

Operating Guideline # 209

Health and Safety Policy

September 27, 2019



**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this Operating Guideline (OG) is to describe how the department (and the municipality) has responded to the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act's requirement for preparing, posting and reviewing the health and safety policy.

**ISSUE/RATIONALE:**

Clause 25(2) (j) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act requires the employer to "prepare and review at least annually a written occupational health and safety policy and develop and maintain a program to implement that policy". Clause 25(2) (k) also requires that the employer "post at a conspicuous location in the work place a copy of the occupational health and safety policy". The Township of Muskoka Lakes – as the employer – has such a policy, but out of an overabundance of caution, the fire department augments that policy with this OG.

**GUIDELINE:**

**Policy Statement**

1. It is the policy of the Muskoka Lakes Fire Department to conduct all operations in a safe and healthy manner in order to prevent injury or illness to workers. The elimination of hazards to personnel and property shall be the prime consideration when planning any work activity. All practical steps shall be taken to ensure that the work environment and work procedures comply with Federal and Provincial legislations pertaining to the health and safety of the employee.

**Principles:**

2. The following are the principles that guide our day-to-day activities:
- a. Every employee has the right to work in a healthy and safe environment.
  - b. Employees are encouraged to be actively involved in maintaining a healthy and safe environment.
  - c. The prevention of accidents, injury and occupational illness should be an integral part of every job activity.
  - d. An internal responsibility system recognising the roles of every workplace participant - from employee to supervisor to employer – is key to an effective health and safety program.

**Mandatory Elements:**

- 3. This OG/Policy Statement together with the corporate policy which must be posted in all fire halls.
- 4. Every reasonable provision for the prevention of accidents and the promotion of safety and health of all employees must be made in compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act, and other relevant legislation. The need to supplement these minimum requirements in light of specific workplace situations must be determined.
- 5. Occupational health and safety programs specific to the fire department's operational needs are developed / implemented, applied and communicated to all employees.
- 6. Managers, supervisors and employees must receive information and training on safe work practices and their duties and responsibilities under applicable legislation.

Operating Guideline # 209

Health and Safety Policy

September 27, 2019



**Departmental Commitment to Health and Safety:**

7. This department undertakes to carry out the following:
- a. To provide as safe and healthy a working environment as can be reasonable be expected, given the nature of firefighting and the resources and technology available.
  - b. To establish an effective internal responsibility system, whereby everyone clearly understands their responsibilities regarding the occupational health and safety of workers.
  - c. To provide ongoing training to heighten employee awareness of known safety hazards and maintain job skills and knowledge.
  - d. To develop and maintain open communication between all levels in the Fire Department to encourage employee participation in the Fire Department's Safety Program.
  - e. To involve all employees in safety through an effective Joint Health and Safety Committee that is accessible to all department members.
  - f. To periodically review the Fire Department's health and safety OG/Policy Statement, program and Operating Guidelines to maintain safety performance.
  - g. To ensure compliance with applicable Federal, Provincial and Municipal safety legislation.

**Responsibilities of Firefighters and Administration Personnel:**

8. Employees are responsible for maintaining a reasonable working knowledge of the requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. They are also responsible for maintaining a reasonable working knowledge of health and safety hazards in the workplace and preventive measures to be taken for their own protection.

9. Workers must:

- a. Comply with all procedures and requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, Highway Traffic Act and other applicable safety legislation.
- b. Report any hazardous conditions, which you cannot immediately correct to your Captain, and failing a satisfactory resolve in your opinion, to a member of the safety committee.
- c. Promptly report all accidents or injuries (no matter how minor they may first appear) to your supervisor.
- d. Not work or operate any equipment that may endanger the safety of yourself or others.
- e. Not engage in pranks or feats of strength that may endanger yourself or others.
- f. Wear and care for protective clothing provided by the Muskoka Lakes Fire Department as instructed.

**Responsibilities of Fire Department Officers:**

10. Captains, District Chiefs and other fire department officers are responsible for implementing the Occupational Health and Safety Program in the work areas under their supervision.

11. Their own safety attitudes and actions are important to setting the safe climate of the organization and their job performance will be measured against their efforts in achieving the Fire Department's safety goals.

12. All safety complaints/recommendations must be processed in keeping with department policy without undo delay.

13. Captains, District Chiefs must:

Operating Guideline # 209

Health and Safety Policy

September 27, 2019



- a) Ensure Provincial, Federal and Municipal legislation is implemented and complied with in their areas of responsibility.
- b) Ensure the Department's safety OG/Policy Statement and program are posted in a conspicuous place in their work areas and obtain and post new copies of the policy and program as required.
- c) Document and investigate all reported accidents and take appropriate corrective action within their authority to prevent a recurrence.
- d) Ensure all employees under their supervision receive adequate training in health and safety legislation, safe work policies, standard operating guidelines and proper use of vehicles and equipment.
- e) Inspect their workplaces to correct safety hazards within their authority and to make other hazards that they cannot correct known to the appropriate level of management above them.

**Responsibilities of the Fire Chief:**

14. The Fire Chief is responsible for administration, direction and implementation of safety policies to ensure a safe working environment. His direct involvement and commitment to safety will determine health and safety success or failure.

15. The Fire Chief or his designate will:

- a) Ensure the safety standards and procedures are developed, maintained, followed and kept up to date.
- b) Ensure the Fire Department complies with Provincial, Federal and Municipal safety legislation.
- c) Consult with all levels of the organization to ensure the safety program is effective and make changes as required.
- d) Make the safety committee aware of safety reports, audits and hazards that he may be aware of, to fulfil the obligations of the internal responsibility system.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**

It is the responsibility of all staff to comply with the provisions of this Operating Guideline.

**REFERENCES:**

- Occupational Health and Safety Act, Revised Statutes of Ontario.