

Meeting Minutes

Ontario Fire Service Advisory Committee (Section 21 Committee)

Thursday, June 4, 2026 – 12 pm – 4:30 pm

Friday, June 5, 2026 – 8:00 am – 12:00 pm

Meeting Held In-Person at PSHSA

Attendance:

Rob Grimwood	OAFC – Committee Co-Chair
Dan Worrall	OPFFA – Committee Co-Chair
Jackie Roberson	OPFFA (Absent day 1)
John Plater	OPFFA (Absent day 2)
Luke Pedersen	OPFFA
Harry Baranik	OAFC
Jeff Kirk	OAFC
Mark Pankhurst	AMO
Doug Kellam	Volunteer Firefighter
John Kidd	Volunteer Firefighter
John Mcbeth	Office of the Fire Marshal (Observer) (Absent day 2)
Jon Lee	MLITSD (Prevention) (Observer)
Evelyne LeBlanc	MLITSD (Prevention) (Observer)
David Winter	MLITSD
Chris Plater	MNR – Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES)
Patricia Clausen	PSHSA (Facilitator)
Kayla Thomson	PSHSA (Minutes)

Regrets:

Jackie Roberson	OPFFA (Absent day 1)
John Plater	OPFFA (Absent day 2)
Aaron Burrige	OAFC
Adam Bulkiewicz	AMO
John Mcbeth	Office of the Fire Marshal (Observer) (Absent day 2)
Tasha Pinkerton	MNR – Aviation, Forest Fire and Emergency Services (AFFES)
Ronald Landry	MLITSD

Guests:

Kristen Cutler	MLITSD (ADM)
Teresa D'Elia	PSHSA (Researcher)
Roula Kovios	MLITSD (Prevention)
Avril Beaubien	MLITSD (Prevention)

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Greetings – R. Grimwood

- R. Grimwood welcomed everyone to the meeting and started a round table of introductions for new member J. Kidd.

Review of minutes from December meeting – R. Grimwood

- The minutes were approved.

ACTION: K. Thomson to send the previous meeting minutes to OAFK for posting.

Guidance notes

Cyclical review – D. Winter

- Committee discussed including a “Committee revised as of ____” to all guidance notes.

ACTION: D. Winter to input revision dates and share with the MLITSD website team to back date all of the previous updates.

4-1 Firefighters protective equipment

- The committee asked D. Winter if it’s possible for a “Draft” or “Changes coming soon” note to be left on guidance notes currently under review and if a link could be added to send people to the OAFK page to submit comments.
- Title changed to “Structural firefighting protective ensemble”.
- L. Pedersen returned on day 2 of the meeting with changes to the current guidance note. He presented the suggested changes to the committee. Largely, his recommendations were accepted.

ACTION: A new guidance note to be made for “Technical rescue protective ensemble”. H. Baranik and J. Plater to form a working group and bring a draft back to the committee. The committee agreed to assigning it guidance note 4.3 since the old one is now archived and the number is now available. The committee requested a “Coming soon” message be placed on the ministry website to replace “Archived”.

ACTION: D. Winter to K. Thomson to send out for comment

4-2 Eye protection

- *Reference to guidance note 4.1 must change to reflect new name.*

ACTION: D. Winter to send through the ministry process.

4-4 Personal alert safety systems (PASS)

- NFPA 1982 reference to change to NFPA 1970 since consolidation.

ACTION: D. Winter to send through the ministry process

4-7 Wildland firefighting and personal protective equipment

- Change reference to “NFPA 1977 or equivalent”.
- Committee discussed rubber boot use and how structural firefighting boots are not what members need for wildland firefighting. The guidance note to be updated to consider alternative footwear in CSA Z195.
- Update NFPA references since consolidation.

- Add reference to [guidance note 3.3 heat and cold stress](#) and the [heat stress toolkit by OHCAW](#).

ACTION: D. Winter to send through the ministry process.

4-8 Care, maintenance, inspection and replacement of structural fire fighting personal protective equipment

ACTION: L. Pedersen, J. Plater, J. Kirk and M. Pankhurst to form a working group to review this guidance note.

