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Commitment to Occupational Health and Safety

Saint Mary's University recognizes that it is responsible for the health and safety of its employees. The University is committed to providing a healthy and safe work environment for its employees and other persons present at its workplaces.

To support this responsibility, the University has established an Occupational Health and Safety Program and is committed to its continual improvement. The University will work with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee, the Science Safety sub-committee and the Facilities Management/Administration Safety sub-committee to identify ways to continually improve occupational health and safety.

Management, faculty and employees at all levels will be held accountable for complying with the NS Occupational Health and Safety Act and regulations, the Saint Mary's University Occupational Health and Safety Policy, the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Program, and all applicable occupational health and safety standards, rules, and safe work practices.

Working in a healthy and safe manner is a condition of employment at Saint Mary's University. Senior Directors, Deans, Directors, Chairs, Managers, Supervisors and Faculty will be held accountable for the health and safety of employees and students under their direction; and for maintaining a safe and healthy environment. Training opportunities will be provided to all employees.

Employees will be trained, must follow proper procedures, and are required to co-operate with management and supervisors, the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee and safety subcommittees, and any person exercising authority under the OHS Act.

The University, Management, Faculty, and staff will, where possible, eliminate workplace hazards. If that is not possible, suitable work practices will be followed. It is the duty of each employee to report to their direct manager, as soon as possible, any hazardous condition or work practice.

Co-operation on health and safety matters will be extended to and expected from all contractors, suppliers, and other parties present at University workplaces.

Dr. J. Colin Dodds, President and Vice Chancellor

1.1 Introduction

The Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act (1996) requires organizations to have a written OHS program. More recent thinking, however, has recognized that to be really effective, the OHS program needs to be actively “managed” in the same way as any other aspect of University operations, such as business development, customer service, and finance. A fully functioning OHS Program is not just a written technical or training or risk-avoidance program, but rather a complete “system” which includes feedback and checks to ensure that the system is working. It requires assignment of responsibilities, setting of targets, accountability for performance, and measurement of progress toward those targets so that the University may take the necessary action and implement continual improvement to ensure the targets are being met. To ensure that Occupational Health and Safety at the University continues to evolve and improve, the University will first implement a traditional written OHS program based on the requirements of the NS OHS Act. Once the OHS Program has been developed and implemented, the University will continue to develop the safety program based on the Canadian Standards Association standard CSA Z1000-06 Occupational Health and Safety Management System.

1.2 CSA Standard Z1000-06

The CSA Z1000 standard is a framework for facilitating improvements in an organization’s OHS performance, and is now regarded as a Canadian OHS best practice. At its core is a system to identify and defines roles, responsibilities and accountabilities. These responsibilities and accountabilities are performance based – using outcomes with concrete goals. The CSA standard is a balanced approach between hazard and risk based on prevention and controls. To review the CSA Z1000 Standard, please contact the OHS Office at 420-5658 or by email at valerie.wadman@smu.ca.

1.3 The Management Cycle

The Saint Mary's OHS Program is built on the well-recognized management cycle of Plan, Do, Check and Act, as outlined in the OHS Management Standard, which repeats in a continuous improvement cycle.

Within the OHS Program, the major elements of the management cycle have sub-elements, which provide the framework for the organization of the OHS Program Manual.

The Occupational Health and Safety Management System is demonstrated in the following diagram.



Figure 1:

Model of the Occupational Health and Safety Management System

1.4 The Occupational Health and Safety Policy

In compliance with the requirement of Section 27 of the OHS Act, Saint Mary's University has developed an OHS Policy. The OHS Policy establishes the framework of responsibilities and accountabilities for the OHS Program cycle to begin. A copy of the current version of the OHS Policy is posted on the OHS Bulletin Board in the basement, McNally East, and the OHS website at:

<https://www.smu.ca/webfiles/6-2007SafetySigned.pdf>

1.5 Management commitment and leadership

This manual describes the elements of the University's OHS Program and identifies the roles of all parties in successfully implementing the OHS Program. The OHS Program includes elements necessary to effectively manage occupational health and safety in the University, including assignment of responsibilities, accountability for performance, measurement of results and continual improvement.

