

The purpose of this newsletter is to unite all the UNBC campus's (Prince George, Prince Rupert, Terrace, Gitwinksihlkw, Quesnel, Likely, Ft St John) and grow our UNBC Community's Safety Culture together by regularly communicating important Safety information. UNBC's mission is to Ignite, Inspire, and Lead change.

## **Happy holiday season and welcome to the December Safety Newsletter. This month's topic is regarding Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees (JOHSC).**

A JOHSC must consist of at least four members, maintain equal or greater worker representation compared to employer members, include co-chairs from both management and workers, and ensure inclusivity by representing all departments, shifts, and unions where applicable.

Starting this December, we're excited to welcome a new representative from the Fort St. John branch to our regular JOHSC team, strengthening collaboration and broadening workplace safety representation.

**Currently UNBC has two types of Safety committees.** The JOHSC [University Joint Health and Safety Committee](#) | UNBC and the [Laboratory Safety](#) | UNBC. Each committee meets once per month, maintaining minutes ensuring accessibility to staff and regulators.

The primary purpose of a Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) is to proactively identify and assess workplace hazards, recommend and support corrective actions to eliminate or control risks, ensure compliance with occupational health and safety legislation, foster a culture of safety through ongoing education and communication, and investigate incidents to develop preventive measures that protect employee health and well-being.



### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The roles and responsibilities within a Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) require employers to provide adequate resources and training, respond to committee recommendations, and ensure compliance with safety regulations, while workers are expected to actively participate in meetings and inspections and promptly report hazards or unsafe conditions, fostering a collaborative approach to workplace health and safety.

**To achieve these objectives**, the committee undertakes key activities such as conducting hazard identification through inspections and risk assessments, investigating incidents to determine root causes and recommending corrective actions, providing training and education for employees and supervisors on safety practices, assisting in the development and updating of safety policies and procedures, and ensuring emergency preparedness for workplace incidents.

Roles & Responsibilities	Occupational Health & Safety Fundamentals	Policies & Procedures	Legitimation: Acts & Regulations
Hazard Identification, Risk Assessment & Control	Ergonomics for injury prevention & accommodation	Hazardous Materials & Occupational Hygiene	Fire Safety Planning, Systems & Inspections
Accident Investigation & Reporting	Worksite Inspections	Emergency Preparedness & Response	Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee

### **Why Emergency Preparedness**

**Matters:** Emergencies can happen anytime—earthquakes, fires, hazardous material spills, or extreme weather events. Being prepared means:

- Reducing risk and harm
- Responding quickly and effectively
- Supporting recovery and resilience

Preparedness isn't just about having a plan—it's about practicing it, knowing your role, and staying informed.

### **Fun Fact!**

UNBC is the only university in western Canada that has an underwater hockey team, the Timberwhales.

JOHSCs deliver significant benefits by reducing workplace injuries and illnesses, ensuring compliance with legal requirements, enhancing communication between management and workers, fostering a strong safety culture that boosts productivity and morale, and generating cost savings through fewer accidents and claims.

To ensure an effective health and safety committee, organizations should provide continuous training for members, secure management support with prompt implementation of recommendations, maintain transparent communication through published meeting minutes, and adopt data-driven strategies—such as analyzing incident trends and hazard reports—to prioritize actions.

## Conclusion

JOHSCs are essential for creating safe workplaces. By fostering collaboration, conducting regular inspections, and promoting education, these committees significantly reduce risks and improve organizational health and productivity.

Their success depends on active participation, management commitment, and continuous improvement. In short, a JOHSC is an essential part of a workplace safety program, helping to reduce injuries and illnesses by fostering communication and proactive hazard management.

**We all play a crucial role in our safety program. By adhering to safety protocols, we help preserve and strengthen the safety culture we aspire to at UNBC.**

## Positive Observations - Promoting a Safety Conscious Culture for our UNBC Community

It takes a special kind of person to pause their own work - especially when he was only supposed to drop off the parts - and patiently guide someone through something as critical as hooking up and activating a fire hydrant.

That act isn't just about sharing technical know-how — it's about demonstrating leadership, care, and commitment to safety.

His willingness to invest time in teaching ensures others feel confident and prepared, and that speaks volumes about his professionalism and generosity.



If you see any positive safety initiatives, please photograph them, and send the pictures to [safety@unbc.ca](mailto:safety@unbc.ca)

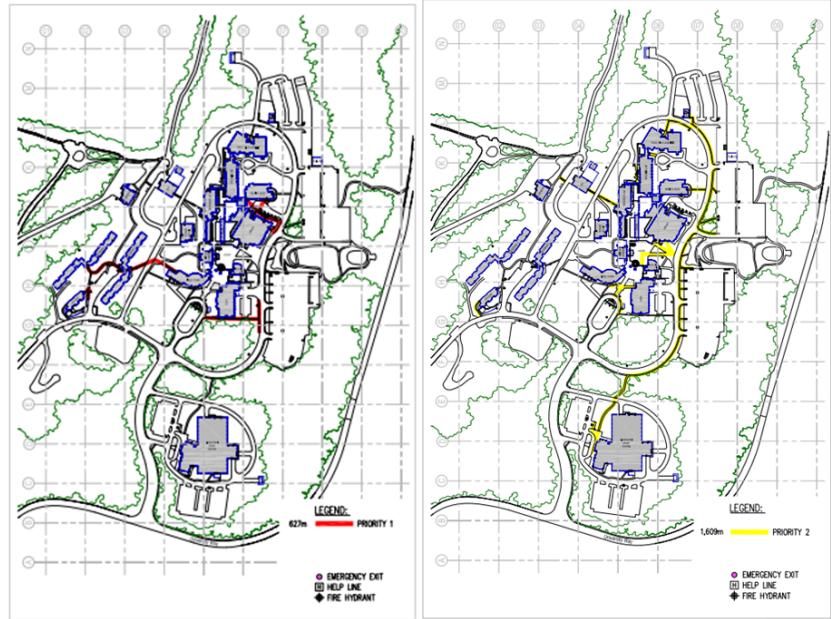
During the winter months Facilities staff clear and sand 5.8 km of sidewalks, 25 accessible entries, 21 fire hydrants and 113 Emergency Exits. Snow clearing work starts with priority routes.

<https://www.unbc.ca/facilities/snow-and-ice-removal>

Priority 1 and Priority 2 routes may be repeated multiple times, weather dependent, before Priority 3 & 4 routes are started.

### PLEASE WALK SAFELY ON SNOW OR ICE

- Take short steps or shuffle for stability.
- Walk flat-footed with your center of gravity directly over your feet as much as possible.
- Keep your hands free and out of your pockets.
- Use designated walkways as much as possible.
- Be prepared to fall. If falling, attempt to roll your body into the fall.



App Store



Google Play



## Working together for safety

*We would like to thank everyone for participating in our growing Safety Community at UNBC!*