4-9 Respiratory protection program

- Add reference to infectious disease.
- Remove “Generally” from the actions for employers section.
- Remove elastomeric respirator reference and just keep it as respirator.
- The committee discussed the seal on an N95 mask.
- Add reference to refer back to manufacturers instructions.
- Fit testing occurrence to change to every 2 years and other circumstances as outlined in CSA Z 94.4 including the utilization of interfacing personal protective equipment.
- Committee discussed testing, retention and requirements in the OHSA surrounding retention. The CSA standard suggests retaining testing until end of the respirator’s life.
- NFPA consolidation updates.

ACTION: D. Winter to send through the ministry process.

4-10 Hearing protection

- Add in record keeping and audiometric testing (Decibel limit for lab and field) under “employers should”.
- NFPA consolidation updates.

ACTION: D. Winter to send through the ministry process.

4-11 Fall protection from elevating devices

- Defer to review in conjunction with working at heights guidance note coming soon.

4-13 Personal protection during fire investigation operations

- Multiple recommendations from a contact of R. Grimwood.
- Remove “generally” from the copy.

ACTION: D. Winter to make changes and come back with a fresh guidance note to review.

ACTION: J. Mcbeth to take this to OFM for review as well.

4-14 Infection prevention and exposure control practices

- Remove exposure from the title and include the IPAC acronym.
- Add that patients with infections diseases may not display symptoms.
- Remove at the scene and return to station, keep it general.

ACTION: D. Winter to send through the ministry process.

ACTION: D. Winter to ensure all links are working for this round of reviews.

Update on guidance notes currently with the ministry – D. Winter

- All guidance notes are up on Ontario.ca but the following:
 - GN 6-19 Alternative Powered Vehicles
 - GN 6-53 Energy Storage Systems
- R. Grimwood and D. Worrall created a communication that can be shared with members to let them know all of the notes are now available.

Review guidance note comments

Firefighter Cancer Prevention Checklist

- Extensive comments received.

ACTION: D. Worrall and R. Grimwood to take a closer look and work on another draft to bring back to the committee for the next meeting.

- A majority of comments were approved by the committee.

ACTION: R. Grimwood to work on new wording for point 17 and send it to the committee for review.

GN #-## Fire Poles in Fire Stations

- No comments received.

ACTION: D. Winter to send through the ministry process.

GN #-## Wash-Down Procedures at Emergency Scenes

- Some comments were approved by the committee. Some were not due to the direction of the guidance note.

ACTION: D. Winter to send through the ministry process.

GN #-## Wildland Firefighting

- A majority of comments were approved by the committee.

ACTION: D. Winter to send through the ministry process.

Review new/revised Guidance Notes:

GN 6-40 Working at Heights (L. Pedersen and J. Kirk)

- L. Pedersen and J. Kirk walked the committee through the guidance note.

ACTION: L. Pedersen and J. Kirk to send the final updated guidance note to K. Thomson to go out for comment.

GN #-## Marine firefighting (D. Worrall, L. Pedersen, J. Roberson, H. Baranik and J. Kirk)

- Defer to next meeting.

GN #-## Insect Hazards (H. Baranik and D. Kellam)

- Defer to next meeting.

OAFC Update – R. Grimwood

- R. Grimwood gave an overview on the OAFC work at Queens Park having conversations regarding firefighter mental health, cancer prevention, sustainable funding and impact of climate change on fire services (wildland firefighting, floods, winds, severe weather, etc.)

OPFFA Update – D. Worrall

- D. Worrall spoke about funding for mental health.
- There is a show of support for the MOH to update firefighter early cancer screening (There has been an age decrease to the minimum colonoscopy age for everyone, not just firefighters, which is fantastic)
- Updating fall seminar scheduling. More information to come.
- General membership is happy with what is happening on this committee
- J. Plater, L. Pedersen and J. Roberson are working on various certifications and training (Active shooter, Working for Workers 6, etc.)

PSHSA Update – P. Clausen

SOLGEN

- Continue to work on SOLGEN project.
- P. Clausen shared that the team is looking for photo submissions from fire departments. If anyone has any they'd be interested in sharing for use on the upcoming website, please reach out.
 - For anyone reviewing these minutes with firefighting photos they are interested in sharing, please reach out to communications@pshsa.ca

Vacancy on government advisory committee

- There is a vacancy on our government, municipal and public safety advisory committee. If you're interested in learning more and joining, please reach out.

