



**Workplace  
Wellbeing**

# **How To Create a More Effective JHSC Webinar Q&A**

## JHSC Requirements

**Q:** How many employees does an organization need in order to have a Joint Health & Safety Committee (JHSC)?

**A:** Employers in Ontario with 20 or more employees are required to have a JHSC with at least two certified members (one worker employee and one management).

Organizations that have 50 or more employees are required to have a JHSC with at least two certified members (one worker employee and one management) and at least two additional members. Learn more about [JHSC composition and roles](#).

**Q:** Do you need a JHSC based on the number of employees at the organization or based on the number of employees in a crew?

**A:** JHSC requirements depend on the number of employees in your organization. Seasonal and temporary employees also count towards the number of employees in your organization. Learn more about which workplaces need JHSCs in [section 9 of the Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) or on the [Government of Ontario's website](#).

**Q:** Does every member of a JHSC have to be certified?

**A:** At least two members of a JHSC must be certified (a worker employee member and a management member). Some organizations may choose to certify all JHSC members to ensure members have the knowledge and skills they need to perform their duties effectively.

**Q:** What is the time frame that the employer has to provide the training to the new JHSC members?

**A:** The OHSA does not specify how soon a new JHSC member must receive training, however, JHSCs must have at least two certified members at all times. According to section 9 (17) of the Act, if a certified member resigns or is unable to act, the constructor or employer shall, within a reasonable time, take all steps necessary to ensure that the committee has at least one certified manager representative and one certified employee worker representative.

With these requirements in mind, it is a good idea to have a committee that goes beyond meeting the minimum requirements of two certified members.

**Q:** Our company has 4 offices and our JHSC meets quarterly. So far this arrangement is working well, but due to our size, we could apply to become a multi-workplace JHSC. Would you recommend becoming a multi-workplace organization?

**A:** If your current arrangement is working well, consider what advantages you would gain and lose in implementing a multi-workplace JHSC. Organize a brainstorm where everyone in your committee can consider the pros and cons of becoming a multi-workplace JHSC. Make sure you consider whether a multi-workplace JHSC could handle all the duties of your current JHSC. For more information, see the [Government of Ontario's resource on multi-workplace JHSCs](#).

**Q:** Do you have advice about setting up a multi-site JHSC?

**A:** Ensure you consider what advantages you would gain and lose in implementing a multi-workplace JHSC. For, instance, could a multi-workplace JHSC handle all the duties of your current JHSC? We also recommend setting up a process for regular communication between workplace sites. Make sure resources are shared equally so that no worksites are being left out. For more information, see the [Government of Ontario's resource on multi-workplace JHSCs](#).

**Q:** We have a multi-site location and an inspector from the MTLSD suggested that we need to have two sets of minutes per site, is this true?

**A:** We recommend following the recommendations of the MTLSD. If you need further clarification about a recommendation from an MTLSD inspector, you can [contact the MTLSD for more information](#).

**Q:** Management does not seem to want to join our JHSC. Since I am the Chair of the Committee and a certified member, how can I get members of management to understand Section 9 of the OHS Act and their legal requirements to the JHSC?

**A:** Send your employer and members management your recommendations in writing. Use [Section 9 of the OHS Act](#) to help explain the legal requirements of the employer to select a management representative to join the JHSC. If the employer or management is not willing to fulfill their responsibilities outlined under Section 9, the JHSC can contact the Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development (MLTSD) for intervention. For more ideas on how to encourage employees and managers to join the JHSC, [check out our resource](#).

## JHSC Rights & Responsibilities

**Q:** I have been told the JHSC reports and is accountable to the President and CEO of the corporation. Is this true?

**A:** A CEO or President may want to take ownership of the recommendations coming from the JHSC, but JHSCs are not accountable to the CEO or President of an organization. JHSCs are accountable to the workforce and the Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development (MLTSD). This is because a JHSC is made up of members who represent both employees and management. These members work together to make health and safety improvements in the workplace.

**Q:** If an employer provides a chart summary of incidents instead of copies of the exact incident report, is the employer still meeting their obligation to inform the JHSC incidents?

**A:** No, employers must provide more than a chart summarizing incidents to their JHSC. The committee should receive the full incident report because it needs all the information in order to make recommendations.

**Q:** We have had challenges getting incident reports from management. We have been told that they don't share with us, due to confidentiality. Is there anything we can do?

