasha Baird | MLITSD |

Thursday, June 13, 12:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Greetings – D. Worrall/R. Grimwood

- R. Grimwood greeted the committee and went over the agenda.

Review of Minutes from February Meeting – D. Worrall/R. Grimwood

- No changes

ACTION: K. Thomson to remove draft watermark and send to O AFC for posting.

Guidance Notes

MLITSD Status Update for All Guidance Notes – E. Arsenault

- Committee received an update regarding all guidance notes currently in circulation and where they are at.
- E. Arsenault updated the committee that 6-46 Structural collapse rescue has been determined to be stuck between hands currently.
- D. Worrall suggested a column be added to the report where it says if the guidance note is published or not.

ACTION: E. Arsenault to send the report to the committee and will see if the second line D. Worrall suggested can be added to the report.

Guidance Note Comments – E. Arsenault

Firefighter Safety Around Rail Lines

- One comment was received on this guidance note. The comment was on the need for additional training on specific areas of concern, for example, fire departments should request the list of top ten materials being brought through their area. The commentor also provided an example of an Ontario fire department that has already started this process and has taken [online courses provided by CN and CP](#).
- The committee agreed it was a good suggestion, but would be better suited being included in a new rail, light rail, subway and elevated rail guidance note, rather than the Firefighter Safety Around Rail Lines one.
- In reference to the new rail, light rail, subway and elevated rail guidance note being drafted, it was noted by the committee that we don't have anything for responses to rail emergencies, let alone subway, light rail or elevated rail, etc. R. Grimwood suggests a new guidance note to deal with the hazards associated with these responses.

ACTION: R. Grimwood and D. Worrall to work on the new rail guidance note.

- The committee reviewed the guidance note one last time and approved.
- The committee discussed who decides the numbers on guidance notes. Due to the changing of hands at the ministry level, the committee agreed to assign the guidance notes a number before we leave today. The Committee also went through currently unnumbered notes assigning them numbers and landed on 6-52 for this Firefighter Safety Around Rail Lines guidance note.

Air Monitoring – D. Worrall/J. Kirk

- No updates.
- E. Arsenault will find out if this was already sent to the Ministry.

Live Fire Training – A. Neal/R. Grimwood/J. Plater

- No updates.
- E. Arsenault will find out if this was already sent to the Ministry.

Marine Vessels – D. Kellam

- No updates.
- E. Arsenault will find out if this was already sent to the Ministry.

Unsheltered Encampments – H. Baranik/D. Kellam/J. Plater

- Working group requested more time due to the number of comments.

- Committee discussed how in depth a guidance note needs to be. Many comments were received from the last meeting and there is worry of overloading the note.

ACTION: E. Arsenault to send M. Pankhurst the guidance note to take a look at with a fresh set of eyes. Working group to continue working on it and provide an update during the next meeting.

Heat Stress/Station Wear – T. Sparks/A. Burrige

- Action items from last meeting were added.
- A. Burrige came across more resources and added them to the reference section.
- A. Burrige walked the committee through all the changes to the guidance note since the last meeting including the new resources found.
- E. Arsenault added the heat stress CCOHS link to the resource section using similar copy to the cold stress one A. Burrige already had listed.

ACTION: E. Arsenault to send the guidance note to K. Thomson to send out for comment.

Unprotected Lightweight Construction

- The OFM directive related to this was added and the guidance note has been sent for posting.
- Committee discussed having a centralized location for all guidance notes being worked on or completed and other files. K. Thomson suggested PSHSA setting up either a Team for the committee on Microsoft Teams or a SharePoint site.

ACTION: K. Thomson to reach out to PSHSA’s IT team to see logistically which one would be better for sharing files externally and then create the team/site for the committee.

Lithium-Ion Batteries – R. Grimwood/D. Worrall/A. Burrige

- Update same as below.

Energy Storage Systems – A. Neal/D. Kellam

- The committee has assigned this guidance note number 6-53.
- The committee reviewed the side-by-side comparison A. Neal worked on as actioned from last meeting. They are not ready to send out for comment quite yet, the guidance note still needs to be cleaned up.
- A. Neal did an overview with the committee about how the tool in Microsoft Word is used to compare two documents.
- D. Worrall confirmed that in the end, there will be three guidance notes regarding different forms of energy storage.
- M. Pankhurst mentioned [a handbook from OAFB titled “Solar Electricity and Battery Storage Systems Safety Handbook for Firefighters”](#). This manual was designed to educate and protect first responders who may attend an emergency situation where solar PV and battery storage installations are present.