1.6 Management representative

At Saint Mary's University, the President has designated the Vice-President, Finance and Administration, to oversee the development and implementation of the required occupational health and safety program.

1.7 Responsibility, accountability and authority

Saint Mary's University is regarded as the employer under the OHS Act and regulations and is responsible for compliance with the act and regulations. Responsibility for workplace health and safety has been assigned to Senior Administrators who are responsible for the management of a Department, Division, or Faculty within the University. Each Senior Administrator must ensure that compliance is maintained in the part of the University which they lead. Each Senior Director, Dean, Manager or Chair, throughout the University, is responsible for their staff and work location.

1.7.1 Executive Management Group

The University Executive Management Group (EMG) is responsible to:

- ensure that all the operations of the University comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and regulations and all orders and requirements of Occupational Health and Safety Officers of the NS Department of Labour and Advanced Education;
- ensure that all the operations of the University adhere to the Occupational Health and Safety Policy;
- ensure that all the operations of the University adhere to the requirements of the University's OHS Program;
- ensure that there is strategic direction and planning for the University's OHS Program

- and to implement the OHS Program;
- integrate occupational health and safety in the University's business;
- allocate resources for health and safety programs and initiatives;
- ensure that program review or audit results of the OHS Program are reviewed and appropriate action is taken; and
- ensure that responsibility/authority for workplace health and safety is delegated to trained and competent personnel.

1.7.2 Senior Directors, Deans, Directors, Managers, Chairs and Supervisors

Senior Directors, Deans, Directors, Managers, Chairs and Supervisors are responsible to:

- ensure compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and regulations within the portion of the workplace under their supervision;
- ensure that all the operations under their supervision adhere to the OHS Policy;
- ensure that all the operations under their supervision adhere to the requirements of the OHS Program;
- integrate preventive health and safety practices into all activities;
- ensure that information and training are provided to employees to protect their health and safety;
- communicate information concerning workplace hazards and the necessary control procedures to be practiced to employees;
- hold employees accountable for following Safe Work Practices;
- supervise employees and review work processes to ensure that employees work in the manner required;
- take action immediately upon any report or suspicion of unsafe or hazardous conditions or situations;
- undertake workplace inspections and conduct investigations of incidents, unsafe work refusals, concerns and complaints related to observed or suspected health and safety hazards, encouraging full participation in such inspections and investigations by representatives of the JOHS Committee;
- co-operate with employees and the JOHS Committee to promote a healthy and safe workplace;
- respond in writing to recommendations from the JOHS Committee, when requested, and within the deadline specified in the OHS Act;
- co-operate with any person performing a duty under the OHS Act and regulations;
- ensure that all orders from and requirements of OHS Officers of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education are satisfied in a timely manner and report all such activities, including progress reports, to the Occupational Health and Safety Section, Human Resources; and
- co-operate with the staff of the Occupational Health and Safety Section, Human Resources in the evaluation of health and safety performance; and

- provide feedback on the operation of the OHS Program.

1.7.3 Employees

Employees are responsible to:

- work in accordance with the OHS Act and regulations;
- adhere to the OHS Policy;
- adhere to the requirements of the OHS Program;
- adhere to other policies and procedures on healthy and safe job performance;
- ensure that work activity and behaviour do not, through act or omission, place their own health and safety, or the health and safety of others, at risk;
- report all workplace hazards and any health and safety concerns to their immediate supervisor in a timely manner;
- report all personal injuries or work-related illness, property or equipment damage, and near-miss incidents to their immediate supervisor in a timely manner;
- follow established safe work practices and use machinery, equipment and materials only as authorized and as trained;
- wear personal protective equipment as required and as instructed;
- participate, wherever possible, in defining safe work practices and in opportunities to protect and promote health and safety on the job; and
- Co-operate with the JOHS Committee, the University Safety Sub-committees, the Occupational Health and Safety Section of Human Resources, or any person performing a duty under the OHS Act and regulations.

