

Draft Minutes
Environment Canada
National Joint Occupational Health and Safety Policy Committee
Wednesday, November 24, 2010 1:00– 3:15 pm

Committee Members

Present:

Members Representing Employees:

- **Tourigny, Pierre** – The Professional Institute of the Public Service of Canada (PIPSC), Ottawa, **Co-chair**

Members representing the Employer:

- **Grimes David** – ADM, Meteorological Service of Canada, NCR, **Co-Chair**
- **Lin, Charles** – DG, Science and Technology Branch, Dorval
- **Bliss, Doug** – Regional Director, Environmental Stewardship Branch, Sackville (replacing Virginia Poter)
- **Morel, Philippe** – Regional DG, Quebec

Absent:

Members Representing Employees:

- **Fletcher, Edward** – International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), Ottawa
- **Panas, Todd** – Regional Vice-President, Union of Environment Workers (UEW), Winnipeg

Members representing the Employer:

- **Poter, Virginia** – DG, Environmental Stewardship Branch, Gatineau
- **Wartman, Dave** – Meteorological Service of Canada, Dartmouth

Technical Advisors

- **Lalonde, Elise** – Corporate OHS, Gatineau
- **McNicholl, Jennifer** – ACEMD, Gatineau (replacing Karen Anderson)
- **Desormeaux, Manon** – Service Officer, Union of Environment Workers (UEW), National Capital Region

Secretary

- **Umutesi-Gasana, Diane** – Corporate OHS Administrative Assistant

The question of quorum was discussed since it was observed that quorum was not reached. As such, the co-chairs agreed that even though quorum was not reached to move forward with the meeting.

1. Review and Approval of the Agenda

No items were added to the agenda and it was approved by all members.

2. Approval of last minutes

Minutes were reviewed and M. Desormeaux pointed out she should be listed as a technical advisor and not a member of the committee. Pending this change, the minutes were approved.

3. **Action Item Review**

Action Item 2009.02.45: Violence in the Workplace

E. Lalonde updated the group on the Violence in the Workplace directive, which is progressing to its last stages. The final directive should be signed by the HRD ADM in the spring of 2011. This item is expected to be completed by the second meeting of 2011.

Action Item 2009.03.18: PeopleSoft – Training component

This item will be re-tabled, as Carol Leveillé could not make it to this meeting to present the OHS module to the committee. This presentation is expected for the first meeting of 2011, at which time the item will be completed.

Action Item 2009.04.22: Lock-down procedures

P. Lessard sent an email informing the committee that the draft was prepared and the working group is currently in the consultation process. The final draft should be presented to K. Anderson in January 2011.

Action Item 2010.02.02: PYR issue and OHS Audit

E. Lalonde informed the group she was waiting to verify some facts and the lessons-learned should be ready within the next few weeks. One recommendation was to share the report with local OHS committees and another was to share with upper management; which is a better position to ensure the implementation of changes. She added that she is writing her recommendations from the lessons learned so they can be implemented regardless of whether the situation in Vancouver was isolated or the symptom of something more widespread. As such, this exercise should serve as a guide in relations between OHS committees and management. She expects to present the report at our first meeting of 2011.

Action Item 2010.03.01: SBO List update

J. McNicholl informed the group RDGs (Karen Anderson in the NCR) were responsible for amending SBO (senior building officers) lists and once names and contact information has been updated; the information will be posted on a new Intranet page. ACEMD will also be working in a procedure to update and maintain this information; which it will share with the policy committee.

Action Item 2010.03.02: Radon Test Results

Since this is an annual exercise, the committee decided to keep it as a standing item; which the committee will review once a year.

4. **Bottled Water Policy**

J. McNicholl informed the group the policy had been submitted and approved at the IS board. There were some minor additions and ACEMD is considering whether EMC approval will also be required. This policy will be revised every three years and the working group is still looking at different ways that may be used to perform monitoring and compliance verification. As for water testing, it is still being performed (97% of buildings were tested) and although the process has been slowed in some instances by municipal work; it should be completed by the end of the year. Senior management has been made aware that water distributors will no longer be used except in cases where municipal potable water is unavailable. UEW shared concerns about water quality; especially by employees who are concerned about chemicals in municipal water. ACEMD will investigate this matter; although it has not received any negative or unsafe test result and in no instances did the results suggest employees should stop drinking this water. UEW invited Ms. McNicholl to share with the union the policy to see

which comments were incorporated. The UEW also recommended testing twice a year. J. McNicholl said her branch practices testing based on risk. Hence, if the annual test shows a possibility of insufficient water quality, testing would be more frequent; this is because there are considerations to be given to factors such as cost versus efficiency. As for test results, ACEMD communicates them to local OHS committees where employees can consult them. D. Grimes suggested the policy committee receives an overview of water testing results annually; this report should also look at communication between water testing authorities and local OHS committees and whether problems are being addressed.

