

SAFETY IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

A typical month in Nova Scotia workplaces produces some startling numbers.

Based on injury figures from 2004, every month, on average, there are 246 serious back injuries. There are 10 severe scalds, or burns. About three severed fingers. Thirty-one broken bones. Chillingly, on average, two people die because of a workplace injury or illness every month in Nova Scotia. In total, more people are injured in Nova Scotia workplaces than in motor vehicle accidents on our highways.

Too many people are injured every day in our workplaces. The greatest losses are human – but injury is also a financial cost. Nova Scotia employers have a lost-time injury rate of 3 per 100 workers and pay among the highest worker insurance premiums.

The Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia is committed to increasing awareness and knowledge of workplace health and safety. The Board promotes attitude and behaviour change and supports the use of best practices in health and safety.

How important is workplace safety to you? What are you doing to make a difference in your work environment? How difficult is it to build a safety culture and shape the attitudes and behaviours of your employees?

This guide will help you understand and put in place an effective health and safety program to protect workers and the general public. If you regularly employ 20 or more people, a safety program is mandatory. But no matter what size of business you are or what business you're in, safety not only saves the terrible human cost of injury – it also saves a lot of financial cost which is good for your bottom line. It keeps people on the job, productive and healthy. As an employer, you should consider developing a program appropriate for the nature, size and complexity of your workplace(s).

The facts are simple. Fewer injuries and more timely and safe returns to work, over the long term, will mean lower costs on the system. In turn, that will translate into lower premiums. More importantly, more Nova Scotians will go home safe at the end of the day.

What will the safety culture of your organization be? Think about it. Read on and start implementing your safety culture today.

Note: The information provided in this guide is not intended to be a substitute for the N.S. Occupational Health and Safety Act or Canada Labour Code, and should not be considered an authoritative legal directive. It is a general information guide intended to share "best practices" in the prevention of workplace injury and helping injured workers return to work.

INTRODUCTION

So, you're ready to make your workplace safer. Now let's make it happen. This guide covers eight simple steps to help you make working safe a top-of-mind concern throughout your organization. The eight steps will give you the basics for starting an effective and sustainable health and safety program.

The best safety programs are straightforward and easy-to-follow. These steps are not overwhelming or complicated. Implement them, and you will find that your workplace is not only safer – it just might be more productive too! Even if you already have a safety program in place, as many leading employers do, you can use this information to evaluate your existing program and make it better.

This is a basic overview. Should you have further questions, help is only a phone call away. If you have more safety questions, or if you have a suggestion that you think could help other employers, please let us know. Call 1-800-870-3331.

STEP 1:
**CREATE A
HEALTH AND
SAFETY POLICY**

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Safety starts with awareness and understanding. Putting your company safety policy on paper with a signature shows leadership's personal and corporate commitment to a safe workplace. It lets your employees know that safety is a priority throughout the organization, and that unsafe practices are not acceptable.

Employers with good health and safety records make it very clear to their employees that working safely is not just a management responsibility, it is also a requirement for employment. Safety is a part of all management, supervisor and employee evaluations and often begins in the recruitment stage, by making positive attitudes and proven safe work practices a condition of hiring. New employees should be made aware of the safety policy as part of the hiring process.

The health and safety policy should be an absolute priority, and should be treated as one of the most important policies within your organization.

A comprehensive OH&S Policy should:

- Express management's commitment to protect the safety and health of employee.
- Clearly identify the objectives of the program.
- Communicate the organization's basic health and safety philosophy.
- Outline who is accountable for occupational health and safety programs.
- Outline the general responsibilities of all employees.
- Be absolutely clear that health and safety will not be sacrificed for anyone's convenience.
- Be absolutely clear that unsafe behaviour will not be tolerated.

Tips for turning your safety policy into action:

- Have your owner, president, or CEO sign the policy.
- Ensure the policy is written in clear language.
- Ensure it's reviewed at least annually.
- Ensure every employee sees a copy and understands it.

A health and safety policy is a living, breathing thing. It will continually evolve over time as job functions and business activities change. Build your policy with enough flexibility to adapt to the needs of new, potentially diverse company applications. Remember to keep your policy current by revisiting it annually, if not more frequently.

Most importantly, the policy must be brought to life. An organization's occupational health and safety policy is a statement of principles and general rules. They must be backed up with action.

Employees need to see that senior management is committed to ensuring that the policy is carried out, with no exceptions. The policy must be followed in all work activities by staff throughout the organization at all levels.

INVOLVE YOUR STAFF EARLY

Wherever possible, involve your employees from all levels of your organization in the creation and decision making process surrounding your safety policy. Everyone must be committed. It is easier to establish commitment and maintain it if key individuals work together to build the solution. Small employers may involve all employees – larger employers may want to work with your company's health and safety committee or safety representatives.

The following sample provides a more detailed format for addressing the required elements. In consultation with your Safety Committee or Safety Representative, you may wish to review and follow the basic elements of this sample.

(Company Name)

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

(Your Company Name / Organization) _____ is committed to providing a healthy and safe work environment for its employees and integrating that commitment into our everyday activities. To realize that commitment, we will implement the following Occupational Health and Safety Policy.

(Your Company Name / Organization) _____ is responsible for the health and safety of its employees while they are at work and will make every effort to provide a healthy and safe work environment.

Managers and supervisors will be trained and held responsible for ensuring

- That the employees under their supervision follow this policy.
- That employees use safe work practices and receive adequate training to protect their health and safety.
- The safety of equipment and the facility at large.

All levels of management will cooperate with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee, the Health and Safety Representatives and employees to create a healthy and safe work environment. Cooperation will also be extended to others such as contractors, owners, inspectors, etc.

The employees of (Your Company Name / Organization) _____ will be required to support our health and safety policy and to cooperate with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee, the Health and Safety Representatives and with others exercising authority under the applicable laws.

It is the duty of each employee to report to the supervisor or manager, as soon as possible, any hazardous conditions, injury, incident or illness related to the workplace. Also, employees must protect their own health and safety by complying with applicable laws and by following company policies, procedures, rules and instructions as prescribed.

Working safely is required of all employees in all situations. Where possible, hazards will be eliminated. Where hazards do exist as a function of the nature of the work, employees are required to use personal protective equipment, clothing, devices and materials, or to take other protective measures as established by the safe work practices.

We recognize the employees' duty to identify hazards, and support and encourage employees to play an active role in identifying hazards and to offer suggestions or ideas to improve health and safety.

To ensure this policy continues to meet our needs, (Your Company Name / Organization) _____ will ensure it is reviewed by our Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee, Health and Safety Representatives and employees at least annually.

Signed:

.....

President / CEO / Owner / Operator

(Your Company Name / Organization) _____ Date _____

OH&S Policy: The condensed version.

If you're a smaller organization, a shorter policy may be more appropriate. It doesn't have to be long and detailed – the main thing is that you have a policy, and that everyone in your company understands and lives up to it. For example:

ABC Company will make every effort to provide a healthy and safe work environment. All supervisors and employees must be dedicated to reducing the risk of injury and illness.

As an employer, ABC Company is ultimately responsible for the health and safety of our employees.

Supervisors will be held accountable for the health and safety of employees under their supervision. Supervisors also are responsible to ensure that machinery and equipment are safe, and that employees follow established safe work practices and procedures.

Employees must protect their own health and safety and that of others by following the law, and the company's safe work practices and procedures.

It is in the best interest of all of us to consider health and safety in every activity. Commitment to health and safety must be demonstrated at every level of this company.

President ABC Company

Date

Remember, all incidents and injuries can be prevented by the monitoring and maintaining of a quality health and safety policy. For questions or suggestions, contact us at 1-800-870-3331

STEP 2:

**KNOW
YOUR
RESPONSIBILITIES**

IMPLEMENTING YOUR OH&S POLICY

A policy sitting in a filing cabinet doesn't change anything. The road to injury is paved with good intentions that got lost in the hustle and bustle of the day. Even the best policy will be ineffective if it's not properly implemented – and that starts with communication.

