

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY

for Principals

South Shore Regional School Board

Your OHS Action List:

- JOHS Committee
- OHS Bulletin Board
- First Aid
- Emergency
Management
Planning
- Violence in the
Workplace
Prevention

A SAFE START TO THE SCHOOL YEAR



As educational leaders, Principals have the overall responsibility for the school and this includes taking all reasonable steps to create and maintain a safe learning environment. In the supervisory role, Principals have direct obligations for their employee's health and safety at work. A safe school culture starts with the Principal—demonstrating their commitment to safety by what they say and what they do. Employees hear and see this reinforcement of safety and it has a ripple effect through the entire school. Principals should have an understanding of SSRSB's safety policy, program and applicable sections of the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations. This may seem a daunting task, so this newsletter is to help guide Principals through many of the basic requirements. While Principals maintain overall responsibility for the implementation of safety activities, assistance in coordinating these activities can be obtained from other school staff. It is helpful for this individual to have some health and safety knowledge and interest (for example, a member of the Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee).

A good starting point for everyone is to watch the video "Taking Responsibility – The Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act": <http://www.gov.ns.ca/lae/healthandsafety/takingresponsibility.htm>

If Principals would prefer personal assistance in understanding responsibilities, please contact the Health and Safety Manager: [Gail Sinclair – 521-0241 – gsinclair@ssrsb.ca](mailto:g Sinclair)

In this issue:

A Safe Start to the School Year	1
Getting Started in September with your JOHS Committee	1
OHS Bulletin Board—Share the News!	2
Be Prepared: First Aid and Emergency Management Planning	2
What if Someone Gets Injured?	2
Violence in the Workplace Prevention	3
What if An OHS Officer Shows Up?	3
Fire Safety Basics	4

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS REFERENCED HERE ARE IN THE BRIEFCASE: "Principal's OHS"

Getting Started in September with your JOHS Committee

Welcome back to a new school year!

There are a lot of actions that contribute to a healthy and safe year for your school. As a starting point, your school needs a Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee (JOHSC). Really good JOHSC's greatly assist in creating, maintaining and improving health and safety. It brings together the workplace's employee knowledge and management authorities committed to make recommendations and take action.



It may be helpful to review the "JOHSC's Terms of Reference" for details about the committee composition and how it will function. The Terms of Reference is a template that JOHSC's will customize to their needs. Schools with less than 20 employees do not require a committee, but at least a single employee OHS representative must be selected.

Once your JOHSC or Representative is established, complete the "JOHSC Representative Information Form"



OHS BULLETIN BOARD—Share the News!

There must be a designated area for OHS information to be available for employees. Typically this is in a general area, like the Staff Room. Certain things must be posted, and a dedicated OHS Bulletin should be used. A complete list of what is required to be posted or available is in “[Information to be Posted or Available](#)”.

Posting requirements includes a current copy of the NS OHS Act and SSRSB’s OHS Policy. There should also be a contact list of: JOHSC/Rep, the NS Dept of Labour, and the First Aid Attendants, as well as the location of the first aid supplies. These contacts can be covered by using the “[Occupational Health and Safety Contact Information](#)” form.

JOHSC meeting minutes must also be posted on the Bulletin Board.



BE PREPARED!

FIRST AID

Most schools have staff trained in first aid, because of a job requirement (Custodians, Teacher Assistants), but this may not be the case for all schools.

For schools with <20 employees, there must be at least 1 employee trained with “Emergency” level first aid.

For schools with 20-100 employees, there must be at least 1 employee trained with “Standard” level first aid.

First aid kits must be visible and accessible to all employees during all working hours. Kit supplies should be checked regularly for condition, expiry and stock.

Kit contents depend on whether there <20 or 20-100 employees. A list of kit contents can be found under “[First Aid Kit Requirements](#)”

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT PLANNING

All schools must have emergency plans. In 2013, the [SSRSB Emergency Management Planning and Critical Incident Response Guide](#) was released to schools to help with this vital planning. It outlines the generic procedures to take in an emergency and material to help school staff understand and carry out support functions during and after an event. School Emergency Response and Critical Incident Response teams must be formed with the overall objective to complete planning activities. In an emergency, one of the four “All Hazard” response measures will be employed. However, the best developed plans will not succeed if not shared, understood and practiced:

Evacuation (aka fire drills) - 6 practices/year: 3 in Fall term with first one in the first week of school, and remaining 3 in Spring term

Relocation—1 practice/year

Lockdown—2 practices/year with first one before the end of September

Hold-and-Secure—1 practice/year



WHAT IF SOMEONE GETS INJURED?...

