SUBJECT: Endorsement of City of Hamilton Health, Safety and Wellness Policy (HUR09001) - (City Wide)

RECOMMENDATION:

That Council endorse the new City of Hamilton Health, Safety and Wellness policy (Appendix A).

Chris Murray,
City Manager

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

A new, updated Health, Safety and Wellness Policy was developed to comply with legal requirements and to help further organizational objectives related to the health, safety and wellness of City of Hamilton employees. Development of a Health, Safety and Wellness Policy is the first activity identified under the City of Hamilton’s Strategic Plan DER 1.3 which states an objective of 15% reduction in WSIB lost time injury rates by 2011 with the long term goal of zero job related injuries. The policy statement communicates Council’s and Senior Management’s commitment to the health, safety and wellbeing of City of Hamilton employees.
BACKGROUND:

Ontario’s *Occupational Health and Safety Act* requires the City of Hamilton, as an employer, to prepare and review, at least annually, an occupational health and safety policy. The Ontario Ministry of Labour, which enforces the Act, deems that the policy is a statement of an employer’s commitment to worker health and safety and should be clear, concise and signed by the highest level of management at the workplace.

The current policy was created in 2002. Since that time, discussions amongst senior leadership in the City resulted in a recommendation to align health, safety, return-to-work and wellness policies and programs more closely within the City. Leadership has also committed to a shared goal of Zero workplace injuries and illnesses. This goal is also reflected in the WSIB’s Community Workplace Health and Safety Charter signed by the Mayor on behalf of Council in 2008. These important developments are not reflected in the current policy. Consequently, a new health, safety and wellness policy statement was created with the assistance of joint health and safety committees and management teams from across the city. The new policy

- reflects the new alignment of health, safety, return-to-work and wellness programs within the City,
- affirms the City’s commitment to Zero workplace injuries and illnesses,
- captures our objective of continuous improvement,
- sets out the roles and accountabilities for all employees, and
- aligns with the City’s strategic objectives and actions for workplace injury, illness and absence reductions.

ANALYSIS/RATIONALE:

The policy will help guide us to reaching our Desired End Results (DER 1.3 and DER 1.7) of a 15% reduction in WSIB lost-time injuries and 10% reduction in employee absenteeism by 2011 while ensuring that we meet legal requirements for preparing and reviewing a health and safety policy. It aligns with the Strategic Plan focus area of a skilled, innovative and respective workplace as well as financial sustainability.

Adoption of this policy embodies the City’s values – respect, leadership, accountability, teamwork, excellence and innovation.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION:

None
FINANCIAL/STAFFING/LEGAL IMPLICATIONS:

It is a legal requirement under Section 25 (2) (j) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act for the City of Hamilton to prepare and review at least annually a written occupational health and safety policy.

POLICIES AFFECTING PROPOSAL:


RELEVANT CONSULTATION:

All joint health and safety committees and Department Management Teams across the City had the opportunity to provide comments and guidance during the development of the Health, Safety and Wellness Policy.

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

The policy affirms the City’s leadership role for health, safety and wellness in our community.

Environmental Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No

By leading to greater health, safety and wellness performance, the policy will also enhance environmental performance by stimulating reductions in chemical use and accidental release of hazardous material along with increased efforts of employees to create healthier workplaces and lifestyles through personal changes like increased recycling, use of public transit, cycling to work, etc..

Economic Well-Being is enhanced. ☑ Yes ☐ No

The policy helps create a supportive workplace through improved employee health, safety and wellness. These improvements will lead to reduced worker’s compensation and other lost-time costs, along with more effective and engaged employees.

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

The City of Hamilton Strategic Plan 2008-2011 includes a focus area entitled “Skilled, Innovative and Respectful Organization”. Completion of a revised Health, Safety & Wellness Policy is the first activity identified under DER 1.3 for Health & Safety in the Strategic Plan.
HEALTH, SAFETY & WELLNESS POLICY

All City of Hamilton employees, partners and agencies hold a shared responsibility to create and maintain a healthy workplace culture by acting in compliance with this policy.

The City of Hamilton believes in creating and maintaining a workplace culture dedicated to achieving the goal of **Zero workplace injuries and illnesses** to help ensure a healthy, safe and prosperous community. Consistent with the City of Hamilton’s Strategic Plan, we are committed to promoting and protecting the physical and mental health of all employees.

With the support and guidance of City Council and Senior Management Team, we will continuously improve our healthy workplace culture by setting ambitious shared targets and goals for improved health, safety, wellness, and return to work programs. We will implement innovative leading practices in health, safety, wellness, and return to work by learning from our own and other organizations’ experiences.

Managers and supervisors across the corporation are accountable for the health, safety and wellness of employees under their supervision. They must ensure that all workplace hazards are identified, controlled and monitored, and must ensure that employees work in compliance with applicable laws, safe work practices and procedures. They will ensure all employees are provided with appropriate support, training, resources, tools and personal protective equipment.

Employees must protect their own and each other’s health, safety and wellness by reporting hazards, participating in training, working in compliance with the law and following safe work practices and procedures established by the City of Hamilton.

The City will support all employees in meeting their responsibilities. Together, we will make every effort to provide the resources necessary to create a safe, healthy and supportive work environment that meets or exceeds all applicable health and safety laws.

**Committed to Zero Workplace Injuries and Illnesses**

*Endorsed by Hamilton City Council and Senior Management Team*

*April 2009*