Remember, the policy should be drafted with input from all levels of the company and then rolled out to all employees, contractors, and so on.

To put your policy into effect, be sure that:

- Everyone in the workplace reads the policy.
- Everyone understands their roles and responsibilities.
- Accountability is clearly stated.
- All levels of management support and enforce the policy.
- You provide adequate human and financial resources to support the policy.
- You establish a process for setting up and reviewing procedures and programs.

STEP 2: KNOW YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Shared responsibility for health and safety in the workplace means taking every reasonable precaution to prevent injuries and illness.

Everyone in your organization should be aware of their responsibilities in helping ensure that all precautions are taken, and further, that prevention is a proactive mindset of everyone in the organization.

Responsibilities should be clearly outlined in your health and safety policy. This can help ensure that safety is a consideration as you plan your business or operational function. By establishing legal responsibility, levels of accountability, promoting health and safety awareness and clearly outlining responsibilities, managers, supervisors and employees can keep health and safety an operational and business priority.

Be sure you:

Communicate clearly. Be specific. Ensure everyone understands their role in preventing injury — from a general view to build a safety mindset, to a practical view of day-to-day operations.

Back up the words with action. It is critical that safety not be something just talked about. Ensure that managers and other employees understand and are held accountable for carrying out these responsibilities.

A CLOSER LOOK AT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR WORKPLACE SAFETY

The following are some of the responsibilities for various workplace groups as outlined in health and safety legislation.

Employers have a general responsibility to ensure the health and safety of anyone at or near the workplace. In practice, that means they must:

- Ensure all equipment is maintained.
- Provide safety instruction and job training.
- Make employees familiar with health and safety hazards in the workplace.
- Ensure that employees have the right protective equipment and safety gear needed to do their job safely.
- Ensure that employees are not exposed to health or safety hazards.
- Co-operate with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee or the Health and Safety Representative, Department of Environment and Labour, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC) and Occupational Health and Safety Officers.
- Comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its Regulations, and make sure that employees do so as well.

Employees have a responsibility for their own health and safety and that of others, and a duty to report anything to their supervisor that they think may be a hazard.

If the supervisor does not remedy the situation it should be reported to the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (in organizations of 20 or more employees) or Health and Safety Representative (in organizations of five or more employees).

In all cases, regardless of size, if all attempts at resolution within the organization do not succeed, employees should report the situation to the Occupational Health and Safety Division of the Department of Environment and Labour, or Human Resources and Skills Development Canada for federally regulated employers.

Owners of land or buildings being used as a workplace have a duty to maintain their premises properly. They must ensure any and all employers who rent, lease, or occupy their land or buildings are aware of any necessary health and safety information. For example, if the owner is aware of a pre-existing environmental condition that could affect health, he or she has a duty to make the employer occupying the space aware of the issue

Contractors or Constructors, like any other employer, are responsible for the health and safety of their employees as well as people at or near the workplace. In addition, contractors or constructors who may be bringing additional sub-trades on site are responsible for coordinating the activities of those employers and self-employed persons, facilitating communication, and ensuring regulatory compliance.

Architects, engineers and occupational health and safety service providers must make sure that the information they are giving out is accurate and complete.

Your health and safety policy (step 1) can help clarify responsibilities. A clear definition and assignment of responsibilities is the cornerstone of an effective health and safety policy. This will help ensure that:

- Policy objectives align with all company plans and objectives.
- Responsibilities for carrying out policy objectives are clearly assigned, communicated, and understood by persons at all levels of the company.
- Legal responsibilities are specified.
- Levels of accountability are established.
- Health and safety awareness is promoted.
- Actual and potential health and safety problems are reported and resolved.
- Required information is collected and made available on a regular basis.

Be sure to specify responsibilities – both general and functional — for the various program activities. Ensure that managers and other employees are held accountable for carrying out these responsibilities.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES

Every employer has different responsibilities specific to their industry and the nature of their work. However, across all industries and sectors, general responsibilities for health and safety do exist at operational levels.

Position

General Responsibilities

Senior Leadership

- Provide policy direction and planning.
- Review control information.
- Delegate responsibility and authority.
- Allocate budget.
- Cooperate with safety committees and representatives.
- Hold line managers accountable for safe production.
- Make sure line managers have adequate resources and support.
- Assist the health and safety committee or representative.

Line Management

- Train operators and others.
- Supervise employees to ensure that correct work procedures are followed.
- Communicate hazard information and control procedures.
- Consult with employees.
- Provide feedback to senior executive.
- Cooperate with the health and safety committee or representative.
- Hold accountable those managers, supervisors, and workers reporting to them.

All Employees

- Comply with company rules and procedures.
- Wear personal protective equipment as required.
- Use machinery, equipment, and materials, only as authorized.
- Follow job procedures.
- Report hazards, unsafe conditions or actions to management.
- Report incidents.
- Report all injuries for First Aid, no matter how minor.
- Cooperate with the health and safety committee or representative.

Health & Safety Committees

- Hold meetings at least once a month.
- Make recommendations on health and safety issues.
- For additional information see also Step 4.

Health & Safety Representatives

- Make recommendations on health and safety issues.
- Take employee health and safety concerns to management.

EMPLOYEE CRITICAL RIGHTS

Employees share in the responsibility for health and safety at the workplace. It is critical that employees have opportunity for input into the safety program. Engaging employees at the beginning builds safety as a culture from the bottom of an organization up, rather than having it only as a directive from the top of an organization down.

By law, every employee in Nova Scotia has three critical rights.

1. The Right To Know - Employees are entitled to information on issues that affect their health and safety or that of another person in the workplace, especially hazards directly associated with their work.

It seems simple - but prevention starts with being aware. Everyone within an organization must be made aware of any safety issues. This right underlines the responsibility as employers to be proactive about safety communication.

2. The Right To Refuse - Employees have the right to refuse unsafe or unhealthy work that they believe will endanger them or another person at the workplace.

3. The Right To Participate - Employees can participate on health and safety committees or be an Occupational health and safety representative, report unsafe conditions, and voice concerns or opinions on any issue that affects their health and safety, or that of the workplace.

MORE ABOUT THE RIGHT TO REFUSE

When a clear safety policy is in place and when employees have been involved in developing a safety culture throughout an organization employers and employees will, in most instances, agree on safe work practices. Safety will become an objective at all levels of an organization.

When this is not the case and an employee has reason to believe that the work they are being asked to do will endanger their health and safety, they have the right to refuse to do the work until the problem is fixed, or until an investigation has taken place. Just as unsafe working conditions or hazards must immediately be reported, an employee must immediately inform a supervisor that they are refusing to work for reasons of safety.

If the problem is not solved to the employee's satisfaction after the initial refusal, the employee may further report to their JOHSC or Health and Safety Representative. Beyond that the employee may report directly to the Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour or HRSDC.

Should an investigation follow, the employee has the right to participate in the investigation along with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee.

When an employee refuses work, you may give that employee other work. You may also give the refused work to another employee, provided that the second employee knows the work was refused and why, and is reminded of his or her right to refuse the work. The task should only be offered where the second employee has the skills to do the job safely.

Employees and their representatives have a right to observe workplace health and safety monitoring procedures and tests, and to have those procedures explained. They must be paid their regular wage for this time.

MORE ABOUT THE RIGHT TO PARTICIPATE

Every employee has the right to participate in his or her own safety.

Not only is this a right, but it is encouraged as a part of a proactive prevention strategy and the creation of a safety culture within your organization. It helps ensure that all employees are able to openly voice any issue or concern.

Employees should be encouraged to take an active role. Every opportunity should be made available for participation in JOHS Committees, as a safety representative, or to generally be a part of safety discussions and planning within an organization. Participation in a JOHS Committee or as a safety representative, are paid components of the job like any other.