ACTION: Working group to send one final guidance note to the committee for review by email prior to the next meeting.

New Guidance Note for Communication Centers – D. Worrall/T. Sparks

- Moved to next meeting.

New Guidance Note for Battery Life and Radios – D. Worrall

- D. Worrall asked the committee about whether a guidance note to address portable radio battery life is required.
- Do we still want to move forward with this guidance note or combine with a preexisting one (Radio communications?).
- Committee discussed upgrades to radios in recent years and older style radios. They also discussed further issues with batteries dying and how it's not just about radio communication as the other guidance note is.
- Committee agreed that they aren't sure it is its own guidance note.

Cancer Communications Working Group – R. Grimwood/C. Hoffman/M. Pankhurst/D. Worrall/P. Clausen/K. Thomson

- The working group informed the committee that they will be requesting new and updated info from WSIB considering there have been a number of changes since the group last met and WSIB spoke with the committee last year.
- Once the group has the info, they will use it to develop a briefing note that includes an overview of the cancers, latency periods, demographics, recommendations, etc. and a slide deck with the same info. The package will also include a media release template for municipalities that adopt a cancer prevention program.

PFAS Discussion – All

- Fluorine free bunker gear absorbs hydrocarbons which appears to be trading one health and safety issue for another.
- More research and education needs to be done before fire departments “upgrade” to what they think is the solution to this issue. We need something that solves the issue without creating other issues.
- Committee discussed firefighting foams vs gels and their PFAS levels. The search for new options is ongoing.

O AFC Update – R. Grimwood

- The committee was invited to the O AFC Health and Safety Workshop on November 19 for a committee update and panel discussion.

ACTION: R. Grimwood to send committee members an invite.

- The O AFC conference and tradeshow just finished and was a success.

Political Advocacy

- R. Grimwood updated the committee on lobbying the government for a new funding source for fire departments. Police currently have a needs-based grant program. The fire services received \$30 M for three years but by the time you divide between all fire departments, it isn't much per department based on equipment, training and other costs. One of the core components is reducing cancer in the fire service. Some things expected to be covered by the grant would likely be inspection, cleaning, care and maintenance of bunker gear, retrofitting fire stations with access to showers and such, PPE for decontamination, access to training for cancer prevention, etc.
- R. Grimwood also told the committee about meeting with the WSIB and talking about how we can reduce their costs and use some of their funds towards preventative actions like early detection mechanisms, individualized screening, cancer prevention programs, etc.

- The lobbying of the Minister of Health to change the OHIP schedule of benefits to reflect occupational risks is also ongoing.

OPFFA Update – D. Worrall

- Avenue and availability for discussion with the provincial government has been good.
- Occupational disease discussions are ongoing with the Prevention Council but reporting numbers do not seem to exist unfortunately. Municipal workers and fire services are also currently lumped together.
- D. Worrall suggested the committee revisit the cancer prevention checklist soon.
- Some fire departments now have packages for what they are doing for cancer prevention including policies to provide inspectors when they pop in for a visit.

PSHSA Update – R. Romero

PTSD Prevention Plans:

- As you may recall, our research is structured into several phases, starting with a Current State Analysis. I'm pleased to share some key updates from our work so far.

Phase 1: Current State Analysis

1. Literature Review:
 - We have completed the literature review, which aimed to identify evidence-informed practices for PTSD and Operational Stress Injuries (OSI) prevention at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels.
 - Our team is currently working on the summary report for this review, which we expect to finalize shortly.
2. Jurisdictional Scan:
 - Our jurisdictional scan is well underway. Initially, we are focusing on leading practices outside of Ontario, consulting with researchers in the field to gather a comprehensive understanding of various PTSD prevention strategies.
 - The next step involves reaching out to stakeholders within Ontario to gauge the current state of Prevention Plans and their level of implementation. We anticipate beginning this outreach in the fall of 2024.

PSP Mental Wellness: The Impact of Organizational Factors (Research Study) – Dr. Megan Edgelow, Queen's University

Purpose of the Research Study

- The goal of this study is to understand how organizational factors influence the mental wellness and work outcomes of public safety personnel. This research is particularly targeted at first responders, public safety personnel, and public safety organizations in Ontario.

Current Update

- They have decided to make a significant change to the study design:

Change in Recruitment Strategy:

- They are no longer recruiting participants through organizations. Instead, they are shifting their approach to directly disseminate a survey.

