

Ministry of Labour

Worker

Health & Safety at Work



Prevention Starts Here

Worker Health and



Preventing injuries and illnesses at work starts here, with the things you learn in this workbook, but it doesn't end here. **One of your employer's duties under the OHS Act is to give you specific information and instructions about how to stay safe on your job. What you learn from this program will help you start to understand those instructions.** We hope you will use what you learn here every day of your working life.

Step 1: Get On Board

Everyone has a role in safety

A new job is a chance for a fresh start. You're learning new skills and meeting new people.

But every job has hazards, no matter how safe it looks.

The number of people in Ontario who suffer a work-related illness or injury each year would fill the seats of a dozen big hockey arenas.

From the list below, who do you think is more likely to get hurt or sick on the job? Check one of the boxes and explain why.

1. New and young workers

Why? _____

2. Experienced workers

Why? _____

The right answer is #1. **Studies show that new and young workers in Ontario are four times more likely to get hurt during their first month on the job than at any other time.** That's because they often aren't told about or don't understand the hazards of the job. They don't know what to expect from their employer, their supervisor and of themselves. Sometimes they aren't sure what questions to ask. Sometimes they don't even know who to ask.

That's where the law comes in.

How the Occupational Health and Safety Act works

The OHS Act is a set of laws that spells out the **duties of employers, supervisors and the rights and duties of workers.** There are also different Regulations that are attached to the OHS Act. They contain more detailed laws about how to make the workplace safe in specific situations. For example, several Regulations explain what is needed to work safely with chemicals and other hazardous materials. This includes training, warning labels on products and information sheets. There are also Regulations for different types of workplaces, such as construction projects, health care facilities, industrial establishments and mines.

The whole point of the OHS Act and Regulations is to keep workers from getting hurt or sick on the job. There are inspectors from the Ministry of Labour who make sure the laws are followed and may issue orders or lay charges if they aren't. If a person is convicted of breaking the law, there

2. The supervisor

Why? _____

3. The worker

Why? _____

The right answer is #1 – **the employer**. The

Duties of the worker

Now here are some of the things the OHSA says every worker has to do as part of their job:

1. Follow the law and the workplace health and safety policies and procedures.
2. Always wear or use the protective equipment that the employer requires.
3. Work and act in a way that won't hurt them or any other worker.
4. Report any hazard they find in the workplace to their supervisor.

Step 2: Get in the Know

You need to know about hazards

Some people say that what you don't know can't hurt you. That's not true at work. On some jobs, what you don't know can kill you. **A hazard is anything in the workplace that could hurt you or the people you work with.**

All of us have heard about a worker or group of workers who were killed on the job. We have heard of workers falling from heights, getting

Think about the people you know. Do you know someone who has been hurt or killed at work? What was the hazard at the root of it? How did it affect you? How did it affect their family? Make some notes about your story in the space below.

2. **Slipping, tripping or falling.** Think of something as simple as spilled coffee on the floor, a cluttered work area, or a raised platform with no guardrails.
3. **Working near motorized vehicles.** Think of being hit by a dump truck that is backing up on a construction site... or someone getting hit by a forklift truck in a warehouse or on a loading dock.
4. **Using or working near machinery.** Over the years, many workers have been killed or seriously injured by the equipment they operated.
5. **Workplace violence.** It can happen in many workplaces such as to a gas station attendant working alone at night, or to a health care worker or a home care worker in those settings.

Some common workplace hazards

Here are some of the most common hazards in Ontario workplaces:

1. **Repeating the same movements over and over, especially if you are in an awkward position or you use a lot of force.**

Think of someone who bends down all day, or someone who lifts heavy things over and over again, especially above the shoulders or below the knees.

Can you think of any other common workplace hazards – especially ones in your own job? Here are a couple of possible examples. Try to list a few others.