STEP 3:
**ESTABLISH
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INTRODUCTION

Instilling a culture of workplace health and safety does not happen “by accident.” It takes a concentrated effort and commitment to create a safe and healthy work environment.

Once you've prepared your safety policy, a safety program puts that policy into action on a day to day basis throughout your company. All employers are strongly encouraged to adopt a safety program. If you regularly employ 20 or more employees, you are required to have one by law.

Though they differ among industries and companies, successful health and safety programs share several key elements.

What's the difference between a policy and a program?

A health and safety policy outlines your corporate approach to safety and outlines responsibilities at all levels. A health and safety program is a written document that brings all the components of health and safety management together. It also includes an implementation plan with clear objectives to ensure the program moves forward. The OH&S management program is how you actually put your safety policy into action.

An effective health and safety program will:

- Assign and communicate health and safety responsibilities.
- Set measurable standards.
- Involve workers in development and execution.
- Identify, assess, and control hazards.
- Investigate injuries and incidents to prevent recurrence.
- Provide ongoing health and safety training.
- Assess results.
- Implement improvements.

Each of these elements should be addressed specifically in the written program.

Just as the policy must be posted and communicated prominently throughout your organization, the program must be lived at all levels. It must be a fundamental element of working for your organization – and employees must be aware of it from day one.

Your program should be a part of:

- Orientation for new employees.
- Ongoing safety training programs.
- Company policy and procedures manuals.
- Employee handouts and/or paystubs.
- Health and safety policy and procedures manuals.
- Standard job procedures manuals.
- Notice board announcements and reminders.
- Health and safety talks and meetings.
- Production, quality, planning, and other meetings.

Bringing your program to life will mean different things depending on the size of your organization, and the nature of your industry. In all cases, it's important that your program is a visible part of your company's operations.

Often, the strength of a program is in the details – regularly discussing it at meetings, reviewing and responding quickly to the recommendations of your health and safety committee or input from your staff, and quickly and effectively responding to inspection reports, incident investigations, and health and safety program evaluations.

Continued reminders through word and action will not only drive home the importance of your health and safety policy and program, but will also demonstrate the commitment of your managers to the policy and program.

What, exactly, does your program look like? What are its key components? The Workers' Compensation Board, Nova Scotia Environment and Labour, and HRSDC can help you implement a health and safety program – and a wealth of material is available. Depending on your industry, you may be a member of an association that also has resources and training. Call us for more information particular to your industry.

MAKE HEALTH AND SAFETY A KEY MEASURE OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Part of a health and safety program is ensuring managers and supervisors are held accountable for its implementation.

Establishing accountability is critical for success. It helps you monitor performance, and it helps you foster commitment throughout your organization to achieving health and safety objectives.

In establishing accountability for health and safety among your management team, you should:

- Include health and safety responsibilities and performance objectives in all job descriptions.
- Specify how performance will be objectively measured.
- Consider health and safety performance in performance appraisals and salary reviews.

Measuring performance, of course, will mean setting standards. As you establish (and regularly review) your health and safety program, you will need to set standards for each program element

Here are some key questions you might want to ask as you build accountability measures and reporting requirements into program elements such as inspections, investigations, and training.

Inspections: What items have been identified that need attention? Who does the remedial work identified by the inspections? By when? Who is accountable to ensure the work gets done?

Investigations: Have the causes and remedies been included in a report? Are the inspection reports reviewed by top management? Has follow-up evaluation of the outcomes been scheduled to ensure no additional complications occurred as a result of the changes?

Training: How are results evaluated? Who evaluates them? To whom are results communicated?

Standards for measuring performance should be set for each program element, and should also take any relevant legal requirements into account. Your standards should be in writing as part of your program, to ensure consistent understanding and compliance.

Setting standards, measurements and accountabilities in this way will help to establish who is responsible for what, and how effectively each manager is carrying out his or her responsibilities.

Document your program.

In order to help you maintain your safety program, it is important to keep records of your actions.

You should:

- Take minutes at safety committee meetings.
- Keep notes of weekly safety talks.
- Make records of all inspections and audits.
- Document regular maintenance.
- Make note of all safety training activities.
- Document all aspects of incident and first aid reporting.

STEP 4:
**CREATE A JOINT
HEALTH
AND SAFETY
COMMITTEE OR
SELECT A REPRESENTATIVE**

STEP 4: CREATE A JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE OR SELECT A REPRESENTATIVE

Health and safety needs a voice in your organization. A Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) or, for smaller employers, a Health and Safety Representative, can be that voice.

A safety committee or representative can be a critical partner in promoting health and safety, building commitment, identifying opportunities to improve safety and providing a means for employees to communicate health and safety concerns.

A Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOHSC) is a forum for bringing employers and employees together to work towards the common good of the workplace to resolve occupational health and safety issues.

A committee consists of employee and management representatives — thus the term “joint”—who meet on a regular basis to deal with health and safety issues.

A joint committee brings in-depth practical knowledge of specific tasks (employees) together with the larger overview of company policies, and procedures (management). It also builds a cooperative attitude among all parts of the work force toward solving health and safety problems.

In Nova Scotia, a health and safety committee is required where 20 or more people are regularly employed at a workplace or on a construction site. This number includes part-time, full-time, casual, and seasonal employees. An employer is responsible for establishing and maintaining the committee.

Employers who employ five or more employees but do not require a JOHSC are required to appoint a Health and Safety Representative.

What does a committee do?

JOHSC activities commonly include:

- Participating in development and implementation of programs to protect the employees safety and health.
- Dealing with employee complaints and suggestions concerning safety and health.
- Ensuring the maintenance and monitoring of injury and work hazard records.
- Monitoring and following up on hazard reports, and recommending action.
- Setting up and promoting programs to improve employee training and education.
- Participating in health and safety inspections and investigations.
- Consulting with professional and technical experts.
- Helping to investigate and resolve work refusals.
- Making recommendations to management for incident prevention and safety program activities.
- Monitor effectiveness of safety programs and procedures.

SELECTING YOUR JOHSC MEMBERS

Employee representatives are selected by the employees, or by a union. Management members are usually appointed by the employer. At least 50% of the committee must be made up of employee representatives.

In selecting potential committee members, priority might be given to people with varied work backgrounds as well as to those involved in hazardous or complex operations.

Workers with long service in the industry will usually have greater appreciation of the work carried out and its risks or hazards. The members of a Health and Safety Committee should have good work habits, be personable, and open to change and input from others.

How big should a committee be? It's an important question. There is no established rule. Too few members may mean that all segments of the work force are not properly represented, while too many members may make the committee hard to manage. As you plan your committee, there are several key considerations:

- The size and complexity of your organization.
- The different trades or unions involved.
- Differing degrees of hazard in the work carried out.
- Representing all segments of your workforce (management, supervisors, office staff, etc.).
- Appropriate representation of workplace diversity.
- Ensuring adequate total knowledge of conditions and work processes.
- Ensuring committee members are properly trained (See Step 7).

JOHSC MEMBER DUTIES

The duties and tasks of the JOHSC members should be specified in writing, posted in the workplace, and a copy issued to each committee member. The function of the JOHSC may be written into the committee's terms of reference.

This document may be used not only to clarify the duties of the JOHSC members, but as an information source for all workers. Duties should be discussed, either individually or in committee, to ensure everyone on the committee understands their role, and its importance.

So, just what does a JOHSC member do? The following are some activities common to all committee members.

- Attending all committee meetings.
- Promoting health and safety at all times.
- Acting as a sounding board on workers' acceptance of health and safety policy.
- Receiving, considering, and resolving worker health and safety complaints.
- Providing feedback on workers' suggestions.
- Promoting and monitoring compliance with health and safety regulations.
- Attempting to raise health and safety standards above minimum legal requirements.
- Helping to train new workers.
- Participating in the identification and control of workplace hazards.
- Participating in the assessment and development of control programs for workplace hazards.
- Participating in incident investigations and inquiries.
- Learning from safety programs of other companies.
- Conducting health and safety education programs.
- Making health and safety recommendations.
- Participating in workplace inspections.
- Advising on personal protective equipment.
- Maintaining and posting JOHSC minutes.
- Monitoring effectiveness of the health and safety program.
- Helping to develop health and safety rules.
- Helping to develop safe work procedures.
- Investigating work refusals.

