

New Worker Orientation

Health and Safety Responsibilities in the Workplace

Legal responsibility for identifying and correcting health and safety hazards rests on the shoulders of all workplace parties (employers, contractors, owners, workers, supervisors, self-employers persons and suppliers). The *Saskatchewan Employment Act* and *the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996* require everyone in the workplace to work together to identify and control health and safety hazards.

Employers

Since employers have the most control over the conditions of work and how it is done, they have the greatest degree of responsibility for the health and safety of workers. Employers must:

- Provide a safe and healthy workplace;
- Establish occupational health committees or representatives and consult and cooperate with them in resolving health and safety concerns;
- Ensure workers are not exposed to harassment;
- Comply with the Act and Regulations;
- Provide required safe work procedures;
- Ensure equipment is provided and maintained;
- Ensure workers are trained; and,
- Ensure supervisors are competent.

Supervisors

Supervisors are critical to safe workplaces because they are closest to the actual work being done and can address and resolve worker concerns. Supervisors must:

- Understand and comply with the Act and Regulations;
- Understand their employer's safety program;
- Understand the need for and safe use of personal protective equipment;
- Understand emergency procedures required under the legislation;
- Ensure workers they supervise understand and comply with the Act and Regulations; and
- Support and cooperate with the occupational health committee or representative.

Workers

Workers also have an important role in making the workplace safe. Workers must:

- Take reasonable care to protect their health & safety and the health & safety of other workers;
- Not harass other workers;
- Comply with the Act and Regulations;
- Use the orientation and training provided to them;
- Follow safe work practices; and,
- Use protective equipment provided to them.

Health and Safety Accountability and Compliance

The general definition of accountability includes:

- being bound to give an explanation of your conduct
- being responsible; answerable

This means that you could be required to explain your behavior because of something that you did, or did not do.

The general definition of compliance includes:

- inclined to consent
- obliging

This means that you are in agreement; that you will follow the rules.

In day to day work, accountability and compliance means:

- following the law, policies and safety rules;
- using the skills you have received in training;
- being responsible for your actions and the decisions you make;
- performing your job duties accurately and appropriately and using your knowledge, skills and abilities; and,
- asking for help/assistance, for additional information or training.

Health and Safety Hazard Identification

A hazard is any activity, situation or substance that can cause harm.

Health Hazard Examples

Health hazards cause occupational illnesses.

- Biological substances
- Physical agents (e.g., noise, electric currents, heat, light, vibration, radiation)
- Ergonomic factors (e.g., lifting, awkward postures, repetitive motions, excessive muscular force, computer use)
- Harassment

Safety Hazard Examples

Safety hazards cause physical harm.

- Slipping/tripping (e.g., clutter, mats, cords, wet floors, spills)
- Lifting and other manual handling operations (e.g., weight, distance)
- Violence (e.g., from client, another worker, visitors)
- Working alone (e.g., home care, shift workers)

If you identify a health or safety hazard (or concern), the first step is to report the concern to your supervisor and discuss ways to control the hazard.

Reporting of Incident & Worker Concern

Incident

An incident is an unwanted, unplanned event that results in or could have resulted in a loss (production, property or person).

Near Miss

A near miss is an incident that does not result in an injury.

One of the responsibilities of all workers is to immediately report all incidents to your supervisor.

Incident Prevention

Incidents can be reduced through:

- increased awareness of safety;
- empowerment of workers to participate in their own safety;
- adequate policies and safe work practices in place;
- sufficient orientation, training and supervision of workers;
- ensuring that all workers comply with workplace requirements.

Safety Talk Discussion

Be Accountable: Choose safety - work safe - and go home injury free!