



MUNICIPALITY OF THAMES CENTRE

REPORT NO. **CAO-002-25**

TO: Mayor and Members of Council
FROM: Chief Administrative Officer
MEETING DATE: January 27, 2025
SUBJECT: **2025 Health and Safety Annual Policy Statement**

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT Report No. Report CAO-002-25 be **RECEIVED** for information;

AND THAT the 2025 Health and Safety Policy Statement, as attached, be **ADOPTED**.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this report is to ensure compliance with the Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA) as it requires Employers to annually review this policy, update it, post it, and maintain a program to ensure all employees are trained. Council adoption will assist the Mayor and Chief Administrative Office to sign the Health & Safety Policy on behalf of the Corporation.

BACKGROUND:

In June 11, 2018, staff presented the Municipality of Thames Centre's Health and Safety Policy Manual. Since then, several standards and operational practices have changed in conjunction with evolving requirements. The *Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA)* mandates that employers annually review, update, and post the policy while maintaining a program to ensure all employees receive proper training and refresher training as needed.

This report also provides information on the new Health and Safety Policy Statement that has undergone review and has been supported by the Joint Health and Safety Committee.

COMMENTS:

In 2024, the Office of the CAO, through the HR Manager, assumed responsibility for the Health and Safety function, replacing the previous Health and Safety Policy revised in June 2018. This was replaced with an Occupational Health and Safety Policy that aligns with current standards, including the introduction of the 2025 Health and Safety Policy.

Additionally, the Respect in the Workplace Policy (Workplace Violence and Harassment),

last updated in June 2016, was revised to incorporate amendments from Bill 190 and other regulatory updates since 2016. These revisions were reviewed and approved by the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC), with consultations from Senior Management.

Starting in 2025, these policies will be reviewed with all staff and volunteer firefighters annually, in compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*. The updated policies aim to enhance clarity, ensure employees understand their rights and responsibilities, and provide management with the tools to enforce them effectively. Supporting documents are attached for reference.

Additionally, greater emphasis has been placed on increasing awareness of the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for all staff. This confidential resource provides employees with access to mental health and wellness support, ensuring their overall well-being is prioritized alongside workplace safety. Information about the EAP has been integrated into monthly communications, including staff emails, and workplace postings. This approach will ensure ongoing visibility and accessibility of the program, reinforcing its importance and availability.

Updates to Health and Safety Processes Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC)

The Committee name was updated from JOHSC to JHSC to ensure consistency with the terminology outlined in the *OHSA*.

All Joint Health and Safety Boards have been updated to comply with *OHSA* requirements, incorporating materials such as the 2024 Green Book. These boards now include:

- Updated Health and Safety Policy
- Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy
- Employment Standards Act Poster
- WSIB Poster (In Case of Injury at Work)
- JHSC Meeting Minutes and Inspection Reports
- JHSC Member List
- First Aid Booklet
- List of Certified First Aiders
- Emergency Contact Information

Additionally, the Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) have been updated to the Safety Data Sheets (SDS) format to reflect current standards.

JHSC Composition and Meetings

The current JHSC includes members: Andrew Sherriff, Anica Peter, David Van Dyk, Devon Brown, Eric Fox, Ethan Musclow, Gary Kelly, Jason Parker, and Tammy Hunter. Names and work locations are posted in the workplace, as required by *OHSA subsection 9(32)*.

JHSC meetings are held at least once every three months, meeting the requirements of *OHSA subsection 9(33)*. Agendas and minutes are prepared, reviewed by Senior Management, and posted on the JHSC board for transparency.

Workplace Inspections

Monthly workplace inspections are conducted by designated JHSC workers, in compliance with *OHSA* requirements. In 2024, the JHSC updated the Inspection Checklist to align with recent *OHSA* updates. The final version will be approved in early 2025.

First Aid and Certifications

First Aid Kits are currently being updated to comply with *OHSA subsection s.2(2)*. The HR Manager has completed certification for both Part 1 and Part 2 of JHSC training to represent management. Efforts are underway to certify a worker representative in 2025.

Discussions are ongoing regarding First Aid training for uncertified staff and future training priorities, including WHMIS, AODA, Worker Awareness, Workplace Violence and Harassment, Fire Extinguisher Training, and maintaining the new Training Matrix.

The Municipality of Thames Centre remains committed to fostering a safe and healthy workplace. Through ongoing policy updates, regular training, and diligent oversight, we ensure compliance with the *OHSA* while promoting a culture of safety and accountability.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

There are no financial implications associated with this report as it is provided for information purposes only.

STRATEGIC PLAN LINK

Pillar: *Community Communications & Engagement*

Goal: *Increase communications between the municipality (Council and Staff) and the public*

REFERENCES:

Occupational Health and Safety Act
Workplace Safety and Insurance Act

ATTACHMENTS:

1. 2025 Health and Safety Policy Statement

Prepared by: Anica Peter, Human Resources Manager

Reviewed by: David Barrick, Chief Administrative Officer