

**APPROVED MINUTES
NYSDEC JOINT STATEWIDE HEALTH & SAFETY
COMMITTEE MEETING
(PEF, CSEA, C-82 and DEC MANAGEMENT)
May 29, 2003**

Attendees

Jim Kersten	(Co-Chair) PEF/EnCon - Buffalo
Jean Edouard	DEC Director of Health & Safety - Albany
Everett Chamberlain	DEC Chief, Transportation Services Bureau - Albany
Mark Cadrette	Health & Safety Office - Albany
Larry Enoch	Health & Safety Office - Albany
Holly Clark	PEF - Albany
Wayne Bayer	PEF - Albany
Jack Marsch	PEF - Region 6
Jonathan Rosen	PEF Headquarters - Albany
Laverne French	CSEA - Region 5
Matthew Kozak	CSEA Headquarters - Albany
Peter Brinkerhoff	Council 82 - Region 4
Karen Glesmann	Council 82 - Region 4
Les Wilson	DEC Division of Law Enforcement - Albany
Marie Furlong	DEC Office of Employee Relations - Albany [Minutes]

Minutes

Approved minutes of the last meeting were distributed via GroupWise on 5/27/03.

OLD BUSINESS

Fleet Management/Regional Fleet Managers

Neighborhood Electric Vehicles:

Sixty-six (66) Neighborhood Electric Vehicles have been received by the Department. These have been loaned to the Department for one year as part of an electric vehicle Evaluation Program being sponsored by General Motors. They will be used at many of our campgrounds and other operational locations around the State this summer.

Vehicle Procurement:

The projected SFY vehicle procurement of 201 vehicles has been partially put on hold due to recent budget concerns. To date, 50 new vehicles have been ordered. These vehicles are being purchased outright with capital funds and delivery is expected this summer/fall. However, approval is still pending from DOB to proceed with the lease/purchase of the remaining 151 vehicles for the Department. This delay has resulted in several of the vehicle build-out-dates being missed. Once we have the approval to move forward, the mix of vehicle types to be purchased will be reviewed in light of what is still available. Several purchases may need to be delayed until new State Contracts are available in October/November.

MMS Implementation:

Implementation of the Maintenance Management automated tracking system (MMS) continues to move forward. The first segment to be implemented is the Vehicle Maintenance Management module. Training will be provided to the users of this module during the first week in June and put in use at our Vehicle Maintenance Centers. This will increase our ability to track maintenance repairs and associated costs. The vehicle mileage reporting component of this system will be implemented in the near future.

Mechanic Losses/Retirement Incentive:

As a result of the retirement incentive, four mechanics retired. To date, three vacant mechanic positions have been filled and one seasonal maintenance assistant mechanic position has been funded. PEF inquired whether Fleet personnel would be affected by the budget.

Fleet Manager:

PEF continues to recommend the Fleet Manager concept and the pursuit of Fleet Pools to effect a more efficient use of our State vehicles.

News & Views

PEF requested a status report on the submission of an article on AEDs.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

All divisions have issued their SOPs. Fish, Wildlife & Marine Resources is updating their SOP to include botulism. The Division of Water is in the process of assigning J. Dezolt to rejuvenate the initiative for training and the update of their SOPs. J. Edouard to invite J. Cooper and J. Dezolt to attend the next meeting for the purpose of providing the Committee with an update.

Supervisors' Health & Safety Training

J. Edouard reported that the Contracts Unit has approved our Supervisors' Health & Safety Training package. We are awaiting approval by J Tuffey and submission to The State Reporter. J. Rosen reminded Management that they agreed to share the package with PEF before it is publicized. PEF requests a copy of the proposal and contract. PEF feels the training should be interactive and tailored to the needs of the supervisors. J. Edouard reported the supervisors had been surveyed for input on what type of training is needed. The training will be funded jointly by the divisions involved. The cost of the training will be \$150 per individual for 900 supervisors to be spread over three fiscal years (increments of 300 employees per year). J. Edouard to discuss with J. Lattanzio sharing the training package with PEF.

Health & Safety Website

PEF again requested that Employee Relations change the placement of the Office of Employee Relations/Health & Safety website on the DEC intranet site. PEF would like it to be in a more 'user friendly' location and not located under "Information for Employees." Health & Safety staff explained that site placement is under the direction of the Public Affairs Office. J. Edouard to discuss with J. Lattanzio.

Department Health & Safety Budget Initiative/Staffing

PEF suggested the sub-committee (L. Enoch, H. Clark, J. Rosen, J. Kersten, V. French, P. Brinkerhoff, K. Glesmann and M. Kozak) meet. Through J. Edouard, J. Kersten is asking for approval of time to meet the afternoon before the next Statewide meeting to discuss this issue and development of a survey on workplace violence. J. Edouard/J. Lattanzio to follow up with J. Kersten.