**A:** Employers have a legal obligation to share information from incident reports with the JHSC within 48 hours. The committee is also required to work in confidentiality, so the employer is allowed to share this confidential information with the committee. Reach out to your employer in writing and remind them of their responsibilities outlined in [Section 9 of the OHSA](#).

**Q:** We should ideally have a worker representative from each of these areas, in order to provide a fair representation, but we don't because our production staff are always busy. Any suggestions?

**A:** JHSC members can only do the work to protect the workplace if they are given the time to do so. Make sure that your employer understands that they are required by the law to give their staff time to perform their JHSC duties as outlined in [Section 9 of the OHSA](#).

**Q:** Are there any existing tools that evaluate the effectiveness of JHSCs?

**A:** The participant handouts provided during this webinar will help you evaluate the effectiveness of your JHSC. You can [access the handouts on our webinar resources page](#).

## JHSCs & Remote Work

**If you would like to learn more about the role of JHSCs in remote work environments, [read our article on JHSCs and Remote Work](#).**

**Q:** Are employers still responsible for the health and safety of employees who work from home?

**A:** Yes, employers are still responsible for the safety of employees who work from home.

**Q:** How JHSCs can help those working from home?

**A:** JHSCs gather any concerns employees have about working from home. JHSCs can also help raise awareness of health and safety issues associated with working from home, such as wires that could cause trips or workstations with improper ergonomics. JHSCs should also work with the employer to identify hazards and solutions to control them. For example, if your employees send in pictures of their workstations as part of a home workspace assessment, the JHSC can help review these pictures and make recommendations. Learn more about [best practices for JHSCs in remote work environments](#).

**Q:** If home offices are part of an organization's workplace, could the Ministry of Labour, Training, and Skills Development (MLTSD) inspect the home office?

**A:** Yes, the MLTSD has the right to enter any land, building, or premise. If your home has been deemed your workplace, then the MLTSD can enter it as long as they identify themselves as an MLTSD inspector.

**Q:** Are health and safety assessments required if employees chose to work from home?

**A:** The MLTSD has provided limited guidance about employer health and safety responsibilities when employees are working remotely. However, under the OHSA, employers are responsible for taking reasonable precautions to protect employees from illness and/or injury.

As remote work has increased significantly, guidance around home workplaces will continue to evolve. In the meantime, we recommend that employers work with an ergonomics assessor and their JHSC to identify remote work hazards and develop self-inspection processes for home offices.

Providing tools like workstation set-up checklists, mental health resources, and ergonomics training can help JHSC members and employees create a healthier and more productive remote work environment. Learn more about [best practices for JHSCs in remote workplaces](#).

**Q:** Is it a breach of privacy to ask employees to provide pictures of their home workspace for health and safety assessments.

**A:** If the picture only requires views of the desk or workstation, it shouldn't be considered a breach of privacy.

**Q:** Do you have a template for a home assessment?

**A:** You can find a sample workplace inspection on [page 6 in your webinar handout](#). This checklist can be used as a starting point to create your own custom home assessment as many of the sections in this checklist are also applicable to home workspaces. We recommend that employers work with an ergonomics assessor and their JHSC to identify remote work hazards and develop self-inspection processes for home offices. You can also use this [RACE: Recognizing, Assessing, Controlling, & Evaluating Hazards resource](#) to help you identify additional hazards that may be present in a home workspace.

**Q:** Is a JHSC necessary if everyone in an organization works remotely? Are we able to dissolve JHSC and go back to having one health and safety representative?

**A:** The MLTSD has not made any changes to legislation that states that workplaces organizations with 20 or more employees require a committee. We recommend following these current requirements. Learn more about [requirements for JHSCs in remote workplaces](#).

**Q:** Are employers responsible for providing ergonomically correct supplies like desks and chairs to employees working from home?

**A:** It is in the employer's best interest to ensure employees have ergonomically correct desks and chairs so that they can do their work safely. To ensure employees' workstations are ergonomically correct, an employer might assess a workstation and decide whether to provide replacement office equipment or help employees adjust their current equipment.

## JHSC Meetings

**Q:** How do we get members to participate in JHSC meetings and initiatives more?

**A:** Find out why people don't want to participate by asking them. This will help you understand how you can get them to participate more. For example:

- Are members given time to do their JHSC work?
- Are members being paid to do their JHSC work?