Be clear about the JOHSC Purpose.

It's important to specify the purpose of a committee in simple terms. In other words, you need a short, snappy way to explain what the committee does. You should include this description in company literature, manuals and orientation material.

For example:

ABC Company Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee

ABC Company is committed to health and safety throughout our organization. Our Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee will:

- Create and maintain active interest in health and safety and reduce incidents.
- Discuss and take effective action on the principal incident-causing conditions.
- Help stimulate an awareness of health and safety issues and an atmosphere of cooperation between management and workers.
- Help in identifying problems, formulating policy and procedures, monitoring and improving workplace health and safety.

Being clear about the role of your committee will translate into more meaningful worker participation at the level where incidents and health hazards most commonly happen.

JOHSC CO-CHAIRPERSON DUTIES AND AUTHORITY

Like any committee, the JOHSC needs a chairperson. Unless otherwise was determined by the committee, a JOHSC will have co-chairpersons – one selected by management, and one selected by employees. A list of duties describing the chairperson's responsibilities and authority should be available to all members.

Specific chairperson's duties may include:

- Scheduling meetings, notifying members.
- Preparing an agenda.
- Inviting specialists or resource persons as required.
- Presiding over meeting.
- Guiding meeting as per agenda.
- Ensuring all discussion items end with an action decision.
- Reviewing and approving the minutes.
- Assigning projects to members.
- Ensuring that the committee carries out its function.

JOHSC SECRETARY

You will also need to appoint a secretary. The secretary's responsibilities may vary, but usually include:

- Keeping pertinent records.
- Reporting on the status of recommendations.
- Preparing the minutes.
- Distributing the minutes.
- Disseminating safety information to members.
- Assisting the chairperson as required.

THE JOHSC MEETING

A JOHSC must meet at least once a month unless the committee feels that it would be they need to meet more often in order to be effective. The Director of the Occupational Health and Safety Division of the Department of Environment and Labour could mandate also additional meetings if it was felt that the committee did not have enough time to perform its duties.

It is very important to set an agenda for each meeting. An agenda helps the co-chairperson keep the meeting focused, and makes the best use of everyone's limited time.

You are required by law to keep minutes of all health and safety committee meetings. Keeping a good record of the activities and discussions of the joint health and safety committee helps ensure that each concern and resolution is documented.

Minutes also promote safety to all workers, and serve as a record of Health and Safety Committee activities. You'll want to capture key elements like the time and date of meeting, attendance, items discussed (reports, problems, statistics, education), recommendations (specifying action by whom, by when), reasons for recommendations (and counter arguments voiced), and the time and date of the next meeting.

Minutes of meetings are generally circulated to all committee members after approval by both health and safety committee co-chairpersons. Copies should be posted prominently throughout the workplace, or distributed to each employee, and the original kept with the records of the committee. It is recommended that the minutes be circulated and posted within a week of the meeting. Posted minutes should remain displayed until the next minutes are released.

Taking good minutes.

The minutes should be clear and highlight all recommendations, decisions, action items and responsibilities. The secretary should make notes during the meeting, using the agenda as a guide and write the minutes immediately after, while the proceedings are fresh in his/her memory. An exact copy of everything said is not required and the minutes should not be so long that they discourage workers from reading them.

Prompt posting of the minutes will show that solutions to safety problems have been followed-up without delay. It also indicates that the health and safety committee is operating efficiently, and emphasizes that safety is a priority item in the organization.

Minutes of previous meetings are useful sources of information. Over the years, they may show trends and reveal problems requiring more investigation, the training of new committee members, or the determination of safety training topics. How long you keep minutes on file will vary with how often you hold meetings, however, a minimum of two years is suggested.

SAMPLE MINUTES

Sample OH&S Committee Meeting

Location & Area Representing: _____

Meeting #: (year – month) **Date:** _____

Attendance: (Account for all members)

Present:

Absent:

(Name, area representing, alternate if applicable, include phone numbers for chairs)

Presenters:

Members providing information or special guests

Old Business:

- Review past meeting minutes, record actions, update results.
- Determine action for outstanding items.

Committee Activity Updates:

- Building and hazard inspections.
- Fire drills.
- Training received or required.
- Subcommittee reports.
- Updated distribution lists.
- **FYI's:** Info to co-workers, list of actions, ideas/suggestions for improvement of the workplace, involve employees in solution process.

Incident Investigations:

Review current stage for a given investigation:

- Collect/review evidence.
- Make recommendations.
- Prepare report.
- Implement plan.
- Follow up results.

New Business:

Define a new issue:

- Assign priority for action.
- Ensure appropriateness and history of similar past action.
- Clearly define action expected.
- Assign a member to be responsible for the issue.

Next Meeting:

STEP 5:

CONTROL HAZARDS

STEP 5: CONTROL HAZARDS

Workplace illness and injuries can be prevented. Employers who take the initiative to prevent incidents have much lower injury rates than those who do not. As a result, they pay less for workplace injury insurance.

In addition to reducing the human toll of injury, improving your health and safety performance can improve your business performance, too. A positive record with workplace health and safety can have many benefits.

- It can lower your costs.
- It can improve employee relations and employee trust.
- It can improve reliability and productivity.
- It can increase public trust and improve public image.
- It can increase organizational capability.

Some industries are more dangerous than others. But even in high-risk industries in our province, safety leaders are achieving low injury rates and seeing their WCB rates reduced. All employers in all industry sectors have the opportunity to improve their safety performance - which, now more than ever, can improve your business performance. Ensuring you are not just doing business, but doing business with health and safety as primary concerns, can be integral to achieving other business goals.

What is a hazard?

A hazard is a practice, behaviour, condition or situation, or a combination of these, that can cause injury or illness or property damage.

CONTROL HAZARDS. CONTROL INJURY.

In an ideal world, employees across Nova Scotia would work in a world free from hazards. For some industry sectors, hazards are a part of doing business. The responsibility is to control those hazards.

Uncontrolled hazards can lead to a range of consequences - from minor nuisances, to interruption of business, to serious injury or illness and even death.

The goal of your hazard identification and control program is to make your workplace, your operations and your employees as safe as possible. *It is an ongoing program that adds participation, builds a safety culture, improves productivity and strengthens employee trust.*

Health hazards endanger an employee's physical health. The results tend to be chronic and their impact on the employee may not be obvious for some time. Safety hazards are hazards that could result in bodily injury or property damage, and often have an immediate impact.

Examples of Health Hazards

Chemical: Includes any form of chemical such as compressed gases, solvents, lead and others.

Physical: Includes noise, vibration, heat, cold and radiation.

Ergonomic: Includes design of the workplace and jobs that involve repetition, force and posture.

Biological: Includes organisms or toxic substances produced by living things that can cause illnesses or disease in humans (e.g., bacteria, viruses, fungi, parasites and insects).

Examples of Safety Hazards

Machine: Includes hazards from moving parts like rotating shafts, belts, pulleys, blades and saws.

Energy: Includes pneumatic or hydraulic pressure, steam, heat and electricity.

Material Handling: Includes manual and mechanical handling (e.g., lifting, lift trucks, conveyors).

Work Practices: Working unsafely - as a result of safe work practices not being in place, or failure to follow them.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

Controlling hazards begins with knowing where hazards start. Five key factors contribute to creating hazards.

You should establish standards in your workplace for each of these contributing factors, and consider each category as you assess your workplace for hazards.

