SUBJECT: Health and Safety Specialist for Culture and Recreation Division (ECS07056) (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council approve the addition of one FTE for a Health and Safety Specialist in the Community Services Department to implement the recommendations of the Municipal Health and Safety Association Audit of Culture and Recreation worksites and provide ongoing supports to ensure compliance with Ministry of Labour health and safety requirements and standards.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A Municipal Health and Safety Association Audit was conducted at Culture and Recreation worksites in 2006 at the request of the Department Management Team. The Culture and Recreation Division received a score of 42.9% on overall management supports to health and safety, a score which is significantly less than the minimum level of 75% for compliance with Ministry of Labour health and safety requirements. Through the reallocation of operational dollars, the Department is able to internally fund a Health and Safety Specialist position to address the recommendations from the Health and Safety Audit and move the organization from a non-compliant status to one that is compliant and duly diligent. Report ECS07056 seeks Council’s approval to increase the
Community Services Department’s complement by one FTE Health and Safety Specialist, at no impact to the municipal levy.

**BACKGROUND:**

The Community Services Department Management Team commissioned a Municipal Health and Safety Association (MHSA) Audit of Culture and Recreation worksites in 2006 to guide the development of a health and safety program for this area of the department. The MHSA Audit incorporates requirements of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, (including Industrial and Construction Regulations), the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board Workwell Assessment. The overall MHSA Audit score of 42.9% on management supports to the Health and Safety Program was significantly less than the minimum level of 75% for compliance with Ministry of Labour health and safety requirements and standards.

The MHSA presentation to the Department Management Team highlighted the following:

- Senior management needs to promote health and safety more;
- Managers and supervisors need to be more accountable for health and safety;
- More time and resources need to be dedicated to health and safety training;
- Planned workplace inspections must be completed and documented;
- Hazard recognition policies and procedures need to be developed; and,
- Legislative documents must be posted in a conspicuous place.

The MHSA cited 50 specific gaps related to Ministry of Labour requirements ranging from the development of a hazard reporting system to policies and procedures on Personal Protective Equipment along with training requirements. In addition, 45 specific areas relating to gaps with Workplace Safety Insurance Act requirements were cited. Forty-two opportunities for improvement regarding Municipal Health and Safety best practices were identified and ranged from identifying minimum health and safety requirements for contractors to having a supervisor’s operational manual available. Multiple physical site improvements were cited.

The assessors documented and communicated the following key areas that need to be addressed:

1. **Policy Review and Approval** – Management must ensure that policies and procedures are developed and implemented so that managers, supervisors and employees are aware of their existence and that they are clearly understood.
2. **Senior Management Team Commitment** – The Senior Management Team must endorse the resources and time required to complete the compliance issues identified in the 18 modules of the assessment.
3. **Standards and Procedures** – Standards and procedures must be developed, kept current and properly maintained e.g. Fall Protection, Confined Space Entry, Lockout/Tagout, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), Facility Specific Hazards, Personal Protective Equipment.
4. Compliance Issues – Specific timeframes must be mapped to dedicate resources and time to ensure that compliance issues are completed as soon as reasonably possible. Timeframes will indicate to Ministry of Labour inspectors that the Department is exercising due diligence during policy and procedure development.

5. Hazard Recognition and Control – In order to evaluate risk management in the workplace, managers, supervisors and those in authority must have Hazard Recognition training in order to identify frequent tasks that have the probability of incurring an accident or serious injury.

6. Health and Safety Inspections – Supervisors and managers must ensure that their areas of responsibility are maintained and regularly inspected to ensure that they are aware of the hazards that exist and that they can control for potential safety concerns. At the time of the audit, very few facility inspections were carried out by anyone other than the Joint Health and Safety Committee.

7. Posted Documents are legislated under the Occupational Health and Safety Act as well as the Workplace Health and Safety Act. Many of the posted documents were either unavailable or out of date. It is recommended that standardized boards be designed and the responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of the boards be assigned.

Since the receipt of this MHSA Audit of Culture and Recreation sites the Department has established five new Multi-site Joint Health and Safety Committees to carry out the functions as described in the Occupational Health and Safety Act. A key effort area for these Committees over the next few years is to oversee, participate in, lead and/or support the implementation of the recommendations of this Audit.

**ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:**

The Department requires the support of a Health and Safety Specialist to address the recommendations from the Municipal Health and Safety Association Audit and move the organization from a non-compliant status to one that is compliant and duly diligent. The Health and Safety Specialist, in consultation with the Joint Health and Safety Committees, will develop an action plan to implement the recommendations from this audit. By committing resources to this position, Management is demonstrating their commitment to the health and safety of their employees and will be better able to meet their legislated responsibilities under occupational health and safety legislation.

In response to the Municipal Health and Safety Association Audit, the Health and Safety Specialist will:

- Undertake extensive policy and procedure development that will be vetted through the Joint Health and Safety Committees;
- Develop and deliver training programs in the critical areas identified such as Hazard Recognition, Personal Protective Equipment, Lock Out/Tag Out, Confined Spaces, WHMIS, and Fall Arrest/Prevention; and,
- Assist with the development of standards and procedures to ensure that all Culture and Recreation worksites are compliant with health and safety legislation.
The Health and Safety Specialist will also provide:

- Consultation to the Culture and Recreation Joint Health and Safety Committees, managers, supervisors and employees;
- Ongoing issues management on health and safety matters such as indoor air quality concerns, confined space assessment, Ministry of Labour visits and orders, hazard assessments and inspections, and critical incident investigations; and,
- Training on new health and safety legislation, controls and interventions as warranted.

**ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:**

The alternative to dedicating one new Health and Safety Specialist to the needs of the Culture and Recreation Division would be to continue to add these responsibilities to the existing Health, Safety and Wellness Specialist in the Department of Community Services. This option has been attempted over the last year and has proven to be unrealistic with the health and safety demands from the other areas of our Department – the two Homes for the Aged, Benefit Eligibility, Employment and Income Support, Housing, Strategic Services and Social Development and Early Childhood Services. The work that needs to be done is too important to be delayed any longer and the breadth and depth of work required is far too much for one individual.

**FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:**

Staff recommends the addition of one FTE Health and Safety Specialist which can be internally funded, at no impact to the municipal levy, through the reallocation of operational budgets within Culture and Recreation.

Not addressing the gaps within the occupational health and safety program for Culture and Recreation leaves the organization in a vulnerable position given Ministry of Labour expectations related to the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Under this legislation, it is expected that the City be compliant with the minimum requirements and take reasonable steps towards the protection of workers.

**POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:**

The recommendation of Report ECS07056 will not contravene any established City policies.

Approval of the staff recommendation will enable the Department to implement the corporate occupational health and safety policy, which states that the City of Hamilton is vitally interested in the Health and Safety of all its workers. Protection of all workers from injury or occupational disease is a major continuing objective. The City of
Hamilton makes every effort to provide a safe, healthy work environment. All managers, supervisors and workers are dedicated to the continuing objective of reducing injury and risk to health. The City of Hamilton, as employer, is ultimately responsible for worker health and safety. The City of Hamilton, headed by City Council, commits that every reasonable precaution is taken for the protection of workers.

**RELEVANT CONSULTATION:**

The Department consulted with Human Resources and the Corporate Management Team prior to the preparation of Report ECS07056.

**CITY STRATEGIC COMMITMENT:**

By evaluating the “Triple Bottom Line”, (community, environment, economic implications) we can make choices that create value across all three bottom lines, moving us closer to our vision for a sustainable community, and Provincial interests.

- **Community Well-Being is enhanced.** ☑ Yes ☐ No
  Supporting health and safety in the workplace contributes to a healthy productive workforce that is better able to deliver services to the community.

- **Environmental Well-Being is enhanced.** ☑ Yes ☐ No
  Health and safety programs typically include interventions and controls that improve indoor air quality and promote active living choices, which decrease transportation modes that negatively impact outdoor air quality.

- **Economic Well-Being is enhanced.** ☑ Yes ☐ No
  Health and safety programs support a healthy productive workforce that is at work contributing to the economic well-being of the organization as opposed to off work with an occupational injury or illness, receiving WSIB or being work accommodated.

- **Does the option you are recommending create value across all three bottom lines?** ☑ Yes ☐ No

- **Do the options you are recommending make Hamilton a City of choice for high performance public servants?** ☑ Yes ☐ No
  Health and safety programming is a fundamental component of the Human Resources Strategy.