At the scene: Take charge, do not panic, immediately assess the situation for seriousness. Priority is any personal injuries. Consider if the situation can worsen, cause further injuries or damage. Get on-scene first aid or call for emergency services as required. Secure the area and do not disturb any evidence that may be required for any investigation.

If the accident is serious, contact the Health & Safety Manager immediately.

Investigate the accident for causes and preventative actions — use the “[Incident Investigation Report](#)”.

Review the incident at the next JOHSC meeting.

Report any injuries that result in medical attention or lost time from work to WCB (non-teaching staff) or Injury on Duty (teaching staff). The HR Department can assist for claim forms.

Violence in the Workplace Prevention

SSRSB recognizes that violence in the workplace is an occupational health and safety hazard with physical and emotional harm. Any form of violence is unacceptable and all schools must minimize, and where possible, eliminate the risks of violence in the workplace.

Principals have been briefed and provided material to:

- Annually identify and assess risks in schools, and develop prevention procedures (generic templates for the most common risks are provided and can be modified as needed)
- This assessment and prevention plans must be reviewed with the JOHSC/Reps
- General training must be provided to all employee (teaching and non-teaching)
- Copies of any specific prevention procedures must be given to affected employees
- As incidents are reported, investigation reports must be completed

All documents are in the "Principal's OHS" briefcase: [SSRSB Violence in the Workplace Prevention Plan](#), [Employee Training & Speaker Notes](#), [Incident Report Form](#), and [Flow Chart](#)



WHAT IF AN OHS OFFICER SHOWS UP?



OHS Officers from the NS Department of Labour make periodic visits to all workplaces. Their visits are usually general, but can also be in response to a complaint or accident. Any visit may result in an issuance of orders, compliance notices, or possibly penalties. Here's some advice on how to handle a visiting OHS Officer:

- The Principal or their designate should meet and cooperate with the Officer, and determine the purpose of the visit
- An employee member from the school's JOHSC/Rep should be given an opportunity to participate during the visit
- If any written inspection or investigation reports are given, the Principal shall sign as confirmation of receipt

...AND FINALLY... Many other OHS activities can occur at schools requiring the Principal's attention.

Specific assistance is always available from the Health & Safety Manager: Gail Sinclair—902-521-0241—gsinclair@ssrsb

Examples of these situations include exceptional employee complaints, work refusals, concerns with Indoor Air Quality, asbestos, radon, contractor safety, safe work procedures, personal protective equipment needs, chemical safety Etc.

Always remember, our ultimate goal is:



BASIC FIRE SAFETY EXPECTATIONS for SCHOOL STAFF*



No combustible / flammable material is permitted within 18" of ceiling.

No combustible / flammable material in/on stairwells, vestibules, ceilings, doors, door casings or windows.

20% or less combustible / decorative material—artwork, decorations, teaching aids, clothing— permitted on wall surfaces.

No combustible / decorative material on walls above or below open coat racks.

No overloading classrooms with combustible materials.

Maintain 3' clearance in semi-circle shape at each door for safe exit.

Keep clear paths through evacuation routes out of rooms and the building.

No wedging doors open, blocking access or obstructing the intended operation of the door, eg, storing behind doors that prevents it from opening all the way.

Evacuation maps on wall by door, preferably on the right-hand side, visible when door open, adult eye level, Primary Route marked in **RED**, Secondary Route marked in dashed **GREEN**, orientated correctly to the building layout.

Upholstered furniture, curtains, textiles must be labelled or have documentation confirming conformance to flame tests or been flame retardant treated.

Extension cords cannot be used as permanent means of electricity.

Kitchen appliances not permitted in classrooms (kettles, toasters, hotplates, microwaves, coffeemakers, etc).

Electrical equipment must be labelled as conforming to electrical safety standards.

**Non-compliance of these expectations may result in order/fines by the Office of the Fire Marshal directly to School Staff / Principals / Superintendent*