1. Loud noise
2. No lighting
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

You also need to think about less visible hazards related to your work – things like chemicals, fumes, and toxic dust. Or germs and viruses in labs and healthcare workplaces. Some of these hazards can make you very sick. Sometimes they make you sick right away; other times you don't know that you are sick until months or even years later. That's why it's

If the hazard still exists after trying to control it through elimination, engineering controls and administrative or work practice controls, your employer may require you to use protective equipment and/or protective devices.

Protective equipment and devices

The OSHA says that one of your duties as a worker is always to wear or use the protective equipment that your employer requires.

You may think that a hardhat, safety glasses, steel-toed boots or some other protective clothing or equipment are uncomfortable or slow you down. But if the OSHA or your employer says you have to wear or use these things to do the work, you have to.

Some of the machinery in your workplace may have a guard. The guard protects you from coming in contact with a moving part. If your employer or one of the OHS Regulations says that the guard has to be used, it has to be used. **The OSHA says that you must never remove or disable any protective device that is required.** If the device has to come off for any reason, you should not use the equipment without a replacement device. Taking shortcuts by removing guards is unsafe – and it's against the law.

The OSHA says you have to make sure you don't use any equipment or machine in a way that could hurt you or any other worker. You also can't act or behave in a way that could hurt you or anyone else. That means no playing games, pranks or acting in other ways that could hurt someone.

Other ways to find out about hazards

There are other ways you can find out about hazards in your workplace. Your employer may have some of the workplace health and safety procedures in writing. These procedures are about the work you do and the machines and equipment you use. Your employer has to make sure that you know and understand them when you start work. Your employer is also responsible for making sure the procedures are followed by everyone.

The law says every worker has to have information and training about chemicals or hazardous materials in the workplace.

The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) Regulation says that you need to receive information and instruction on how to use, store and get rid of hazardous materials safely. This information is available on warning labels and information sheets.

If your job involves using equipment, your employer and supervisor must instruct you on how to operate that equipment safely.

One way to get information on the safe use of machinery is from the operator's manual. It tells you about hazards and has instructions on how to use the equipment safely. Your employer should make sure anyone can check the manual if they need information. If there is no manual available for the equipment you are using, you should ask your supervisor for information on how to operate the equipment safely.

Another important way that you can learn about hazards is through training. Sometimes your employer will give you the training at your workplace; sometimes you will be sent somewhere else for training. Your employer also has to tell you how and where to get first aid, and what to do in an emergency.

In a safe and healthy workplace, everyone knows about hazards. **If you see a hazard on the job or a “close call,” report it to your supervisor or employer right away.** That way, someone who knows how to fix it can deal with it so that no one gets hurt. “Prevention Starts Here” when everyone knows about hazards.

Step 2 Quiz

Here is a quick quiz on this part of the program. (The answers are in the back of the workbook, but please don't look at them ahead of time.)

1. The Occupational Health and Safety Act says that you have the right to know about hazards in your workplace.
Yes No
2. If a hazard can make you sick, you will always start to feel sick right away.
Yes No
3. To keep from getting hurt on the job, you need to find out about the hazards while you're working.
Yes No
4. If you have any doubts about the safety of the work you're doing, you should keep those doubts to yourself.
Yes No
5. If you see a hazard while you're working, you should report it to your supervisor or employer right away.
Yes No

Step 3: Get Involved

Working together for safety

Understanding the Occupational Health and Safety Act is all about knowing the health and safety duties of employers, supervisors and the duties and rights of workers, and putting them into action. We all have to get involved.

If an employer knows about a hazard and doesn't try to eliminate or reduce it, or make sure the workers are told about it and how to deal with it,

The right to participate in health and safety

The OHSA gives you the right to participate and get involved in keeping your workplace safe and healthy. There are many ways you can do this.

