



# Stand for Safety

SEIU-West Worker Safety Committee

March 2020

## Worker Safety Committee Mission Statement:

*Create strategies and programs that broaden awareness of safety for all SEIU West members. We will strive to be a knowledgeable resource for staff, Executive Board and members and offer education and support for all members on matters relating to Occupational Health and Safety.*

## Occupational Health Committees (OHC) 101

The SEIU-West Worker Safety Committee (WSC) hopes this overview will help members understand how Occupational Health Committees (OHC) are formed and how to become a member of your OHC.

### The What, When, and How, of OHCs:

The employer must set up an OHC if the workplace has ten or more workers (*SEA 3-22*). The employer must ensure that the OHC is structured and maintained as required by law [*SEA 3-22(1)*]. All workers have the right to participate and ensure the OHC is effective. An OHC must have between 2-12 members and at least half must be in scope staff.

### Selecting members:

The employer must select management members, however **management must not outnumber worker members**. In a unionized workplace, **the union determines the appointment process for worker representatives on the OHC** – if you are interested, contact your Unit Chair or call the SEIU-West Member Resource Centre (MRC) at 1.888.999.7348 ext. 2298 to find out more.

The employer should ensure the OHC fairly represents workers with significantly different concerns. Example: Shift workers should be involved in OHC meetings and have their concerns fairly represented. The employer must provide work time for workers to choose their members. The employer must post the names of OHC members (*SEA 3-25*).

Each OHC must have two Chairs. One must be designated by the employer and one selected by worker members of the OHC at its first meeting.

Each OHC member serves for a term of three years. Members may serve for more than one term. If a member doesn't want to serve on the OHC anymore, that person should remain in office until someone is ready to take over.

To have quorum at OHC meetings: half of all OHC members must be present; half of the OHC members present must be workers; and at least one employer member must be present.

OHCs must meet every 3 months but if it is a facility's first-ever OHC meeting, the employer must ensure the new OHC meets within two weeks of being set up. For the next three meetings, the OHC should meet at least once each month for three months. These meetings will help the OHC to get going and gain credibility.

### Duties of OHCs:

- Advising and assisting the employer;
- Assisting to identify, assess and control hazards;
- Dealing with the concerns of workers;
- Communicating with workers;
- Contributing to and developing policies, plans and programs;
- Planning worker training;
- Handling refusals to work under *SEA 3-31*;
- Regularly inspecting their workplaces; and
- Investigating certain incidents and dangerous occurrences.



Check out our committee page on [www.SEIUWEST.ca](http://www.SEIUWEST.ca).