In Section 9 of the OHSA, JHSC members are entitled to be given time away from work to complete their JHSC duties. When a member is performing their JHSC duties, the employer is required to compensate the member their regular or premium rate. For more ideas on how to encourage JHSC participation, [check out our resource](#).

**Q:** Do JHSC meeting minutes need to be physically posted or can we just share them electronically?

**A:** The MLTSD has not set any specific requirements about whether meeting minutes should be printed or digital, but meeting minutes do have to be as accessible as possible. It's important to recognize that some people may not have access to a computer. If you choose to share meeting minutes electronically, we recommend printing out the meeting minutes and posting them on a board in a conspicuous location, such as in a lunchroom or on a safety

**Q:** If an organization holds JHSC meetings are held online with its other offices in Ontario that don't have/need a JHSC. Is this okay and is it okay to have one set of meeting minutes?

**A:** Yes, it is a good idea to collaborate with the other locations that do not have a JHSC in order to address the concerns or ideas coming out of all your locations. Since these meetings would involve all locations, it would be appropriate to have one set of meeting minutes.

**Q:** Is there anywhere we can find a list of topics to share with our committees at meetings that will be pertinent for healthy workplace culture?

**A:** To help build a more effective committee, make sure you go through the [JHSC Self-Assessment plan included in the webinar handouts](#). Once you've improved on key areas, then you can start looking at outside topics to make incremental improvements. You also can visit [OSG's blog to learn more about a variety of health and safety topics](#).

**Q:** Do you have to have a JHSC meeting or can it be via newsletter?

**A:** JHSCs are required to have an in-person or virtual meeting in order to collaborate and share information.

## JHSC Inspections

**Q:** Do employers have to address recommendations from their JHSC?

**A:** Yes, once the JHSC submits its formal written recommendations, the employer is required to respond to the JHSC's recommendations within 21 calendar days. If the employer agrees with the recommendations, the response must include a timetable for implementation. If the employer disagrees with a recommendation, the response must give the reasons for the disagreement

**Q:** What if an employer does not respond to recommendations from their JHSC?

**A:** If an employer does not respond to a JHSC's formal written recommendations, the JHSC may follow up to:

- See if the employer has received the recommendations
- Ask if the employer has any questions about the recommendations
- Resubmit the recommendation

**Q:** Is the management JHSC representative required during inspections?

**A:** A management JHSC representative is not required to be present during inspections. The JHSC must designate a non-management member to inspect the workplace. For more information about inspections, see our resource on how [JHSCs should conduct workplace inspections](#).

**Q:** Is it okay to have all members of a JHSC perform an inspection?

**A:** Involving all JHSC members in an inspection is a good practice to get everyone involved, but is not required.

## Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA or Green Book)

**Q:** Is there a difference between the meaning “must” and “shall” in legislation?

**A:** In most cases “must” and “shall” mean the same thing. Sometimes standards may say “must” while legislation will say “shall.” The use of “shall” means there is an immediate obligation.

**Q:** How often do we need to update our Green Book and is it a requirement to have the latest version of the Green Book?

**A:** Every year, amendments are made to the OHSA (Green Book), so you should update your copy yearly. And yes, organizations are legally required to post the most up-to-date version of the OHSA.

**Q:** Does every single crew within an organization need a copy of the Green Book or is it okay to just post one copy in the office?

**A:** Employers are responsible for providing measures and procedures to perform their job safely. For this reason, we recommend providing employees easy access to the Green Book wherever they are working (in the office, on a worksite, from home, etc.).

**Q:** We have multiple staff JHSC boards, do we need to post Green Book on all boards or just one?

**A:** Each workplace is required to post at least one copy of the OHSA (Green Book). To ensure the OHSA is as accessible as possible for your employees, we recommend posting a copy anywhere you post health and safety information in your workplace.

**Q:** Should we provide our JHSC with their own copy of the Green Book in addition to the one posted in our office?

**A:** We recommend providing each committee member with their own copy of the Green Book so that they can reference it when needed.

**Q:** Does the Green Book have to be posted in a certain area?

**A:** The Green Book (OHSA) should be posted in a place where it is easy for employees to find (for example, in a lunchroom or on a health and safety board).

**Q:** Is downloading the Green Book from a website the same as having a hard copy?

**A:** Workplaces are required to post the most up-to-date version of the Green Book (OHSA). This could be purchased as a book or downloaded and printed from the [Government of Ontario's website](#). In order for employees to find information, easily, consider posting a copy [hard copy with regulation-specific indexing](#).

# Contact us

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