Can you think of three?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Here are four good ways to get involved in keeping your workplace safe, but there are many more:

1. You can ask questions when you're not sure about something
2. You can volunteer to become a worker health and safety representative or a worker member of the joint health and safety committee.
3. You can help your health and safety representative or joint health and safety committee with health and safety inspections by pointing out possible hazards in your work area.
4. You can take your health and safety training seriously and put what you learn into practice in your job.

Health and safety representatives and joint health and safety committees

The OHSA says that workplaces with 6 to 19 workers need to have a health and safety representative or a joint health and safety committee. In most larger workplaces with 20 or more workers, the OHSA says a joint health and safety committee has to be set up.

Committees have to have at least two people on them; the workers or their union, if any, pick one of them and the employer picks the other. In workplaces where there are 50 or more workers, the committee must have at least four members, and at least half of the members have to represent workers.

The committee plays an important role in helping to keep workplaces safe. For example, a member of the committee who represents workers must regularly inspect the workplace. Information from these inspections is brought back to the committee. The committee then makes recommendations

In smaller workplaces, the health and safety representative has many of the same roles as a committee. They help to improve health and safety at work. They do this by inspecting the workplace often. If they find a problem, they make recommendations to the employer about how to fix it.

What to look for and what to ask

The OSHA says that your employer must post the OSHA and other health and safety information in your workplace, such as an occupational health and safety poster.

Look for the posted names of your health and safety representative or joint health and safety committee members – these are people you can talk to if you need help. And if your workplace has more than 5 workers, your employer has to post the company health and safety policy.

If you can't find any of this information in your workplace, talk to your supervisor about it. Health and safety is an important part of his or her job. You can also talk to the people you work with and benefit from each other's experience.

Be a safety role model

Most workers should be able to look to their supervisors as good health and safety role models. But others may also be looking to you as a role model for good health and safety practices. **How you work, and the way you think and talk about the work, can affect the safety of the people you work with.**

The message you want others to get from you is: "Prevention starts here."

Step 3 Quiz

Here is a quick quiz on this part of the program. (The answers are in the back of the workbook, but please don't look at them ahead of time.)

1. It's important that you know the safe way to do your job. You should share what you know. If you see a hazard, you must report it to your supervisor or employer.
Yes No
2. You should get involved in health and safety by asking questions, and you should put what you learn from training into practice on the job.
Yes No
3. If you can't find any health and safety information posted in your workplace, you should just go back to work and not worry about it.
Yes No
4. Your health and safety representative or joint health and safety committee can help you with any concerns that you might have about working safely.
Yes No
5. It's OK to take safety shortcuts to get the work done faster and on time.
Yes No

Step 4: Get More Help

You are not alone

It's a sad fact that in some workplaces, nobody pays much attention to safety. In those workplaces, it's all about doing the work as quickly as possible. If someone questions the way things are being done, they may get a dirty look but nothing is done to make things safer. People in workplaces like that are often afraid to do anything about it because they don't want to get fired. So they keep quiet.

Maybe you felt that way on a past job. That's why it's important to know that you are not alone. Help is always available from outside the workplace.

If you see something unsafe that could hurt someone, you need to report it to your supervisor or your employer. It's also a good idea to tell your health and safety representative or committee if there is one.

But if the employer or supervisor doesn't fix the problem, you can call the Ministry of Labour.

The Ministry's job is to help prevent workplace injuries and illnesses through enforcing the OHSA. They want to know if there are problems that aren't being fixed.

Ministry of Labour inspectors can't be in all workplaces at all times. But the Ministry wants to hear if there's a problem on the job that isn't fixed anywhere in Ontario. So it has a toll-free number that you can call. Calling that number connects you to the Health and Safety Contact Centre that takes calls 24 hours a day, seven days a week. If you don't want to give your name when you call the Health and Safety Contact Centre, you don't have to. Here is the number:

1-877-202-0008

Remember we mentioned reprisals before?

It's against the law for your employer or your supervisor to fire or punish you for doing what the OHSA expects you to do, or because you asked them to do what the OHSA expects them to do.

