

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC)

National Occupational Health and Safety Policy Committee (NOHSPC)

Meeting

Minutes of meeting held March 17, 2016
NHCAP, Ottawa

Attendees:

Employee Representatives:

Chair: Rolfe Antonowitsch, Range Management Biologist, DORDS (PIPSC)
Milton Dyck, Technician, SCRDC (PSAC)
Dean Babuin, Research Technician, ARDC (PSAC)
Dale Woloshin, Senior IT/BCP Analyst, IT Security and Architecture, ISB
Gaston Mercier, Chemist, SJRRDC (PIPSC)
Jane McDonald, Mass Spectrometry Technician, KRDC (PSAC)

Employer Representatives:

Matt Shea, Director General, Human Resources Directorate, CMB
Alan Parkinson, Director General, Community Pastures Program, PB
Ling Lee, Strategic Advisor, Partnerships and Planning Directorate, STB
Denna Dougan, Director, Integrated Services, CMB
Joseph Silva, Director, Workplace Programs, Human Resources Directorate, CMB

Technical Advisors:

Sami Reaz, Head of National OHS Program, CMB

Secretary:

Christine Martel, OHS Project Officer, National OHS Program, CMB

Guests:

Mark Scriver, Human Resources Advisor, Workplace Wellness Programs, Human Resources Directorate, CMB
Heather Logan, Director of Sales, Partners for Mental Health

Regrets:

John Sharpe, Director, Integrated Planning and Reporting, STB
Sarah Leonard, Research Assistant/Plant Biology, SJRDC (PSAC)

1. Acceptance of Agenda

- Agenda was accepted with two additions.
- December minutes were approved.

Action:

- Rolfe's title needs to be corrected in the Participants List; it should be the same as what is used in the minutes.

2. Business arising from the Minutes

a) Automated External Defibrillators (AED) Update

- The contract has been awarded to HeartZap for a period of three years; 130 PowerHeart G5 AEDs have been purchased with the option of buying more as need over the three year period of the contract. They are expected to arrive by the end of March 2016.
- Each site will need to identify an AED coordinator and alternate. Training will then need to be completed for these coordinators and the First Aid Attendants. The units can be shipped to the sites for installation.
- Concerns were then raised with regards to the cell tower access for certain remote research centres and if this would affect any of the monitoring of the AEDs locally as all the units are monitored wirelessly.

Action:

- Message will go to the Workplace OHS Committee Co-chairs and Senior Building Responsible with information regarding the AED guidelines for installation and placement.

b) WHMIS/GHS Update

- L. Lee provided an update on the status of the WHMIS/GHS Request for Proposal (RFP). An RFP is no longer required. A contract has been put in place 1500 virtual seats to offer WHMIS 2015 through the Canada School of Public Service (CSPS) / Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS).
- We have 14 months (until June 2017) to get the trainings completed and meeting the new legislative requirements.

Action:

- Message will be sent out with the new symbols and information.
- Message will be sent out on the instructions on how to register for the training once the process has been finalized. Targeting early April 2016.

c) JSA Tool

- A preamble to be added to the tutorial in the JSA database will complete the update for the JSA Tool.

Action:

- Preamble text to be added into the Tool to be reviewed by the co-chairs prior to insertion in the Tool.
- Reviews of communication pieces are due back to Corporate OHS on March 21, 2016.
- To be communicated once approved.

d) Ergonomics Program

Action:

- Ergonomics Program to be reviewed by co-chairs one final time prior to final management approval.
- Ergonomics Program to be approved by the Assistant Deputy Minister of Corporate Management Branch.
- Final communications will be approved secretarially by the co-chairs.
- Ergonomic Program to be communicated once approved.

e) Update on Hoteling Stations at NHCAP

Action:

- C. Martel to follow with employee representatives
- C. Martel to follow up with IT regarding getting active jack access (near conference rooms T3-1-313 / 370) on Meeting dates for members to use, in case Wi-Fi access is not available.

f) OHS Reporting

Action:

- Training Report will be done during the summer for the Regional OHS Coordinators to prepare the Regional OHS Coordinators for their training blitz in the fall.

g) National Laboratory Safety Committee (NLSC) Update

Action:

- S. Reaz, M. Dyck and R. Antonowitsch to schedule a meeting to discuss the mandate of the NLSC.