People: Action - or lack of action - can create workplace hazards. Knowledge and training is critical to avoid unsafe behaviours. Solid leadership that puts health and safety top of mind can help ensure procedures and safe practices are followed.

Equipment: Tools and machines can be hazardous. Look for unsafe or unhealthy conditions such as:

- Inadequate guarding or barriers.
- Defective tools and equipment.
- Incorrect tools and equipment for the job.
- Inadequate warning systems.

Materials: Some materials such as hazardous chemicals pose a risk in and of themselves. In other cases, handling materials improperly or using the wrong material for the task at hand can pose a hazard.

Environment: Some hazards are created by the work environment. Look for things like:

- Condition of all work surfaces and walkways.
- Overcrowding and poor ventilation.
- Poor lighting, extreme temperatures and noise.
- Poor housekeeping.

Process: Process involves a combination of people, equipment, materials and environment. It includes design, organization, pace and type of work. By-products such as heat, noise, dust, vapours, fumes and scrap materials may be created by the process, and these can be a hazard.

MORE ABOUT RECOGNIZING, ASSESSING AND CONTROLLING HAZARDS

Workplace hazards to health and safety come in many different shapes and sizes.

And the first step toward a safe workplace is learning to **RECOGNIZE** a hazard.

Hazards will generally come to light through your own observation, that of an employee, through an inspection, through an investigation, by analyzing past records or by analyzing the specific job function of a task or process. Of course, once you recognize them, hazards must be brought to the attention of people who can act on them.

To **ASSESS** a hazard is to evaluate its likely impact, in the context of your workplace, and in the context of existing standards and regulations. This will include your own safety policy, as well as Department of Environment and Labour legislation, industry guidelines, and manufacturers' recommendations.

When a hazard has been recognized and its impact assessed, you need to **CONTROL** the hazard and either eliminate or limit its impact on your employees.

Hazards are generally recognized in five main ways

- Observation or worker complaint.
- Inspections.
- Investigations.
- Record analysis.
- Task or process analysis.

MORE ABOUT RECOGNIZING HAZARDS

It sounds simple, but it's not always as easy as you think. Some hazards are easy to detect, and some are not – for example, a hazard may be hidden in a specialized task rarely performed. It may be something that seems perfectly normal to the person doing the job, or it may only appear in certain weather conditions.

Recognize Hazards through Observation and Worker Concerns

Hazards may be recognized through observation, or when a worker raises a concern.

Sometimes, a casual remark by a visitor or another fresh set of eyes can point out something you may not have noticed.

Employees and others in the workplace should immediately report known or suspected hazards to a supervisor or manager. Encourage reporting of “near misses” also. Whether employees complain of discomfort, notice unusual odours or find themselves straining to complete certain tasks, it is important that they report the hazard, and that their concern is heard and acted upon.

Supervisors must take every reasonable precaution to protect the worker. Worker concerns should be immediately heeded and looked into, to determine if there is a hazard or if controls should be improved.

Did you know? If employees know there is a hazard, they are obligated by law to report it to the supervisor or manager.

Recognize Hazards through Inspections

Workplace health and safety inspections are particularly effective for recognizing hazards – in fact, that's a big part of why inspections are done.

Workplace inspections identify and record hazards and potential hazards, especially those that need immediate attention. They help ensure that existing health and safety standards and procedures are met, and that any hazard controls you may have put in place are working. They also help your Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee or your Safety Representative to recommend corrective actions.

The inspection discussed at most length in this guide, is the regularly scheduled inspection conducted by the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee members or safety rep. Inspections also include spot inspections by managers or supervisors of their areas, maintenance inspections, and pre-operations checks of equipment.

Of course, as an owner or senior manager, you should inspect your workplace yourself, too. See the detailed section that follows for more on effective workplace inspections.

Five Steps to Effective Inspections

- a. Establish inspection procedures.
- b. Prepare for the inspection ahead of time.
- c. Conduct the inspection.
- d. Report the findings and make recommendations.
- e. Follow up.

RECOGNIZE HAZARDS THROUGH INVESTIGATIONS

Through recognizing, assessing and controlling hazards, incidents and injury in the workplace can be reduced. However, when an incident happens, it's critical to investigate – to learn from experience and do your best to ensure it doesn't happen again. Step Six looks in more detail at investigations – but it's important to note how critical a tool they can also be for recognizing hazards.

Investigations can help you identify the immediate and root causes of the incident, injury or illness and find ways to prevent it in the future. They may also point out that it's time to update your policies, procedures or training programs.

Investigate any injury, illness, incident or even near miss to help prevent more serious events in the future. Conduct interviews, and find out what happened.

Effective investigations will not only lead to fewer injuries and incidents – showing your workers this type of support may improve employee relations, which can improve overall morale, productivity, and even your bottom line.

Investigations must be completed after a critical incident, injury or fatality. This is the law.

Four Steps to Effective Investigations

- a. Secure and manage the scene.
- b. Notify the appropriate people.
- c. Investigate.
- d. Report.

Recognize Hazards through Examining Records

Examining records can help you recognize patterns and frequencies of injuries or illnesses. By looking for trends, you will be able to decide where to focus prevention efforts.

Records include things like:

- First aid reports.
- Incident reports.
- Workers' Compensation claims.
- JOHSC inspection reports.
- Investigation reports.
- Equipment damage reports.

Consider them individually and consider them in context of each other. You will soon identify trends in injury and illness, and you'll have a basis for measuring the effectiveness of your health and safety program. Records can also be a resource to support your decisions on health and safety, and to help your Health and Safety Representative(s) make recommendations and prioritize activities.

TASK OR PROCESS ANALYSIS

Task and process analysis is an excellent method for recognizing potential hazards. Task or process analysis involves breaking a job or process down into individual steps and carefully looking for hazards at each step by examining it and its relationship to the other steps. The impact and involvement of the contributing factors (i.e., people, equipment, materials, environment, process) at each step is included in the analysis.

Task analysis looks at the individual tasks of a single job. Process analysis looks at the sequence of jobs or the relationship between jobs that make up the complete process of providing the service or making the product from beginning to end. More on task analysis follows later in this chapter.

Three Steps to Task and Process Analysis

- a. Identify tasks, steps and/or the relationship between these.
- b. Identify the contributing factors at each step.
- c. Identify the hazards associated with each task and contributing factor combination.

FIVE HAZARD RECOGNITION CORNERSTONES

There are five key steps that can help you ensure hazards are recognized in your workplace.

1. Set Standards.

Hazard recognition depends on establishing a plan to analyze work and monitor processes. This depends on knowing exactly how the process should be – so you’ll be better able to spot variances that may be a hazard. Set a high standard for analyzing work, identifying and correcting hazards, responding to worker concerns, scheduling regular inspections, and planning for investigations of all incidents. Also, be clear about what records should be kept and how they should be tracked, and analyze tasks to build best-practices and safe-work guides.

2. Communicate.

Make sure workers know about your plan for hazard recognition, have an opportunity for input, and understand how important it is to your organization. In particular, make sure results of inspections and investigations are communicated to the appropriate persons.

3. Train.

Be sure all appropriate people are trained to identify hazards, to take action on their own observations or respond to worker concerns, to do inspections, to get the most out of record examination and to perform proper task analysis.

4. Evaluate.

Review procedures to see if hazards are being recognized and corrective action is taken.

5. Acknowledge Success and Make Improvements.

Be sure to acknowledge those who reported hazards and contributed to the recognition of hazards. Constantly revise procedures as needed.

FOUR ASSESSMENT CORNERSTONES

Recognized hazards need to be assessed to determine their root cause, whether workers are exposed and, if so, to determine if the exposure is at a harmful level. There are four basic steps to assessing hazards.

1. Collect information about PEMEP

You've recognized the hazard – now, how did it get that way? Collect information about People, Equipment, Materials, Environment and Process (PEMEP) that may have helped cause the hazard.

