

# The power of **Section 21 committees** explained

## **Two groups in IHSA's Labour-Management Network directly influence provincial acts and regulations.**

Some committees that work for health and safety improvements have a direct line to those who set the law and standards.

Section 21 of Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) allows the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development to create committees that provide them with sector-specific health and safety advice and reports. According to Section 22.3(1.1) of the OHSA, the Chief Prevention Officer also seeks advice from these committees and receives any information they provide to the Minister.

To further promote health and safety, many of these committees produce materials that help those in their sector comply with legislation, understand their legislative responsibilities, and share information about emerging issues.

There are two Section 21 committees in the industries that IHSA serves:

- The Provincial Labour-Management Health and Safety Committee - Construction (PLMHSC)
- The Provincial Labour-Management Safety Committee - Electrical and Utilities (PLMSC-EU).

Their bipartite memberships—meaning they're equally made up of labour and management representatives—meet monthly to provide the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development (MLITSD) and CPO with input on industry-wide safety priorities.

Both committees set strategic direction for IHSA's wider Labour-Management Network, while focusing their own efforts on high-impact activities, such as advocating for revisions to training standards (e.g., entry-level awareness, traffic control, rigging, supervisor, and powerline work) and laying the groundwork for regulatory improvements. They engage directly with the MLITSD on technical reviews and proposed amendments to the OHSA and the *Regulation for Construction Projects* (O. Reg. 213/91).

The Construction Legislative Review Committee, a subcommittee of the PLMHSC, often carries out work related to the *Regulation for Construction Projects* by reviewing and refining submissions for regulatory change before they go to the MLITSD. This process makes sure that proposals are technically sound and based on real workplace experience.

Importantly, the Section 21 committees also serve as hubs for cooperation among industry, government, and system partners. They maintain ongoing relationships with the MLITSD, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), colleges, unions, and trades councils.

Because these committees are established and recognized by provincial legislation, their work and insights carry significant weight—giving them a powerful voice to work for systemic health and safety improvements in the construction and electrical utilities sectors.

## **Advocating for legislative change**

Since 2024, the Labour-Management Network has consulted on and promoted awareness of many important health and safety developments, such as:

- The first annual report of the Construction Death Review Committee
- *Regulation for Construction Projects* (O. Reg. 213/91) amendments on crane safety and menstrual product availability on jobsites
- Proposed changes to the *Coroners Act* (R.S.O. 1990, c. C.37) and Ontario's *Building Code* (O. Reg. 332/12)
- Updates to the *Electrical Utility Safety Rules* and *Utility Work Protection Code*
- *Working for Workers Five Act* and *Working for Workers Six Act* ■



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