Survey Distribution:

- The survey will be distributed in the spring/summer of 2024. This new approach will allow them to reach a broader audience and gather more comprehensive data.
- At this time, they have not yet received the link to the survey, but they will ensure it is widely shared once it is available.

Commitment for Participants:

- They are asking participants to complete a 10-20 minute anonymous, confidential survey. This will help them gather crucial data on their experiences and perspectives.

Compensation: Participants in the survey will have the opportunity to enter a draw to win one of twenty \$50 gift cards as a token of our appreciation for their time and effort.

Public Safety Personnel Mental Wellness: The Impact of Organizational Factors








Purpose of Research Study
To build an understanding of how **organizational factors** impact public safety personnel **mental wellness** and **work outcomes**.

Target Population
First responders, public safety personnel, and public safety **organizations** in **Ontario**.

Commitment
Complete a 10-20 minute anonymous, confidential **survey**.

Click [HERE](https://fhs.cac.queensu.ca/WMH/surveys/?s=9KJJ4HEJDKEC9EWP) to take the survey
Or paste this link into your web browser:
<https://fhs.cac.queensu.ca/WMH/surveys/?s=9KJJ4HEJDKEC9EWP>



Or scan the QR code with your mobile device

Compensation
Survey participants can choose to be entered to win 1 of 20 \$50 gift cards.

For more information, contact Dr. Megan Edgelow
Email: workandmentalhealth@queensu.ca
Phone: 613-533-6000 ext. 75593

This study has been reviewed for ethical compliance by the Queen's University Health Sciences Research Ethics Board.



OSIR Tool

- The OSIR tool is a practical and purpose-built assessment designed to help organizations understand the risks associated with occupational stress injuries. It aids in identifying approaches to build resilience and guides workplace psychological health strategy and action planning.

Functionality of the OSIR Tool

- The assessment is conducted via an anonymous 26-question survey answered by employees.
- The survey questions evaluate employees' perceptions of a supportive environment, supportive leadership, employee behaviors, and support programs.
- The data collected is analyzed and stored by PSHSA, and expert consultants provide a detailed report to employers. This report offers in-depth insights into the effectiveness of current supports, policies, and programs, along with recommendations for future actions.

Current Updates

- Free Access for Public Safety Organizations:
 - The OSIR tool is available free of charge to public safety organizations until the end of the fiscal year 2025-2026. This is a fantastic opportunity for organizations to take advantage of this comprehensive tool without incurring costs.
- Recruitment of Organizations:
 - We are actively recruiting interested organizations to participate in this initiative. If your organization is interested, please contact our Consultant to discuss the next steps and get started.
- Validation Study:
 - The validation study of the OSIR tool is ongoing in collaboration with the Institute for Work & Health. We anticipate having an updated version of the OSIR tool ready for testing by summer 2024. This updated version will incorporate the latest findings and improvements to better serve our organizations.

In summary

- The OSIR tool is free for public safety organizations until the end of FY25-26.
- We are actively recruiting organizations to use this tool. Please contact our Consultant for more information.
- The validation study continues, with an updated version expected by summer 2024.

Designated Officer, Course Updates

- Designated Officer course content and materials are in process of being updated to include details of the July 1, 2023, Mandatory Blood Testing Act (MBTA). The presentation materials as well as learner resources are under final stages of review. Date of release pending.

For any services inquiring about the difference in the MBTA, a resource is posted on the PSHSA website since June 2023 that reviews the entire MBTA and provides a comparison of old version and new changes, as well as a brief description of what the changes mean.

Designated Officer, MBTA Resource can be found [here](#).

Training Updates

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| R2 for Leaders – classroom training | https://www.pshsa.ca/courses/r2-for-leaders-building-resilient-organizations-distance-learning-program | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Free for a limited time to public safety organizations (until end of FY25-26).• Contact Consultant to schedule a session. |
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| R2 The Fundamentals - eLearning | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Police – R2 – The Fundamentals-Police (HPOELEN1123) (talentlms.com) • Fire – R2 – The Fundamentals-Fire (HFIELEN1123) (talentlms.com) • EMS - R2 – The Fundamentals-EMS (HESELEN1123) (talentlms.com) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free for a limited time to public safety organizations (until end of FY25-26). • Self-register with link. |
| Managing Mental Health Stay at Work & Return to Work for First Responder Organizations – classroom training. | https://www.pshsa.ca/courses/mental-health-stay-at-work-return-to-work-for-first-responder-organizations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free for a limited time to public safety organizations (until end of FY25-26). • Contact Consultant to schedule a session. |

OPRA Tool Transition to Online Platform

- We are excited to announce the transition of the Occupational Psychological Risk Assessment (OPRA) tool to an online platform. The OPRA tool helps organizations address job-based psychological risks to foster worker wellbeing.