2. Identify or establish the applicable standard

Where the law sets out a standard to control workplace hazards, it must be followed. Consider your own workplace policies, procedures and expectations; as well as Department of Environment and Labour or Canada Labour Code legislation, industry guidelines, and manufacturers' recommendations.

3. Compare information collected to appropriate standards

Analyze the information gathered in Step 1 and compare it to the relevant standard in Step 2. If necessary, get help from an expert to complete the hazard analysis, especially where hygiene or health testing is needed.

4. Document and report the findings

You've recognized the hazard, and now you've assessed it. Set an action plan to eliminate and control hazards. Be sure to keep the records on file. Sometimes, you may require help to do more detailed workplace monitoring and analysis (e.g. industrial hygienists, ergonomists, engineers).

Remember – your responses to all concerns demonstrate commitment to prevention, and that commitment will flow throughout your organization.

WORKPLACE INSPECTION: A CLOSER LOOK

Through critical examination of the workplace, inspections identify and record hazards for corrective action. In cooperation with management, Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees (or for smaller employers, a Health and Safety Representative) plan, conduct, report and monitor inspections.

Regular workplace inspections are an important part of the overall occupational health and safety program.

An inspection examines your workplace in order to:

- Listen to the concerns of workers and supervisors.
- Gain further understanding of jobs and tasks.
- Identify existing and potential hazards.
- Determine underlying causes of hazards.
- Monitor hazard controls (personal protective equipment, engineering controls, policies, procedures).
- Recommend corrective action.
- Follow up action to evaluate solution effectiveness.

Inspections are ineffective when the given time allows for only a hasty look. Consider the complexity of your workplace and be sure to allow appropriate time. Allowing for a few hours or a day of inspection is preferable to weeks or even months of lost-time injury or reduced productivity.

Develop a schedule for inspections outlining when they will be carried out and who will perform them.

To help decide how many inspections are necessary, how long they should last and how often they are needed, consider:

- How many different work operations do you have?
- How large is (are) your operation(s)?
- What type of equipment are you using? More hazardous equipment may require more frequent inspection.
- How hazardous is the work process itself? The more hazardous the work, the more frequently you should inspect to ensure it's being done as safely as possible.
- How many shifts do you have? Is the work different on different shifts?
- Have you recently added new processes or machinery?

DURING THE INSPECTION

Safety inspections are a necessary part of doing business. A little planning and knowledge before going into an inspection can maximize its effectiveness and efficiency, while minimizing workplace disruption.

First, discuss your planned inspection route before undertaking the inspection. Review where inspection team members are going, and what they are looking for. During the inspection, you will want to "huddle" before going into noisy areas. This eliminates the need for arm waving and shouting, and it generally improves communication.

Each inspection team member should have a clipboard or note pad, and inspection checklists. Each member should also be allowed to proceed at his or her own pace.

Engineers, maintenance personnel and other appropriate specialists should be available to provide information on special equipment or processes. The health and safety committee may invite industrial hygienists, union health and safety specialists, or workplace managers to join the committee inspection team to help them in examining certain aspects of a work area.

Inspect protected.

Without exception, wear personal protective equipment (PPE) where required while you are inspecting. If it's required and you don't have any or none is on hand - do not go ahead with the inspection. List this as a deficiency and return when you can inspect safely.

Supervisor Involvement

Before inspecting a department or area, the committee should contact the supervisor in charge. A supervisor will have much value to offer because of his or her familiarity with workers, equipment and environment, but it is important that the supervisor not act as a tour guide. The inspection team must remain independent and make uninfluenced observations.

The inspection team should also consult the supervisor before leaving the area, and should discuss each recommendation. Pay particular attention to items that the supervisor can immediately correct. Note these on the report as corrected. This keeps the records clear and serves as a reminder to check the condition during the next inspection.

Supervisors may interpret reporting as a criticism, but committee members cannot fail to report hazards. Maintain objectivity and an attitude that is firm, friendly, and fair.

Observe closely and identify unsafe work.

While inspecting, pay close attention to how people are performing their duties. Look for deviations from accepted work practices. Remain objective and don't name names - use statements such as, "a worker was observed operating a machine without a guard." Do not use information derived from inspections for disciplinary measures.

Some common unsafe work practices include:

- Using machinery or tools without authority.
- Operating at unsafe speeds or in other violation of safe work practice.
- Removing guards or other safety devices, or rendering them ineffective.
- Using defective tools or equipment or using tools or equipment in unsafe ways.
- Using hands or body instead of tools or push sticks.
- Overloading, crowding, failing to balance materials, or handling materials in other unsafe ways, including improper lifting.
- Repairing or adjusting equipment that is in motion, under pressure, or electrically charged.
- Failing to use or maintain, or improperly using personal protective equipment or safety devices.
- Creating unsafe, unsanitary, or unhealthy conditions by improper personal hygiene, by using compressed air for cleaning clothes, by poor housekeeping, or by smoking in unauthorized areas.
- Standing or working under suspended loads, scaffolds, shafts, or open hatches.

It's important to watch employees who may not be working safely, but much can also be gained from closely observing those that are. Carefully observing and documenting the steps a careful and skilled employee uses in performing hazardous tasks can be valuable when you are developing and documenting safe work procedure.

Top ten inspection principles

When conducting inspections, follow these basic principles.

- Draw attention to the presence of any immediate danger – other items can await the final report.
- Until they can be repaired shut down and "lock out" any hazardous items that cannot be brought to a safe operating standard.
- Do not operate equipment that may be sitting inactive. Never ignore any item because you do not have knowledge to make an accurate judgment of safety. Ask the operator for a demonstration.
- Look up, down, around and inside. Be methodical and thorough. Avoid the "once-over-lightly" approach.
- Clearly describe each hazard and its exact location in your rough notes. Record all findings on the spot – you may forget them later.
- Be sure to use check boxes to record your progress in case the inspection is interrupted.
- Ask questions, but do not interrupt the flow of work unless you see immediate danger. It is important to inspect a working area, to observe the job functions. Stopping work could also create a potentially hazardous situation.
- Consider the static (stop position) and dynamic (in motion) conditions of whatever you are inspecting. For example, if a main machine is shut down you may want to postpone the inspection until it is functioning again.
- Discuss your findings as a group, and determine what corrections or controls are appropriate.
- Do not rely on your senses. You may need special equipment to measure the levels of exposure to chemicals, noise, radiation or biological agents.
- A picture is worth a thousand words. Take a photograph if you are unable to clearly describe or sketch a particular situation. Digital photographs are especially useful, as they are easy to store and can be emailed to appropriate staff.

INSPECTION FINAL REPORT

Your inspection report is the official record of the safety inspection. It is an important document and a keystone in your health and safety program.

First, the basics. Mark the date, the names and titles of your team, and the area you're inspecting.

As you inspect, record the observed unsafe conditions, and the correction or control method, along with a definite correction date and who is accountable for action. Take immediate action as needed. When permanent correction takes time, take any temporary measures you can, such as roping off the area, tagging out equipment or posting warning signs.

Be sure to number each item, followed by a hazard classification. Be sure to be specific - state exactly what you have detected and its location. Instead of stating "machine unguarded," state "guard missing on upper pulley #6 lathe in North Building."

Stick to the facts and the intended correction in your briefing with management so that they take action quickly.

Each inspection team member should review the report. When everyone is satisfied the report is complete and accurate, the report is complete.

In addition to file copies as needed, be sure to provide a copy of the inspection report to each manager affected for action.

Remember to assign a priority level to the hazards you observe. This will indicate the urgency of the corrective action required. For example:

A = Major – requires immediate action.

B = Serious – requires short-term action.

C = Minor – requires long-term action.

EXAMPLE OF A WORKPLACE INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Location: _____ Date of Inspection: _____

Department/Areas Covered: _____ Time of Inspection: _____

Observations					Follow-up		
Item and Location	Hazard(s) Observed	Repeat Item Y/N	Priority A/B/C	Recommended Action	Responsible Person	Action Taken	Date

Copies to: _____ Inspected by: _____

FOLLOW-UP AND MONITORING

Inspections do little good if the report sits in a filing cabinet. It is your responsibility and that of your committee, to review inspection reports with a keen eye.