It's even against the law for your employer or

put someone else in danger. Talk to your union, other workplace representatives, supervisor or employer if you think your right to refuse work may be limited by the work you do.

More information and resources

Ontario has a health and safety “system” which includes the following partners:

➤ Ministry of Labour

Develops, communicates and enforces occupational health and safety requirements and employment standards. Develops, coordinates and implements strategies to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses and can set standards for health and safety training.

1-877-202-0008

www.labour.gov.on.ca

➤ Workers Health & Safety Centre

An occupational health and safety training centre for workers, representatives and employers.

1-888-869-7950

www.whsc.on.ca

➤ Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers

Six medical clinics located across Ontario that provide occupational health services and information.

1-877-817-0336

www.ohcow.on.ca

Health & Safety Ontario

Four health and safety associations that provide sector specific consulting, training, products and services. www.healthandsafetyontario.ca

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Another place you can go for information is the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. They have information and fact sheets on their website. If you are having trouble finding information, you can ask questions by telephone at 1-800-668-4284 or through their website at www.ccohs.ca.

“Prevention Starts Here,” but it doesn’t end here.

To help you understand how Ontario’s workplace health and safety system works together to help create healthier and safer workplaces, try to match the following list of organizations to their purpose. (The answers are in the back of the workbook, but please don’t look at them ahead of time.)

ORGANIZATION	PURPOSE
A. Ministry of Labour	<input type="checkbox"/> Health and safety training
B. Health and Safety Ontario	<input type="checkbox"/> Enforces the OHSA
C. Workplace Safety and Insurance Board	<input type="checkbox"/> Medical clinics for injured or sick workers
D. Workers Health and Safety Centre	<input type="checkbox"/> Insurance benefits for injured or sick workers
E. Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Occupational health and safety consulting, training, products and services

Step 4 Quiz

Here’s a quiz on the information we’ve covered in Step 4. (The answers are in the back of the workbook, but please don’t look at them ahead of time.)

1. If you report a dangerous situation to your supervisor and your health and safety representative and they can’t find a way to fix it, you can call the Ministry of Labour’s toll-free number for help.
Yes No
2. If you have reason to believe the equipment you are using might hurt you or someone you work with, you have the legal right to refuse the work.
Yes No
3. Some workers, such as nurses, firefighters and police officers, have a limited right to refuse work.
Yes No
4. It’s against the law for your employer or your supervisor to fire or punish you for doing what the OHSA expects you to do, or for asking them to do what the OHSA expects them to do.
Yes No



What's Next

Now that you have completed this general awareness program, you are ready to be given more specific information and instruction by your employer and supervisor as required by the OHSA. You should hear about:

- Specific hazards in your workplace

- The procedure to follow when reporting health and safety concerns, incidents or injuries

- Any protective equipment you are required to wear or use

- Where the company's health and safety policy is posted (in workplaces with more than 5 workers)

- Where the first aid station is and the names of qualified first aid providers

- The company's emergency plan

- Information on hazardous materials in your workplace

- The workplace violence and harassment prevention policy

- Where a copy of the OHSA is posted

- Where the names of your joint health and safety committee members are posted

Ontario's Health & Safety System

ORGANIZATION

- A.** Ministry of Labour
- B.** Health & Safety Ontario
- C.** Workplace Safety and Insurance Board
- D.** Workers Health and Safety Centre
- E.** Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers

PURPOSE

- D.** Health and safety training
- A.** Enforces the OHSA
- E.** Medical clinics for injured or sick workers
- C.** Insurance benefits for injured or sick workers
- B.** Occupational health and safety consulting, training, products and services

Call the Ministry of Labour at 1-877-202-0008

Report critical injuries, fatalities, work refusals anytime.

Workplace health and safety information,
weekdays 8:30am – 5:00pm.

Emergency? Always call 911 immediately.

Find out more:

www.ontario.ca/healthandsafetyatwork

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