Action Item 2010.04.01: Water testing Annual Report

ACEMD and Corporate OHS to work jointly on an annual report that would include statistics (number of building tested, results); a review of problems encountered, how they were solved and whether water testing authorities and local OHS committees communicated efficiently.

5. Ergonomic issues with PeopleSoft – safe software design

Mike Arnold from the AAAC unit presented on the topic of PeopleSoft and ergonomic issues associated with this software, and the issue of safe software design in general.

Issues identified including excessive amount of clicking and mouse use (important in the case of PeopleSoft); as well as overload of the right hand due to location of keys and accessories, and the need to adopt software and techniques to use the left hand instead. These have been linked to wrist and neck injuries sustained by EC employees. The AAAC is concerned with this issue due to the amount of injuries associated with it; and while it recognizes that ergonomic assessments are helpful in eliminating some risks; they are not effective when it comes to built-in software flaws.

In regards to PeopleSoft, M. Arnold argued it is neither usable nor accessible and since usability and good design are not yet standard business requirements and therefore not evaluated across the board; the definition of good software design is still subjective; but M. Arnold argued good design should be clarified as usable, accessible and with no resulting injury. Mr. Arnold went on to say that even though problems have been reported; PeopleSoft is part of government-wide applications that are often not tailored to the individual customer (departments) needs, but rather to the whole enterprise (government). In order for EC to identify business requirements that will lead to usable, accessible and lower risks of injury; it will have to communicate its needs and concerns to the cluster of departments that collaborate on the PeopleSoft project. As for the national policy committee, it has to articulate these requirements and bring it to senior management at EC; it can also approach committees from other departments involved in order to request changes to the application.

Committee members and participants also had the chance to ask Mr. Arnold a few questions: D. Bliss asked whether the AAAC had concerns about Microsoft and M. Arnold said this application has also generated a few issues but that CIOB is only on the executing end and EC should express its requirements for customized applications or hardware at a senior departmental and interdepartmental level. To answer C. Lin's question about the feasibility of changing PeopleSoft and how it is used; M. Arnold stated it was possible to customize the user interface of the application and make it fit our requirements; but current organizational settings may complicate the process. P. Tourigny then asked who at EC is responsible for gathering these requirements to bring them to the inter-departmental cluster. M. Arnold referred the committee to Don Bilodeau (Director General, who represents EC at this inter-departmental table). D. Grimes also emphasized there was an educational component to software use such

as training and awareness sessions to ensure individuals use of equipment that is safe. Members agreed such tools as THAs and training can help EC customize safety requirements and exercise due diligence in regards to computer use. Committee also agreed on the following proposal: A letter will be addressed to the EC PeopleSoft committee indicating the national joint OHS policy committee had a presentation on ergonomic issues stemming from the use of PeopleSoft; which need to be taken into consideration as they are causing injuries. This letter will ask which steps are being taken by EC to address these issues. Emphasis will be placed on financial losses due to injuries sustained by EC employees (e.g. cost of sick leave or injury-on-duty leave, need to replace injured experienced employee by temporary staff or requirement on co-workers to pick up the work on top of their own, with resulting costs and loss of productivity). Committee tasked Corporate OHS with drafting of this letter with the assistance of Mike Arnold.

Action Item 2010.04.02: PeopleSoft and ergonomic issues

Corporate OHS to work in collaboration with AAAC on a letter addressed to the EC PeopleSoft committee on ergonomic issues associated with this application.

7. Round Table

P. Morel: Has questions regarding the implementation of SBOs and link with regional OHS committees (ROHSC) and local OHS committees (LOHSC) and will gather information for the next committee meeting. There was a proposal to invite Daniel Lebel and Lynette Cox to this meeting, as initiators of this structure.

M. Arnold: Informed the members there was a disability management working group composed of several departments and EC has no representative at this table; he will send the contact information to Diane for distribution.

P. Tourigny: Has been hearing rumours about budget cuts related to OHS training (printing material, travelling) and he would like this issue to be brought forth at the next meeting. E. Lalonde informed the group HRB had important travel and O&M budget cuts; which have resulted in some training being cancelled in regions; therefore trainers will have to start considering alternative ways of delivering training. M. Arnold suggested involving CIOB to look at possible avenues.

Next meeting will be scheduled for beginning or mid-February and the following one in mid-May.

Meeting adjourned at 3:30 PM

David Grimes, ADM, MSC, Employer Co-Chair

Date

Pierre Tourigny, PIPSC, Employee Co-Chair

Date