Identify where action is needed immediately. Over time, you will be able to identify trends. Get feedback and ask questions where you need to.

Inspection reports: The eyes and ears of your health and safety program.

Your safety report is an important document. Consider it just as important to your business as your regular financial statement and review it with an eye for detail. It can tell you things like:

- Priorities for corrective action.
- What departments and what staff could be working safer.
- Insight about why incidents are occurring in particular areas.
- Need for training in certain areas.
- Areas and equipment that require more in-depth hazard analysis.

The health and safety committee should review the progress of the recommendations, especially when they pertain to the education and training of employees.

INGREDIENTS FOR A GOOD INSPECTION PROGRAM

The main ingredient in any inspection program is knowing exactly what information, paperwork, and resources you'll need to conduct the inspection. The following is a summary of inspection information requirements:

1. Basic layout plans of your facility showing equipment and materials used.
2. A thorough knowledge of how work flows through the facility.
3. Complete information on all chemicals (WHMIS).
4. Knowledge and location of storage areas, which must also be inspected.
5. Up-to-date knowledge of workforce size, shifts and supervision.
6. Up-to-date knowledge of workplace rules and regulations.
7. Expert knowledge and documentation of job procedures and safe work practices.
8. Manufacturer's specifications for all equipment and tools.
9. Complete sets of personal protective equipment for inspectors.
10. Knowledge of engineering controls.
11. Knowledge of emergency procedures - fire, first aid and rescue – for all departments and areas in your operation.
12. Complete records of all past inspections, records of incidents, and records of investigations.
13. Records of all worker complaints about hazards in the workplace.
14. Past recommendations of the health and safety committee.
15. Maintenance reports, procedures and schedules.
16. Third-party regulatory inspection reports or other external audits (insurance, corporate specialist, etc.).
17. All monitoring reports (levels of chemicals, physical or biological hazards).
18. Past reports of unusual operating conditions.
19. Up-to-date list of committee inspection team members and any technical experts for each area in the operation.

JOB ANALYSIS: A CLOSER LOOK

Job Analysis is a structured approach to identifying each step of a job function, or specific task. It helps identify and pinpoint particular hazards, and develop a means of eliminating or controlling the hazard to prevent injury.

Some job analysis comes from simply closely observing a worker actually perform the job. This can prompt instant recognition of hazards, and is far more effective than trying to outline a job analysis from memory

Sometimes, observation of the actual worker may not be possible. In these cases a group of experienced workers and supervisors – including members of your Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee - complete the analysis through discussion.

Job analysis may identify hazards you didn't notice before, and it increases the knowledge of those participating. It's also a safety marketing tool - you'll increase awareness of health and safety with employees, open new lines of communication with workers, and drive home the importance of safe work procedures through action. The completed job analysis and the work procedure based on it, can serve as a teaching aid for initial job training and as a briefing guide for infrequent jobs. It forms a "common denominator" for health and safety inspections, and it will also help you be thorough when you are investigating incidents.

Five stages of thorough job analysis:

- Select the task to be analyzed.
- Break the tasks down into a sequence of steps.
- Identify and rank potential hazards at each step.
- Determine preventive measures to overcome these hazards.
- Write a safe work procedure to identify and control the potential hazards.

STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE TO JOB ANALYSIS

STEP 1: SELECT THE JOBS TO BE ANALYZED.

Ideally, all jobs should have a job analysis. But it is important to be practical with time management, and to prioritize jobs for analysis. To establish that priority, consider:

- Jobs with particularly high injury rates, or injury severity.
- Jobs where you know the potential for injury or illness is high.
- New or modified jobs where hazards may not be evident.
- Non-routine or infrequently performed jobs with which workers may not be familiar.

Writing tip: Start each job with a verb!

STEP 2: IDENTIFY JOB STEPS

A job step is a segment of the operation necessary to advance the work.

As a rule, most jobs can be described in 10 steps. If more steps are required, consider dividing the job into two parts.

It may sound simple, but job analysis takes time and thought. Too detailed, and you will create too many steps; too general, and you may miss key job functions.

It's also critical to keep the steps in their correct sequence. Any step which is out of order may miss potential hazards or introduce hazards which do not actually exist.

The example below uses a familiar task – changing a flat tire – to illustrate the job analysis process.

1. Record the steps in sequence.

At this stage, you're identifying what is done – not how it is done. Job steps are recorded in the left hand column.

Sequence of Events	Potential Incidents or Hazards	Preventive Measures
Park vehicle.		
Remove spare and tool kit.		
Pry off hub cap and loosen lug bolts (nuts).		
And so on.....		

2. Identify Potential Hazards

Next, list the things that could go wrong at each step. Watch the job being performed several times. Think of worst-case scenarios and focus on potential hazards. Ask questions like:

- Can any body part get caught in or between objects?
- Do tools, machines, or equipment present any hazards?
- Can the worker make harmful contact with objects?
- Can the worker slip, trip, or fall?
- Can the worker suffer strain from lifting, pushing, or pulling?
- Is the worker exposed to extreme heat or cold?
- Is excessive noise or vibration a problem?
- Is there a danger from falling objects?
- Is lighting a problem?
- Can weather conditions affect safety?
- Is harmful radiation a possibility?
- Can contact be made with hot, toxic, or caustic substances?
- Are there dusts, fumes, mists, or vapours in the air?

Potential hazards are listed in the middle column of the worksheet, numbered to match the corresponding job step. For example:

Sequence of Events	Potential Incidents or Hazards	Preventive Measures
Park vehicle.	a) Vehicle too close to passing traffic. b) Vehicle on uneven, soft ground. c) Vehicle may roll.	
Remove spare and tool kit.	a) Strain from lifting spare.	
Pry off hub cap and loosen lug bolts (nuts).	a) Hub cap may pop off and hit you. b) Lug wrench may slip.	
And so on.....	a) ...	

3. Identify Preventive Measures

You've identified the steps of a job, and the hazards at each step. Now, how do you prevent injury by eliminating or controlling hazards?

There are four key ways to deal with hazards. Always consider them in this order.

1. Eliminate the hazard

The best prevention is a total cure – total elimination of the hazard.

- You could choose a different process.
- You could modify the existing process.
- You could substitute a hazardous substance with a safe one.
- You could improve the environment, such as adding ventilation.
- You could improve the equipment or tools posing the hazard.

2. Contain the hazard

If the problem can't be eliminated, prevent contact with the hazard through enclosures, machine guards, worker booths or similar devices.

3. Revise work procedures

Can you modify the hazardous steps, change the order of the steps, or add new steps to the job (such as locking out energy sources) to make the job safer?

4. Reduce the exposure

If you have exhausted all other methods, your last resort is to reduce exposure.

For example: you might minimize encounters with the hazard by modifying machinery or the work process, or requiring personal protective equipment such as hard toed boots, safety shields or respirators. You should also ensure that any necessary emergency facilities, such as eye-wash stations, are on hand for when incidents occur.

The recommended measures are listed in the right hand column of the worksheet, numbered to match the hazard in question.

In listing the preventive measures, avoid general statements such as "be careful" or "use caution." Be specific about what employees should do and how they should do it.

For example:

Sequence of Events	Potential Incidents or Hazards	Preventive Measures
Park vehicle.	a) Vehicle too close to passing traffic. b) Vehicle on uneven, soft ground. c) Vehicle may roll.	a) Drive to area well clear of traffic. Turn on emergency flashers. b) Choose a firm, level area. c) Apply the parking brake; leave transmission in gear or in PARK; place blocks in front and back of the wheel diagonally opposite to the flat.
Remove spare and tool kit.	a) Strain from lifting spare.	a) Turn spare into upright position in the wheel well. Using your legs and standing as close as possible, lift spare out of truck and roll to flat tire.
Pry off hub cap and loosen lug bolts (nuts).	a) Hub cap may pop off and hit you. b) Lug wrench may slip.	a) Pry off hub cap using steady pressure. b) Use proper lug wrench; apply steady pressure slowly.
And so on.....	a) ...	a) ...