Key Points

- The OPRA tool helps organizations address job-based psychological risks to foster worker wellbeing.
- The benefits the OPRA tool brings to workplaces are many. The tool can help workplaces:
 - Create awareness of psychological hazards and risk.
 - Determine if existing control measures are adequate to prevent psychological harm, or if more are required.
 - Prevent injuries and illnesses by incorporating findings into job descriptions, informing development of safe work practices, offering guidance on prioritizing and actioning control measures to prevent harm and promoting and fostering vertical trust in the workplace.
- How does the OPRA tool work?
 - The OPRA uses a collaborative, job-based approach to bring workers, supervisors, labour representatives, and wellness professionals together to gather a full understanding of each job role and its risks of psychological harm.
 - Participants complete a brief eLearning module to learn more about the tool and how to use it effectively.
 - They are then guided through 18 job factors that impact psychological health and for each job factor, they rate probability and severity of psychological harm.
 - Afterwards, the tool will propose practical workplace solutions that are customized to the job and the workplace, based on how the job factor is present, and the identified risk of harm.
 - Participants can also add solutions that are unique to their job and their workplace.
- New Online Availability: The OPRA tool is now accessible online through PSHSA Consultants, providing an easier and more efficient way for organizations to conduct their safety audits.

- Public Access: Starting this fall, the online OPRA tool will be available to the general public, enabling broader access to this valuable resource.

Use the Tool

- For more information or to get started with the OPRA tool, please contact opra@pshsa.ca or get in touch with your [health and safety consultant](#) today.

Committee Discussion

- Committee discussed how the fire services are being bombarded by surveys. Many are long as well.
- Committee also discussed how there are a lot of mental health resources available right now, too much in fact. Not a lot are specifically for front line workers either which is a gap also. PTSD research is also mainly from the military which can relate to police but the gap is with fire service and paramedics.

Coroner LODD Process Update – D. Worrall/R. Grimwood/J. Snider

- It was noted that once findings are finalized, it would be beneficial for reps from the committee to sit down and take a closer look at what happened and referencing guidance notes to see how the death could have been prevented and stopped from happening again. However, because there is a ministry group already, is that potentially a conflict?
- Right now, the schematic says “notify s21”, the committee won’t be brought in for review, just notified with the final report.
- This is now considered a closed action item for future committee meetings and no longer required as a standing agenda item.

ACTION: K. Thomson to remove LODD update action item from the agenda template.

New Business

Firefighter representation on the committee – All

- Last meeting there was discussion on wildland firefighters joining the committee.
- E. Arsenault met with their ministry and provided them with an update on them not being an official part of the committee due to differences in the job itself, rules and regulations. They are however, invited to attend a meeting to see what is done in these meetings and present what they do.
- The committee expressed interest in inviting them to a meeting as a guest.

ACTION: E. Arsenault to provide an update at the next meeting on the decision for this. They are continuing to have conversations.

Location for Remaining 2024 Meetings – R. Grimwood

- As mentioned at the last meeting, the previous meeting space is no longer available. The committee discussed ideas for a space to host future meetings including:
 - The Ministry has an IHSA building, an office in downtown Toronto as well as the Kitchener office. Committee discussed the high expenses of staying in downtown Toronto. This may not be a viable option.
 - PSHSA head office in North York.
 - Mississauga fire training centre for September but also perhaps November.
 - C. Hoffman suggested locations where we can learn more about what we are talking about (PTSD, etc.).
 - Guelph was discussed as an option due to this.

- Hamilton has a medical surveillance program that the committee could see in full swing.

ACTION: For the September meeting, E. Arsenault to book the Kitchener space and J. Plater to check if Guelph is available. An update to be provided to the committee once location is finalized. K Thomson to update the meeting invite to reflect the location once confirmed.

Stakeholder and Dignitaries Invites to Future Meetings – R. Grimwood

- An invite to be extended to Piccini for the Hamilton meeting if it happens so he can see a medical surveillance program in full swing.
- Minister to be invited to the September meeting and November as a backup.