World Trade Center (WTC) Medical Monitoring Task Force

The program is officially over. At DEC we have accommodated late registrants through May 1, 2003. PEF requests the statistics on how many employees were followed up for respiratory and psychological issues. J. Edouard has requested that the DOH physician give us that information. J. Edouard will continue to follow up. **Update: DOH has extended the program through January 2004. As of July 16, 2003, 20 additional DEC employees have been enrolled.**

Evacuation Procedures/Emergency Preparedness Plan

All DEC facilities in the regions with more than 10 employees have a standard emergency response plan in place. Per the Department of State (DOS) code, J. Edouard will instruct the Regional Directors to conduct at least three (3) fire drills per year and will request they forward input on any problems experienced.

DOS is currently conducting "Train the Trainer," and Tenant Safety Officer training for Central Office, Regions 1-5 has been scheduled for June 5 through June 23, 2003. Regions 6, 7, 8 and 9 have yet to be scheduled. J. Edouard is scheduled to meet with the trainer, Paul Martin, to give him specific instructions for each facility.

In response to an inquiry from PEF, J. Edouard to send a memo to all regional health & safety committees to ensure that all TSO positions vacated through retirements have been filled.

Automated External Defibrillators (AED)

J. Edouard reported that, per GOER, this issue has not yet been addressed at contract negotiations. Therefore, all purchases of AEDs remain on hold. J. Rosen (PEF) contended Management is incorrect and reported that other agencies are currently purchasing AEDs. J. Kersten suggested that each Committee union representative contact their contract representative to further this issue.

Right to Know Training

No update at this time.

Safety Incentive Differential (SID)

J. Rosen reported that SID is an issue in contract negotiations at this time. The DEC sub-committee formed to draft new suggested language has not yet met. J. Edouard will follow up on this. As a health and safety concern, Management reminded the Committee that those who meet the criteria are being provided with the SID.

Regional H&S Committees' Annual Recommendation for Award - Propose Regional Committee

PEF recommended Regions 5 and 6; Management suggested the Operations Division. The Committee agreed to give awards to both Region 6 and Operations.

DEC H&S Joint Training & Conference/Statewide Proposal for Pro-Active H&S Refresher of All Regional Committees and Their Activities

No update to provide. CSEA (M. Kozak) reported that CSEA may have (grant) funds and staff for this project. PEF suggested meeting with CSEA and C-82 to explore the possibility of their funding the training. PEF suggested a ½ day or one day training program. The unions to meet prior to the next Committee meeting and report back.

Local Committee Formation

Region 7 expressed an interest in rejuvenating their local committee. PEF requests a report from J. Lattanzio/J. Edouard on Region 2 committee activity. J. Edouard mentioned that J. Lattanzio had spoken to the Regional Director on this issue.

VIN Etching Program

The program has concluded and it was mutually agreed to drop this issue from the agenda.

Class B Biosolids/Botulism

These topics have been added to the Fish, Wildlife & Marine Resources and the Division of Water SOPs.

Respiratory Protection Committee

The DER committee on this issue is no longer meeting and has no future plans to meet. The Department respiratory protection policy is currently being updated to incorporate requirements of the emergency response plan.

Incident Command (IC): Weapons Mass Destruction

PEF requested information/explanation on the threat levels at our regional offices. J. Edouard was not aware of any Department documents detailing the threat levels we have in place.

How is the Department addressing the Chemical Security Act of 2003? J. Edouard was unaware of this legislation but will look into it. J. Rosen to provide J. Edouard with a copy.

PEF requested that the Interagency Joint Operations Group (IJOG) be placed on the next agenda and that the Health & Safety staff give a presentation on their involvement in that program at the next meeting. The unions expressed their concern over not having been consulted on IJOG.

PEF is still attempting to have access to the Department Emergency Preparedness & Response Plan. Their FOIL request has been denied, but the issue will be pursued by PEF's legal department.

Body Armor (C-82)

L. Wilson (OPP) reported that body armor is now on order, and the vendor is currently taking measurements. The light weight body armor will be in manufacture next month. The vests will be for officers through captains. The vests will be paid for up front and then the Department will apply to the Federal Government for reimbursement. The Division of Criminal Justice Services will work with us on the federal application. Our percentage of reimbursement on the purchase price (\$165,000/over \$600/per) is not certain. These vests will be for ECOs only (not Rangers). In response to inquiry from K. Glesmann (C-82) on why the Rangers were not included, L. Wilson explained that funding sources are different for law enforcement and rangers. PEF to provide K. Glesmann with information on how to get reimbursement from the Federal Government for vests.

Smallpox Vaccinations

Mutually agreed to drop this issue from the agenda.