3. Corporate OHS Policies & Programs

a) OHS Training Thresholds

- M. Poirier presented training data and engaged the committee in a discussion on setting thresholds for training percentage targets by branch and regions.
- The OHS Audit identified gap that require senior management to be trained on OHS roles and responsibilities.

Action:

- M. Poirier to research industry standards in training as well as in the private sector for more analysis prior to setting thresholds.
- The committee to then set a threshold of what they see as reasonable levels of acceptable target thresholds for training by branch (based on high risk versus low risk work environments) and regions.
- Measures are being put into place to address the processes to target senior management training.

b) New Hazardous Occurrence Investigation Report (HOIR) Log Sheet

- M. Poirier provided the committee with an overview of the new Excel HOIR log sheet that is being used by the regional OHS coordinators to track hazardous occurrences as of January 1 2016.
- The goal is to establish better trends with more reliable data. This new log allows for more flexibility to analyze and interpret the information.

Action:

- Develop standard reporting information from this new tracker that we want to present to the committee based on this new log sheet.

c) Procedures for Resolving a Workplace Violence Complaint – Task Team Update

- M. Poirier provided a brief summary of where the team was with their review of the procedures and how the discussions were going.
- The team's next meeting is planned for next month (April 2016).

4. Upcoming OHS Communications

- The upcoming events and related communications between now and the next meeting in June were discussed. These included the National Day of Mourning and the North American Occupational Safety and Health week.

Action:

- The JSA Tool is to be communicated once approved.
- The Internal Ergonomic Program is to be communicated once approved.
- NOHSPC March minutes to be posted online as approved.

5. Updates from National Safety Programs**a) National Containment, Biosafety and Biosecurity Committee (NCBBC) Update**

- The Committee has had 4 videoconferences since December and 2 special meetings.
- An update was provided on the status of the MRAP regarding their Audit (Laboratories).
- Discussed the new lists of Risk Group 2 (RG2) pathogens released via the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) biosecurity portal. Conducted outreach with researchers to determine the number of centres potentially affected by the list; developed a list of priority organisms for re-classification and submitted risk assessments to PHAC; guided research and ADRDTS through the licence application process.
- The Biosafety and Biocontainment Officers had regularly scheduled teleconferences plus one additional teleconference in February.
- Provided an update on the new biological Agent List and implications for centres that handle the TG2 fungal pathogens and a strategy for maintaining compliance until risk group assignments of various pathogens to RG1 can be approved.
- Reminder to staff that everyone must be made aware of what is new following the implementation of the Human Pathogens and Toxins Regulations (HPTR).
- The additional teleconference was necessary to discuss the Human Pathogens and Toxins Act (HPTA) licence application process and the details of each centres Plan for Administrative Oversight.

- All centres that possess organisms identified on the RG2 biological agents lists have applied to PHAC for a licence in compliance with the HPTR.
- A new cycle of assessments will be prepared once licences are issued and there is some clarity provided regarding plant pathogenic fungi.

b) National Radiation Safety Committee Update

- A Canadian Nuclear Safety Commission (CNSC) notification of expiry Agilent Model G2397A in Swift Current.
- A transfer record request to remove a device from license was sent to the CNSC for a Wallac 1400 Series device in Fredericton.
- Updates were made to the Share Point page.

c) National Laboratory Safety Committee (NLSC) Update

- The Committee is inactive at this time. Awaiting decision from the Policy Committee as to whether or not it will be dissolved.