Fire S21 Communications Avenues – R. Grimwood

- R. Grimwood shared that D. Worrall runs an [OPFFA health and safety twitter account](#) and suggested there could be a Section 21 Committee social media account (Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, etc.).

ACTION: E. Arsenault to reach out to Ministry Communications and see if we can have a social presence and will update the committee at the next meeting.

Friday, June 14, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm

Greetings – D. Worrall/R. Grimwood

D. Worrall welcomed the committee to day two.

Policy Update – R. Mukuna

Working for Workers 5 Act

- On May 6, 2024, the Ontario government introduced Bill 190, Working for Workers Five Act, 2024, which includes various proposed amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA).
- The proposed amendments would, if passed:
 - Amend the definition of harassment to include protection against virtual harassment to reflect modern workplaces.
 - Allow for the use of electronic copies of the OHSA, policies, etc. To meet “posting” requirements under the OHSA.
 - Allow for joint health and safety committee (JHSC) meetings to be held virtually.
 - Clarify the application of the OHSA to telework in the private residence.
 - Require washroom facilities that are provided to workers to be maintained in a clean and sanitary condition.
 - Add new requirements for specific workplace parties to keep, maintain, and make available records of cleaning of workplace washroom facilities as prescribed in regulation (regulatory amendments to follow).
- Amendments to O. Reg. 213/91 –Construction Projects, made under the OHSA, which come into effect on January 1, 2025, will also require the provision of menstrual products at construction projects with 20 or more regularly employed workers and that are expected to be three months or longer in duration.

Committee Discussion

- The O. Reg. 714 proposal the policy division received is still being worked on and sometime next week or the week after they are expected to receive questions for clarification.

- D. Worrall had an inquiry on if there's anything they can do to help get this moved along.
- R. Mukuna informed the committee that this will be her last meeting, the new member of Policy coming in will be Rachel Davidson. The committee thanked R. Mukuna for her time on the committee and wished her well at her new role.

Slow Down Move Over

- Just under two years ago, the committee welcomed the previous Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) Monte McNaughton and Dr. Moody at a meeting for a presentation including this topic.
- There was concern over slow down move over causing accidents rather than helping to avoid them.
- Ministry staff, members of the tow truck industry, and roadside workers, etc. have agreed that this needs an expansion as it isn't just an emergency services concern anymore.
- There will be meetings this summer to work on expanding this. Hopefully there will be an official reading next spring for proposed changes.

Regulation Working Group – R. Grimwood

- About eight years ago they started work on O. Reg. 714 revisions.
- When it was presented, evidence was provided on why this was needed including reference to other regulations.
- The update includes three topics: Training safety, operational procedures and cancer prevention.

UTV/ATV/Snowmobile/Off Road Vehicles – H. Baranik

- H. Baranik brought forward the idea of having a guidance note specifically for UTV/ATV/Snowmobile/Off road vehicles since there currently isn't one on the topic.
- Similar to the marine guidance note– if you have this you need this. It's noted that it isn't relevant for all departments of course, but a guidance note would still be helpful where they are used.
- H. Baranik went over examples of issues departments have faced including members being injured operating these machines.
- C. Hoffman noted that bylaws need to be brought into the guidance note. Departments using these machines need to know their area bylaws. Some places don't allow them on roads, but there are mentions of EMS being allowed to use them. Everywhere will be different.
- Committee agreed it would be a useful guidance note to have available.

ACTION: H. Baranik, M. Pankhurst, J. Plater to work on a new guidance note.

Prevention Works Strategy Presentation – N. Bradshaw (June 14th 10 am)

- N. Bradshaw introduced herself and the prevention division and prevention works.
- The committee did a round table of introductions.
- Context: The ministry recently passed the mid-point of Prevention Works, Ontario's occupational health and safety strategy.
- Purpose: The purpose of the mid-point strategy engagement is to:
 - Learn about and build on what is working to prevent workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities.
 - Identify current and emerging issues/trends and challenges/gaps.

- Discuss opportunities to address gaps and barriers to help focus the ministry's work for the remainder of the strategy, and initiate planning for the next version of the strategy.