Workplace Violence/Security (J. Rosen)

J. Kersten reported that the unions were denied the ability to meet on the day before this Committee meeting. PEF proposes the sub-committee meet before the next meeting. PEF would like to conduct a survey of DEC employees to ascertain the scope of this problem at DEC. The unions will prepare a draft survey and discuss it at the next meeting. If Management chooses not to proceed, the unions will proceed on their own (J. Rosen). OSHA guidelines call for an assessment of needs and the develop of interventions to address the needs. J. Edouard told the committee he is not in the position to give them an answer on whether Management will participate in the sub-committee. Also, they would like to convene the subcommittee before the next meeting. CSEA requested an answer to this request within 2 weeks.

NEW BUSINESS

HazMat Team Training

P. Brinkerhoff (C-82) told the Committee he feels C-82 staff are not being adequately trained on the equipment issued to them. Employees are given instruction booklets and left to their own devices. After some discussion, it was concluded that P. Brinkerhoff will identify which equipment (and duties involved) is presenting the problem for the officers and so advise L. Wilson. Hazmat training program involves 40 hours of training, dependent upon the equipment issued. Currently Lt. Shovlin is developing a training protocol which will include issues such as confined space investigations, exposing drug laboratories, etc.

Cold Water Immersion/Survival Suits (Mustang Suits)

L. Wilson reported that these suits are on Law Enforcement's procurement agenda for the MORE and Marine Teams and for everyone on the larger boats. Funding for the year has not been revealed yet. Purchase price for full suits will run about \$400. P. Brinkerhoff recommended that these suits should be considered a priority for the small boats also. He felt that even the Sterns suits which are available on some of the boats would be helpful. V. French recommended that the mustang suits be purchased in orange.

SARS, Hepatitis, Lyme Disease

As an FYI to the Committee, J. Kersten reported that SARS in sewage has a life expectancy of 4-5 days, and asked if the Health & Safety staff have looked into this from a Class B biosolids perspective. PEF feels the Division of Water (DOW) should take a proactive approach to protect its employees. L. Enoch stated that, if the CDC issues a guideline on this, the Department can take action on it; otherwise not much information is currently available. All parties will continue to research and share any information which could impact upon the agency.

There is a hold on Lyme Disease immunizations. J. Edouard reported that J. Lattanzio plans to re-issue last year's directive on Lyme Disease. Council 82 suggested that the programs have leniency towards reimbursing employees on the purchase of DEET insect repellents for protection. PEF believes that the programs should already provide insect repellents, and that the affected employee simply has to ask for the repellents when working on field assignments.

Crown Victorias/Police Packages for SUV Patrol Vehicles

These two issues were returned to the agenda by P. Brinkerhoff (C-82). Concern was expressed over the Crown Victorias gas tank issue and the cars being turned over to other divisions. The Department currently has 116 Crown Victorias (CV) in our fleet. Of these, 82 are in Law Enforcement service while the remainder have been realigned to support various Programs around the State. Due to concern over fuel tank safety in high speed rear-end collisions, Ford implemented a retrofit program to increase the protection of the fuel tank for all police interceptor CVs. All of our CVs that are in Law Enforcement have been retrofitted as well as 28 of the remaining 34. Two of the not completed vehicles are awaiting engine replacements and the other four are expected to be completed within a few weeks. All of the retrofits have been accomplished by local Ford dealerships within the various Regions. After the retrofit was completed, the work was inspected by our Vehicle maintenance Centers. No discrepancies were identified.

Regarding the reassignment of vehicles, E. Chamberlain reported that the DLE vehicles are rotated on a three year basis. Dependent on their condition, they are placed into other program areas. Currently we have 116 in the fleet: 82 are in law enforcement; the remainder (34) have been realigned to Operations support.

P. Brinkerhoff believes Law Enforcement and Ranger emergency vehicles should be equipped with a blue strobe light to identify it as an emergency vehicle. L. Wilson reported that red is the NYS standard emergency color.

P. Brinkerhoff also thought that the SUV patrol vehicles should be equipped with police packages. E. Chamberlain reported that the SUVs, which are purchased on State contract, are not pursuit vehicles (the Crown Victorias are), and they come with a special lighting package. He said the Department hopes to purchase 42 new Explorers for Law Enforcement out of this year's budget. P. Brinkerhoff also mentioned that he feels there should be more user training on the capabilities of the SUV. L. Wilson will suggest to Sgt. Rawson that he include some instruction on the proper use of an SUV when he does new vehicle training.

Respirator Protection/Biological and Chemical Emergency Response - C-82 would like this issue added to the next meeting agenda.

NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Statewide Health & Safety Committee will be held on **September 26, 2003 at 9:30 a.m.** in Room 1022 at 625 Broadway, Albany, New York.