

HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLNESS

Health and Safety Representatives

Overview

Generally speaking, Health and Safety Representatives act on behalf of their colleagues by working with the employer to address and improve health and safety conditions in their workplace. The requirement to have Health and Safety Representatives available at the workplace including designated staff who conduct regular inspections of the workplace, is outlined in the province's [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#).

Depending on the number of people employed at your workplace, you may be enlisted to serve as a Health and Safety Representative and/or as a member of a local Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC). The following document provides answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs) about the roles and responsibilities of appointed Health and Safety Representatives in AMAPCEO bargaining units.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

What will be expected of me as a Health and Safety representative or Committee member?

Health and Safety Representatives work in conjunction with their fellow workers, supervisors and employers to report and address safety concerns. As a Representative or member of a JHSC, you will be responsible for the following:

- Identifying actual and potential workplace hazards;
- Obtaining information from the employer on health and safety conditions;
- Inspecting the workplace on a regular basis;
- Being consulted about (and having a worker representative be present at) the beginning of health and safety-related testing in the workplace;
- Making recommendations to the employer on health and safety improvements in the workplace; and
- Participating in investigations of work refusals and inspecting workplaces when there are critical injuries.

What is a Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC)?

A Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) is an advisory group made up of both management and worker representatives who work together to identify health and safety problems and recommend solutions. Typically, workplaces with 20 or more regularly employed workers are required to have a Committee that's equally represented by management and workers including its two Co-Chairs. In workplaces where there are between 6 and 19 regularly employed workers, the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) requires the appointment of a Health and Safety Representative rather than a Committee.

How much time commitment is required?

Appointments are made by the AMAPCEO Board of Directors and consist of a two-year term that is renewable. As part of this work, Representatives and designated committee members are expected to conduct regular (monthly) inspections of the workplace to help identify hazards and thereby prevent or mitigate injuries.

As a member of a local JHSC, you should also expect to meet once every three months to discuss tabled matters for approximately 1 – 2 hours (variable). Additional commitments may be required of the two Committee Co-Chairs (e.g. drafting the agenda, chairing meetings in rotation).

Your responsibilities as a representative or committee member, however, are considered part of your normal job duties and does not require union leave from the workplace. You will continue to be paid by the employer for your health and safety work.

What kind of training is provided?

Your employer must provide training to representatives participating on Joint Health and Safety Committees. At a minimum, they must ensure one JHSC member representing workers and one representing management has completed a training program approved by the Ministry of Labour. Employers will soon be required to train Health and Safety representatives in smaller workplaces without a JHSC.

As part of our membership education program, AMAPCEO organizes periodic training and information-sharing opportunities for all of our health and safety representatives. Health and safety representatives also receive activist newsletters regularly during the year and are invited to participate in events organized by their District Executives.

How do I become a representative or join a joint health and safety committee?

To be eligible, candidates must be signed-up members in good standing and agree to observe AMAPCEO's [Activist Code of Conduct](#). An application form is available on the AMAPCEO website (www.amapceo.on.ca/health). If your appointment is approved, AMAPCEO informs your employer of the appointment and your name will be posted in

your workplace and on the AMAPCEO website so colleagues will know whom to contact if they have questions or concerns.

Questions and Assistance

For more information on the role and application process of health and safety representatives, please contact your [Rob Harris](#), Labour Relations Specialist, or your current Health & Safety representative. A complete list of Health & Safety Representatives can also be found on the AMAPCEO website at www.amapceo.on.ca/health.