ACTION: P. Clausen to send R. Grimwood and D. Worrall the information to share with their members.

Firefighter cancer prevention project update – T. D'Elia (Virtual)

- T. D'Elia provided the committee with an update on the firefighter cancer prevention project.
 - For anyone reviewing these minutes, if you are interested in viewing the presentation, here is the PDF:



FCCP Section 21
Meeting - 2026.06.0.

- Discussion:
 - The committee asked about testicular cancer research and if that will be included. T. D'Elia shared that they did find research on testicular cancers and right now this presentation is for bridging current gaps, but the concern will be flagged and brought to the project group.

- T. D'Elia asked if the committee had any updates from the MLITSD on the wildland firefighting cancer prevention checklist. J. Lee isn't sure, but the policy team may know more. When it comes to the committee, it will be shared with T. D'Elia.
- T. D'Elia asked if the list was accurate. C. Plater shared that the medical surveillance piece isn't entirely on their radar right now, but other than that, no other comments.
- The committee recommended reaching out to the Indigenous Fire Safety Council and CAFC to review the Indigenous section. R. Grimwood has a connection at IFSC he can share with T. D'Elia.
- It was also noted that the National standard for Indigenous wildland firefighting is being pushed right now.

FRIDAY

MLITSD Prevention Update – Jon

Update regarding the CPO – K. Cutler MLITSD (ADM)

- Dr. Moody is no longer with the MLITSD. In place of him is K. Cutler, the MLITSD ADM.
- A new CPO will be selected in the coming months.
- The committee did a roundtable of introductions for the ADM. K. Cutler has recently transitioned into the prevention side of her work and is happy to be here.
- K. Cutler has joined us here today to update the committee on a few things and take any questions.
- Discussion:
 - There is not a policy update currently, but policy will come back and attend these meetings regularly.
 - Guidance note timelines: We had to stop a lot of work due to the delay. Is there any room for changes in the process?
 - The committee spoke about J. Lee's work with the committee and how it has been great to have him here at the meetings.
 - The cancer prevention list is a good thing but a small department may have issues because of funding. When the revised O. Reg 714 is introduced, there may be compliance challenges.
 - K Cutler shared that this is not an uncommon concern, it will be taken into consideration with the o reg update.
 - From the wildland perspective, when bringing in firefighters from other places with other regulations, we have to purchase equipment for those firefighters so they can meet our requirements if their equipment doesn't meet it.
 - K Cutler shared that it is a good point and something to think about for the proper approach.
- K Cutler shared that if the committees needs anything, to reach out. They can all work together

Occupation exposure registry (OER) – M. Borges, A. Beaubien, and R. Kovios (Virtual)

- The OER team updated the committee on the use case of the OER self tracker.
- The OER team did a walkthrough of the OER tool and how it works.
 - Questions:

- Is there an exported excel spreadsheet?
 - Yes, there is a PDF export of the report you submitted.
 - The intent before the more interactive piece is a summary of all of the items you put in, that you might need to provide to a physician. Right now, this just takes submissions one at a time but in the future they want to change it to report generally what you are exposed to on the job and then go into the macros of the work as well as individual exposures.
- Is this tool mobile friendly?
 - Yes.
- Is the format current? It would be especially good for young people to use early so they can track throughout employment. Structural firefighters are exposed to a lot of designated substances whereas wildland firefighters are exposed to limited items on the list but exposed daily.
 - Right now, the first attempt has a write in portion for one exposure, but the new one will allow you to select multiple at the same time.
 - The hope is to get it to a point where everyone can use it across their career.
- The point is to have the data available about yourself and what you've been exposed to.

Ontario Regulation 714/94 Modernization – D. Worrall

- D. Worrall provided an update on O Reg 714 for the committee as well as K. Cutler.
- He reminded the committee that some questions were sent out to the policy team.
- This has been in the works for over 10 years now and it needs to officially be updated.
- There were some questions from policy which were answered. K. Cutler updated that it's definitely in the process and getting closer.
- There's a survey going out to departments to see if changes are already adopted or if this will take a larger cost for municipalities.