6. Standing Agenda Items

a) Work Refusals / Emergency Response Measures / Ambulance Calls

- Zero work refusals for end of 2015 and thus far for quarter 1 of 2016.
- **Drying Oven Explosion – Lethbridge**
 - An undergraduate student was performing an experimental procedure that utilizes residue bags and processing rumen samples with feed stuffs. The residue bags are pre-soaked in acetone and allowed to dry prior to placing in drying oven. This is a normal and frequently utilized procedure with written SOP's.
 - Reportedly the bags are to be left to dry for +1 hour before placing in the dryer oven. The student reported that they estimate that they only allowed the bags to dry for approximately 15 minutes prior to them placing the bags into the drying oven.
 - During the sequence of events, the student left the lab and went to an adjacent lab, approximately 10 minutes later she heard the oven explosion.
 - The student had received WHMIS training at the commencement of her work term.
 - There were no personal injuries as a result of the explosion; damage was limited to the drying oven, a weigh scale and refrigerator which were in close proximity to the oven.
 - Preventive measures:
 - Signage: Permanent highly visible signage to be added to the front of all drying ovens utilized on site that include the following information:
 - In most applications, the exhaust damper will need to be open during drying or degassing for best results

- This oven is not an explosion proof oven and is not designed to handle combustible gasses. Do not place explosive, combustible or flammable materials into the chamber.
- Protocols:
 - All protocols relating to the use of acetone to wash materials (e.g., sample bags, glass ware, etc.) that will be placed inside a drying oven will be reviewed and updated.
- The incident was well investigated involving the local WOHSC and was reported to ESDC-LABOUR as per reporting protocol.

Action:

- A synopsis of the situation and signage should be shared with all Research Centres.
- Check that there is a JSA in place and evaluate whether or not it needs to be reviewed and revised or not.

b) ESDC Reports, Assurance of Voluntary Compliance (AVCs) and Directions

- M. Poirier presented the Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) Annual Report Summaries (LAB1058 – Workplace OHS Committee Report and LAB1009 – Employer’s Annual Hazardous Occurrence Report) to the committee. These reports give an overview of the number of disabling injuries, number of deaths, number of minor injuries, and the number of other hazardous occurrences across the country.

Action:

- Minor updates to some stats from sites and address and name information to be made.

c) Update on Workplace Violence Cases

- A broad discussion took place on the status of any Workplace Violence Cases. No employee names were mentioned, only overview of situation and outcome if available were discussed.

7. New Business

a) Partners for Mental Health Presentation

- H. Logan provided the committee with an overview of the Not Myself Today campaign produced by Partners for Mental Health. It provides practical literacy to support peers and make them more aware about mental health. There are also tools available to manager to promote healthy discussions amongst staff.

b) Mental Health Awareness Week

- J. Silva stated that the first week of May is Mental Health Awareness week. This is an opportunity to get tools out there while we get our Wellness Strategy developed.
- We will be launching the Not Myself Today campaign as one of our tools to raise awareness.
- There will be a network of guest speakers set up with personal testimonials.

Action:

- Plans are to develop a Mental Health Guide for Managers and Employees. This will be shared with the committee once available.

c) Metal Health sub-committee of NOHSPC

- J. Silva proposed establishing a mental health committee as a sub-committee to the NOHSPC. It would have representatives from current members of the NOHSPC.
- It would also have representatives each of the employment equity committees and other AAFC committees could also be involved such as the Young Professionals Network (YPN). Terms of reference are still to be established but they are definitely looking for a regional representation on the committee.

Action:

- M. Dyck and R. Antonowitsch to nominate to employee representatives from each union to sit as NOHSPC representatives on the Mental Health sub-committee.

d) Lyme Disease from Tick Bites

- D. Babuin raised concerns with Lyme disease from tick bites as possibly becoming a greater concern for us.
- There have been some Workers Compensation Board (WCB) cases where it is hard to determine if the bite occurred at work or not. Also, there are issues with some testing issues where the sampling of the strains being covered in certain regions is not covered the same as in other areas and not being tested the same.
- A suggestion was made that a warning about ticks should be sent out and that a procedure and reminder that tick bites need to be recorded as a hazardous occurrence.

Action:

- Information message on proper care and procedures on how to prevent tick bites to be sent out.

Next Meetings

- June 15, 2016 – Ottawa, ON
- September 15, 2016 – Ottawa, ON
- December 1, 2016 – videoconference
- March 16, 2017– Ottawa, ON