CALGARY SAFETY CONSULTANTS

JHSC Recommendation Letter Template

How to use this form

Use this form for each formal written recommendation from your joint health and safety committee to the employer. It goes with our free guide, **How to Write JHSC Minutes and Recommendations**. Pages 2 and 3 are the recommendation, page 4 is for the employer's written response, page 5 is the committee's follow-up and escalation record, page 6 sets out the rules by jurisdiction with a worked example, and page 7 is a one-page quick guide.

When to write a formal recommendation

- The fix needs a decision above the committee, costs money or changes a policy or procedure.
- The concern was raised informally and hasn't been fixed.
- The committee wants the employer's answer on the record, with the legal response deadline running.
- Small fixes the manager at the table can approve on the spot don't need this form. Record them as actions in the minutes.

Steps

- **1.** Agree on the hazard at the meeting and give it a minutes item number.
- **2.** Gather the evidence: inspection findings, incident reports, measurements, photos, worker concerns and the rule that applies.
- **3.** Work down the hierarchy of controls and choose the control the committee recommends, plus interim controls.
- **4.** Complete pages 2 and 3, sign them (both co-chairs) and send them to the person who can approve the fix. Keep a copy.
- **5.** Log the recommendation and its response due date in your action item log, and check it at every meeting until it's verified and closed.

Definitions

Term	What it means
Recommendation	Formal written advice from the committee to the employer about a hazard or the health and safety program.
Request for response	A written request for the employer's answer. In British Columbia, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, the employer's deadline runs from a recommendation that includes one.
Hierarchy of controls	Controls ranked from most to least effective: elimination, substitution, engineering controls, administrative controls, then personal protective equipment (PPE).
Interim control	A temporary measure that reduces the risk until the permanent fix is in place.
Consensus	Worker and employer members agree to support the recommendation. In Ontario, if the committee tries in good faith and can't agree, either co-chair can send written recommendations.
Verified closure	The committee has checked that the control is in place and working, and recorded it in the minutes.

Response deadlines at a glance

- **21 days:** British Columbia, Ontario and Nova Scotia (in BC and Nova Scotia, from a written recommendation that includes a request for a response).
- **30 days:** Manitoba, Prince Edward Island (from the request), Newfoundland and Labrador, and federally regulated workplaces.
- **As soon as reasonably possible:** Northwest Territories and Nunavut (the WSCC code suggests 21 calendar days).
- **Other approaches:** Saskatchewan and Quebec use different processes; Alberta, New Brunswick and Yukon set no fixed period. See page 6.

> **Tip.** Even where no deadline is set, ask for a written response by a specific date and record it in your terms of reference, so every recommendation gets an answer.

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Recommendation no. | **Date sent** | **Minutes item no.** | **Meeting date discussed**

To (name and title of decision maker) | **Workplace, department or site**

Worker co-chair | **Employer co-chair**

1. The problem

State the hazard, where it is, who is exposed and what could happen, in one or two sentences. One hazard per recommendation.

Hazard and what could happen

Location, equipment or task | **Who is exposed (titles, shifts, number)**

2. The evidence

Evidence attached or referenced

- ☐ Inspection finding
- ☐ Measurement or test result
- ☐ Worker concerns
- ☐ Manufacturer information
- ☐ Incident or near miss report
- ☐ Photos or video
- ☐ Legal requirement or standard
- ☐ Other

Evidence details: dates, numbers, report references and the rule or standard that applies

Attachments (list)

Committee's view of the risk

- ☐ Low
- ☐ Medium
- ☐ High
- ☐ Serious: interim controls needed now

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3. The recommended control

Work down the list. Tick each level the committee considered and the one or ones it recommends, and explain why higher levels weren't practicable.

Level of control	Considered	Recommended	Details
Elimination: remove the hazard	☐	☐	
Substitution: replace with something less hazardous	☐	☐	
Engineering: guards, ventilation, enclosures, interlocks	☐	☐	
Administrative: procedures, training, signs, scheduling	☐	☐	
PPE: personal protective equipment	☐	☐	

Interim controls until the permanent fix is in place

4. The timeline

Interim controls by (date)

Permanent control by (date)

Suggested owner (title)

How the committee reached this recommendation

☐ Consensus of the committee

☐ Co-chair recommendation without consensus (where the law allows, such as Ontario s. 9(19.1))

If there was no consensus: summary of each position and how the committee tried to agree

Request for a written response

☐ The committee requests a written response to this recommendation by the date below, as required or allowed by the law that applies to this workplace.

Response requested by (date)

Law and section that applies

Worker co-chair (name)

Signature

Date

Employer co-chair (name)

Signature

Date

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The employer completes this page and returns it to both co-chairs. Respond to each part of the recommendation, give reasons for anything not accepted, and give a timetable for anything accepted.

Recommendation no.	Date received	Date of response	Response due (per law)

Employer's decision

- ☐ Accepted in full
- ☐ Accepted in part
- ☐ Alternative control proposed
- ☐ Not accepted
- ☐ Delay explained: full response coming by the date below

If delayed: reason, and date the full response will be provided

Timetable for accepted actions

Action	Responsible (title)	Target date

Reasons for any part not accepted, and any alternative control proposed

Interim controls now in place

Responded by (name and title)	Signature	Date

Committee review of the response

- ☐ Response received on time
- ☐ Response includes reasons or a timetable
- ☐ Committee satisfied
- ☐ Committee not satisfied

Reviewed at meeting (date and minutes item)

Committee comment

Implementation tracking

Date	Update	Status

Verification and closure

Verified by (title)

Date verified

How verified (inspection, test, observation)

- ☐ Control in place and working: closed
- ☐ Not effective: back to the committee

Closure recorded in minutes of (date and item no.)