MNR AFFES Update – C. Plater

- The committee discussed the cancer prevention program and how well it's going.
- C. Plater provided an update on corporate MNR updates including funding, training, aircrafts and program expansion for new teams they're hiring for.
- The urban interface is going to be highly prioritized. There will be people developing programs and they want to work with OAFCA and OPFFA to ensure the training is what is needed.
- The committee was provided an update on current projects previously discussed including the heat stress project with CROSH (The committee was also provided with a document laying out all of the details), the respiratory project and the exposure project.
- There is a group working on a project right now for decontamination (25 people). They recently got a videographer on the team who is going to be documenting a firefighter going into decontamination. He showed a document outlining the project and findings which included photos of the entryway and where firefighters can't go unless they are fully decontaminated.
- Temperature of the water, the tumble speed and PH of the soap are important in decontamination washers and also for cleaning the washers. The committee recommended including a section in the report on cleaning the decontamination machines.

- The committee discussed field decontamination options. Chris shared that they have a few different projects happening for trucks and aircraft.
- The committee discussed the benefits for wildland firefighters with the modernization of O Reg 714.

Cancer Prevention Sub-Committee (D. Worrall, R. Grimwood, M. Pankhurst and K. Thomson)

- Now that the committee has updated WSIB data (See “New Business” section below), the sub-committee needs a new member and will re-engage. Please reach out if interested.

Committee Communications (K. Thomson and D. Kellam)

- OAFC and OPFFA marketing teams will be working with the working group, however, there are changes on their end coming and are not at a point yet to be involved.

PFAS Discussion – All

- D. Worrall prepared a presentation outlining some updates and FYI’s surrounding PFAS including
 - Fire departments are aggressively phasing out per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) from turnout gear because scientific evidence directly links these "forever chemicals" to exceptionally high occupational cancer rates among firefighters. This transition is tightly regulated by the new NFPA 1970 standard, which enforces strict chemical limits and introduces updated performance metrics. However, the shift has introduced secondary chemical concerns (such as toxic flame retardants) and increased manufacturing costs. The New Hazard: Brominated Flame Retardants (BFRs). The International Association of Fire Fighters (IAFF) cautions departments that gear marketed as "PFAS-free" may use these undisclosed, toxic flame retardants. Departments must request independent lab verification for RSL compliance.

New business

September 2026 meeting location – J. Kirk

- Springwater confirmed as the host for September

ACTION: J. Kirk to send K. Thomson room block, station address and access information so she can update the meeting invite.

WSIB data – R. Grimwood

- R. Grimwood presented new WSIB data provided to the committee. There is highlighted data on cancer and mental health.
- The committee discussed the cost of firefighting including equipment, vehicles, staffing, overtime and absenteeism.
- The data shows us that chiefs of volunteer firefighters are sharing more info with volunteers, we are finally starting to see change.
- The committee discussed how it’s next to impossible to get life insurance once you get diagnosed with cancer.
- The committee discussed reporting including non-reporting illnesses and how numbers are always higher than the data shows.
- Occupational disease is killing people, often more than anything else.

- The committee discussed mental health and its cost and effects on firefighters.
- The committee discussed how things are getting better now that the data is available and members are being educated on the importance of health and safety, but it's not 100%. There is still lots of change that needs to happen but we are headed in the right direction to support firefighters.
- "Are we making sure people are reporting and are people getting diagnosed earlier?" are the main questions. Education on monitoring your own health is extremely important.

ACTION: R. Grimwood to send the committee the slides and excel files.

Other new business

- Slow down move over has been addressed and they are waiting for a response. This will go to the Minister to ask for extra support. An education piece is huge, D. Worrall is working on a training piece using information he's gathered and experienced himself. There is a considerable gap.
- In 2017, the PTSD prevention program was created and it's going to be law. We are trying to do everything we can to support members.
- The committee discussed a need for people outside of the Fire Section 21 committee to know about what is happening within the committee, especially other section 21 committees.

2026 meetings:

September 28 and 29 – Springwater

December 3 and 4 – Ajax