Committee Discussion and Comments

Area Of Systems' Focus: Improve Work-Related Mental Health and Prevent Violence And Harassment

- D. Worrall went over our conversations from yesterday regarding the amount of mental health resources out there.
- The committee also relayed the same note from yesterday on how the fire services have an overwhelming amount of survey inquiries.
- PTSD prevention plans were not taken as seriously as they should have been. There needs to be more guidance and enforcement.
- Huge gap on the volunteer side. Not much tracking happens after they leave the fire service so it's hard to track when they experience illnesses and/or cancer later in life. They also work other jobs along with being volunteer firefighter. We don't officially know how big the problem is, but we have an idea with no numbers to back it up.
- For example: A firefighter struggling with mental health is a mechanic outside of their volunteer work with the fire service, but their mental health struggles came from being a volunteer firefighter. There may not be tracking back to their volunteer role if they were to have died by suicide. There needs to be more support for volunteers.
- At one point in time there was nothing, now there is too much and there is no way to measure the success. No data of how many people we helped along the way.
- There needs to be ROI: "Your mental health numbers are huge, what are you doing?", "Is there investment on this?", "We know there is a problem, if we spend this money on this, this is how we reduce our numbers."
- Internal peer support teams ensuring they're kept up to date is what seems to be working. They are an initial diffuser. If firefighters come across a critical scene, there is a team of firefighters who volunteer and have received training to know how to defuse themselves and the situation. Some individuals are trained to do a guided defusing or debriefing.
- Most services have these but there is a gap in sending those who are struggling to see a psychologist. Or they do go, and the psychologist doesn't know and/or understand the fire services. It can make members feel abandoned and misunderstood, it's a stigma.
- Fire services need a specialized psychologist. If they don't have anyone working with them (employer, union, etc.) they suffer because of it. If there was more support and knowledgeable support, they wouldn't need to take as much time off from duty. They could get the help they need and feel ready to return to work sooner.
- There needs to be a mental health component built into the training of recruits before they are on duty. Preparing them before they start while they are still training could avoid crisis' in the future.
- The issues are being brought forward, why isn't anything being done? Did they ask what their job is, what you're exposed to, what your chances of having cancer are?
- N. Bradshaw spoke about the report and what it outlines and that they know it needs to be fixed.

Area of Systems' Focus: Prevent Occupational Illnesses

- Use of the cancer prevention checklist has been a positive. The hope is that other departments are taking it seriously as it can truly help.
- The committee talked about how bunker gear used to be stored and cleaned before. Washing bunker gear and having alternative gear, isn't a law, it isn't required, but we are

making great strides compared to where we were. The checklist is being used as an enforcement tool by inspectors so they can see where gaps are. Departments can take that and fill the gaps with programs. Lobbying has also driven the process on presumptive legislation for their members. The fire services need continued support.

- There is barely any data regarding female firefighters, but we see what's happening. There needs to be more research, more access to screening, for all firefighters, including women.
- We are at epidemic levels. At least let us get tested for cancer, heavy metals, help with PTSD, give us help through the healthcare system. Early diagnoses and a proactive approach can help in saving lives and money down the line.
- We are trying to lobby at events. Wildland fire fighters are experiencing similar toxins. Exposures are extreme. Today in Ajax there is a funeral today for a firefighter with 30 years in the service who has died of cancer.
- The committee talked about truck costs and shared the conversation from yesterday about the \$30M in funding for the fire service.
- The committee discussed hearing issues and hearing protection. There is stuff in place like the pump operator having hearing protection and ear plugs but there needs to be training for staff on hearing protection.

Prevention Works Objectives

- D. Worrall gave N. Bradshaw an overview of the O. Reg.714 project and what the committee set out to do eight years ago.
- The fire services do things differently like operating on roofs without fall protection equipment. There is a need for proper regulations for fire services because we are different.
- There is no continuity in data. WSIB is different from MLITSD, which is different from MOH, which is different from other collected data, we need consistency.
- More training is a necessity, but training is expensive per individual.
- This is one of few professions where training is part of your day to day, fire services is so different in terms of training requirements.

Final Comments and Opportunities for Change

- When legislation comes down, especially to a small department, there's a cost. The government needs to help. If there's a new program, at least provide a solution for those who don't have much of a budget. Up north is a great example.
- Help the inspectors with proper training in the field they are going to visit.
- A line of duty death was reviewed by R. Grimwood and D. Worrall after the ministry and they noticed that the outcome could have been different if the inspectors knew what was going on and knew how to ask the correct questions.
- N. Bradshaw mentioned there are definitely some common themes with other session they've done.

2024 meeting dates:

September 16 and 17, 2024

November 28 and 29, 2024