1.7.4 Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee and Safety Sub-committees

The Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) is a collaborative employer-employee body established to work together to address health and safety issues in the workplace and is responsible to:

- perform the functions of a joint occupational health and safety committee as defined in sections 29, 30 and 31 of the OHS Act and as required by the regulations;
- hold regular meetings in accordance with written Terms of Reference/Rules of Procedure and operating procedures and maintain minutes and records of committee activities;
- work co-operatively with management and employees to identify hazards to health and safety and provide input on health and safety programs designed to respond to the hazards;
- work co-operatively with the employer in the investigation and resolution of health and safety complaints, concerns or work refusals;
- work co-operatively with management in undertaking inspections, inquiries, and investigations concerning health and safety;

- participate in the yearly review of the Occupational Health and Safety Policy;
- advise on the development, implementation, and evaluation of the OHS Program;
- participate in the co-operative auditing of the workplace to determine compliance with occupational health and safety requirements; and
- Develop written recommendations to management as considered appropriate.

1.7.5 Occupational Health and Safety Subcommittees

Senior Directors, Directors, Deans, Chairs, Managers, and Supervisors are responsible for health and safety within their respective areas. To assist them in the development, implementation and maintenance of an effective health and safety system, the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee has established two health and safety sub-committees, Facilities Management/Administration and Science. These sub-committees are working groups that are intended to involve faculty, staff and others in health and safety matters.

The role of Sub-committees is to provide support for the various University departments and faculties by assisting with such activities as:

- participating in inspections and hazard identification
- participating in the development of policies, procedures, work practices and guidelines that will improve health and safety performance.
- participating in the identifying of health and safety training requirements,
- participating in the identifying of facility and equipment changes that will improve health and safety; and
- participating in problem-solving and follow-up on various health and safety matters

1.7.6 Occupational Health and Safety Section, Human Resources

The Occupational Health and Safety Section, Human Resources, provides coordination and consultative services to the University in support of the OHS Program, and is responsible to:

- coordinate the yearly review of the OHS Policy;
- coordinate the development and implementation of the OHS Program;
- monitor implementation of the OHS Policy and OHS Program,
- provide consultative support services to management and employees on matters relating to occupational health and safety;
- provide statistical reports on University performance on key health and safety indicators;
- monitor, evaluate and audit occupational health and safety compliance and performance with legislated standards;
- support University initiatives to facilitate improvements in health and safety and to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses; and

- liaise with unions, external agencies, and the Department of Labour and Advanced Education on health and safety issues.

1.8 Employee participation

Saint Mary's University recognizes and values the knowledge and skills of employees with regard to performing their jobs safely and will promote a workplace culture where employees are supported and encouraged to contribute to improving occupational health and safety performance and in the development, implementation and continual improvement of the OHS Program. The University commits to working in partnership with employees and their representatives, through the internal responsibility system, to develop and implement measures in order to eliminate and minimize risk of occupational injury and illness in the workplace.

The University will facilitate full participation through:

- the consultative process by which the OHS Program is developed and improved;
- employee participation in the process of hazard identification, risk assessment and risk control;
- employee participation in the development of Safe Work Practices; and
- the training and orientation designed to further employee competence.

1.9 Further development of the OHS Program/ Management System

The development of this manual is not the end of the development of Occupational Health and Safety, but the beginning of the development of an occupational health and safety system. The University intends to develop and implement the remaining components of the CSA OHS Management Standard.

By its very nature, the OHS Program is a continual improvement process following an ongoing Management Cycle. Some chapters of this manual have been fully developed and will only require periodic review and revision based on the changing needs of the University. Other chapters will require experience with the OHS Program and further work to develop tools and implement elements of the system. As changes occur, updates to this manual will be circulated.