Escalation record (use only if needed)

Step	Done	Date	Notes, names, file numbers
Written reminder from both co-chairs to the decision maker	☐		
Meeting with the manager who can approve the fix	☐		
Raised with senior management, with copies and dates	☐		
Contacted the OHS regulator (where the law provides a route or the hazard is serious)	☐		
Regulator outcome recorded in the minutes	☐		

If a hazard puts a worker in immediate danger, don't wait for this process: stop the work and use your work refusal process.

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Employer response deadlines and escalation routes

Jurisdiction	Written response	What the response must include	Route if unresolved
Alberta	No fixed period; concerns resolved in a timely manner (Act s. 3(1)(f))	Not set; agree it in your terms of reference	No route set out; contact the OHS regulator about an uncontrolled hazard
British Columbia	21 days after a written recommendation with a request (WCA s. 39)	Acceptance, or reasons; written explanation of any delay	Co-chair may report a rejection (s. 39(3)) or an unreasonable delay (s. 39(5)); WorkSafeBC may order a deadline for a delay
Saskatchewan	After written notice of an unsafe condition (Regs s. 3-17(2))	Actions taken or planned, or reasons for not acting	Employer gives written reasons if it doesn't resolve the concern; the employer, committee or any member may refer it to an occupational health officer (SEA s. 3-29)
Manitoba	30 days (Act s. 41.1(2))	Interim controls and reasons for disagreeing (s. 41.1(3))	Any party may contact WSH for referral to an officer
Ontario	21 days (s. 9(20))	Timetable if accepted, reasons if not (s. 9(21))	No route set out; contact the OHS regulator about an uncontrolled hazard
Quebec	Written reply on points of disagreement (Act s. 79)	Points of disagreement explained	Either side may submit to the CNESST
Federal	30 days (CLC s. 125(1)(z.10))	What action, if any, will be taken and when	No route set out; contact the OHS regulator about an uncontrolled hazard
Nova Scotia	21 days after a written request (s. 34(1))	Acceptance, reasons, or explanation of delay	Must report unreasonable delay to an officer (s. 34(2))
New Brunswick	No fixed period	Not set	Committee must call an officer if it can't agree (s. 14(13))
Prince Edward Island	30 days after the request (s. 27(1))	Acceptance, reasons, or explanation of delay (s. 27(2))	Must report an unacceptable explanation to an officer (s. 27(3))
Newfoundland and Labrador	30 days (Act s. 5(f.1))	Accepted, or rejected with a reason; updates until done (s. 5(f.2))	No route set out; contact the OHS regulator about an uncontrolled hazard
NWT and Nunavut	As soon as reasonably possible (Regs s. 52); code suggests 21 days	A response to the recommendation	Co-chairs may report to the WSCC (code of practice)
Yukon	No fixed period stated by the regulator	Not stated	No route set out; contact the OHS regulator about an uncontrolled hazard

Worked example

Problem. Noise in the grinding room. Both grinding stations, day and night shift operators exposed (6 workers). Risk of permanent hearing loss.
Evidence. Noise readings on September 18 above the exposure limit at both stations; three workers reported ringing ears (minutes item 2026-09-04).
Recommended control. Elimination and substitution not practicable. Engineering: enclose both grinders with acoustic panels. Administrative: add the room to the hearing conservation program. Interim PPE: hearing protection required in the room immediately.
Timeline. Interim controls now; enclosures by January 31.
Request. The committee requests a written response by the date the law requires.

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The four parts of a strong recommendation

Part	What to write	Tip
1. Problem	The hazard, where it is, who is exposed and what could happen.	One or two sentences. One hazard per recommendation.
2. Evidence	Inspection findings, incident reports, measurements, photos, worker concerns, the rule that applies.	Dates and numbers make a recommendation hard to dismiss.
3. Control	The specific fix, chosen by working down the hierarchy of controls, plus interim controls.	Explain why higher-level controls weren't practicable.
4. Timeline	A reasonable completion date, a sooner date for interim controls, and a request for a written response.	The request matters: in BC, NS and PEI it starts the employer's clock.

Quality check before you send it

- ☐ It deals with one hazard, and anyone could find the location from the description.
- ☐ The evidence includes dates, numbers or report references.
- ☐ Higher-level controls were considered before training, procedures and PPE.
- ☐ Interim controls are included if the permanent fix will take time.
- ☐ There is a proposed completion date and a request for a written response.
- ☐ It's numbered, dated, signed by both co-chairs and addressed to someone who can say yes.
- ☐ No worker names, medical details or personal information.
- ☐ It's logged in the action item log with the response due date.

Common mistakes

- Recommendations that stay verbal, so no written response is ever due.
- Vague wording such as "look into the noise" that can't be accepted, rejected or tracked.
- Several hazards in one letter, so one hold-up stalls them all.
- Jumping straight to training and PPE without considering better controls.
- Closing the item when the employer says yes, instead of when the fix is verified.

Hierarchy of controls: quick reference

Level	Example for a noise hazard
Elimination	Stop the noisy process or buy in the part instead.
Substitution	Use quieter equipment or a quieter method.
Engineering	Enclose or isolate the source, add damping or barriers.
Administrative	Limit time in the area, schedule noisy work when fewer people are present, hearing conservation program.
PPE	Hearing protection, fitted and worn correctly. Use with higher-level controls, not instead of them.

Need help? Calgary Safety Consultants offers joint health and safety committee and representative training and helps employers build recommendation and response processes. Read the full guide at calgarysafetyconsultants.ca/safety-guides/committees/jhsc-minutes/ or call 1-888-231-0358.

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