SHARE THE INFORMATION

Once the job analysis is complete, be sure all workers who perform that job are informed.

The side-by-side format used in job analysis worksheets is not an ideal one for instructional purposes. You'll have more impact with education in a narrative format.

For example:

1. Park vehicle.

- a) Drive vehicle off the road to an area well clear of traffic, even if it requires rolling on a flat tire. Turn on the emergency flashers to alert passing drivers so that they will not hit you.
- b) Choose a firm, level area so that you can jack up the vehicle without it rolling.
- c) Apply the parking brake, leave the transmission in gear or PARK, place blocks in front and back of the wheel diagonally opposite the flat. These actions will also help prevent the vehicle from rolling.

2. Remove spare and tool kit.

- a) To avoid back strain, turn the spare up into an upright position in its well. Stand as close to the trunk as possible and slide the spare close to your body. Lift out and roll to flat tire.

And so on...

As you're communicating with workers and crafting the document, ensure any hazard controls that are repeated throughout are identified early in the document. In the changing tire example, you could include a special note at the start to advise workers.

Example: *This activity requires the lifting and handling of reasonably heavy items. It is critical that you always use correct lifting, carrying and handling techniques in steps 2, 3, 6, 7 and 8. Proper procedures can then be written as "Safe Work Procedures or Practices." These then become standard procedures.*

RANK THE HAZARDS

In cases where a large number of hazards are identified, it may be necessary to rank the relative importance of hazards to determine priority for corrective action. Normally this process will rank three critical items on a scale of one to three.

Frequency

How often is the task involving the hazard performed?

Severity

How bad is an injury / illness resulting from the hazard likely to be?

Probability

How likely is it that an injury will occur while performing the task?

By assigning a score on each item, it is possible to add the scores and obtain a relative ranking. This would of course have to be reviewed in light of the actual activities and hazards.

STEP 6:

**LEARN
FROM
EXPERIENCE**

STEP 6: LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE

Imagine this scenario.

Staff are arriving for work on a winter day, and the temperature takes a sudden drop. An employee slips and falls on some ice near the entrance. The employee gets up, goes to work, and doesn't tell anyone about the ice. Moments later, a supervisor slips and manages to avoid a fall – but also simply continues on with their day. Finally, another employee falls and breaks their wrist. Only as the first aid attendant readies the employee for a trip to the hospital is the ice finally dealt with.

This injury could have been prevented by simply reporting the “near-miss” in the first place, and taking appropriate action.

This chapter introduces incident investigation and reporting. Much more detailed information is available, and you are encouraged to contact us or the Department of Environment and Labour should you need more information.

Learn from the past and prevent recurrence.

Suppose that your employees are getting injured. For every incident, do you know who was involved, what happened, and why it happened? Are there any repeat incidents or near misses? Are all members of your workforce familiar with past incidents so that they might recognize and avoid the hazards?

Prevention is a primary objective of incident investigation. By finding the causes of an incident and taking steps to control or eliminate them, you can prevent similar occurrences.

Remember: Effective incident and injury investigation means fact-finding – not fault-finding. Find out about the incident, including what happened before and after, and you'll most often be able to explain why and how it happened. As soon as possible after an incident, investigators should examine physical evidence and interview witnesses.

SELECT AN INVESTIGATION TEAM

By identifying a team of investigators you can respond quickly to any incident, injury or illness. The team should be representative of the workplace and have a cross section of skills and abilities. It should be large enough that it can still be operational if one or two members are absent at any time.

TRAIN YOUR INVESTIGATIVE TEAM

There are a number of critical skills involved in conducting an effective investigation that can lead to prevention of similar incidents or injury in the future. Training your team in advance can help ensure your investigations are effective, and that people have the necessary skills and understand their roles prior to being faced with an actual incident.

TOOLS OF THE INVESTIGATION TRADE

Prepare your investigators with the right training in how to conduct an investigation, and the necessary tools to carry out the investigation.

A complete investigation kit includes:

- Tape measure.
- Clipboard, pens or pencils, and paper (square or graph paper is recommended for illustrations).
- Equipment tags for labeling.
- Flashlight.
- Emergency phone numbers (police, ambulance, fire, Nova Scotia Department of Environment and Labour).
- Barrier tape.
- Camera and flash.
- Incident investigation forms.
- Investigation checklist.

Investigate near misses too!

As illustrated in our example, don't wait for a hazard to become an injury before investigating. Although this chapter deals with the investigation of an injury scene, it's important to remember that all incidents and near misses need to be investigated. Depending on their severity, the investigation may range from a quick assessment of the situation and a fix, to an in-depth, long-term investigation with interviews. Apply the same principles to every case – be thorough, be complete, and be accurate.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

This is the first step in response to any incident.

When an incident occurs, the danger is not limited to those directly involved. When there is a gas leak or a fire, for instance, other workers on site and the general public may also be threatened. Your first priority is your employees – both those injured and those who may be in danger.

EMERGENCY RESPONSE

What you do	Why you do it
Take charge. Do not panic.	Reduces confusion and establishes control.
You must get help before rescuing. Call your first aid attendant and 911 if needed. Relay as much information as possible. Ensure clear access for emergency personnel. Have someone meet emergency responders and guide them as close to the scene as safely possible.	The more quickly emergency medical personnel respond, the better the outcome for the injured person.
Immediately assess the seriousness of the situation. Ask: Can the present situation get worse? Is anybody injured? How can damage be minimized?	Prioritizes need, prevents other injury, minimizes property damage.
Don't become a casualty yourself! Never rush into an incident scene without first evaluating potential risks. Where safely possible, eliminate and contain potential hazards. Remove all non-essential people from danger area.	Don't let one injury turn into others. In an emergency you must ensure that the hazard has been contained before any rescue is made. This is especially important if electricity, fire, gas or confined space are involved.
Provide first aid as soon as safely possible.	Helps stabilize and improve condition of injured persons until professional medical help can be obtained.
Find out where injured persons are being taken.	Provides information for families and investigators.
Inform senior management and, when necessary, Department of Environment and Labour. Except as otherwise directed by an Officer, Do Not Disturb the Accident Scene until the investigation is complete.	Meets regulatory requirement for notification when there has been a critical injury, when a worker has lost consciousness, or following any other situation as defined by legislation.

SECURE THE SCENE AND IDENTIFY WITNESSES

The injured have been tended to and there is no further threat. Next, secure the scene and identify potential witnesses.

Witnesses can disperse quickly and never be seen again. This is especially true when passersby have witnessed an incident, for example, at a construction site. A good witness can provide an accurate description of the incident.

It's important to identify and interview anyone who saw the incident or was in the vicinity immediately before, during, or after the incident. Injured workers, may be some of the most valuable witnesses.

SECURING THE SCENE

What you do	Why you do it
Control crowd. Ask someone to assist. Ask onlookers whether they know how the incident happened. Identify witnesses. Tell them that their help will be needed later. If incident occurred in a room, keep onlookers outside. Post someone outside until a barricade can be erected.	Stabilizes situation, slowly bringing it back to normal. While a crowd can hinder investigation and needs to be controlled, it can also provide valuable witnesses.
Secure area until the investigation is completed. Physically isolate the incident by locking, taping or fencing off the area.	Ensures that scene and evidence will not be disturbed. Allows investigators to go back to scene and assess what may have been missed or overlooked.
If possible, ask emergency crews to leave material where they found it. Only move and remove what is absolutely necessary to assist the injured or to protect property from further damage.	Helps investigators to establish facts rather than making assumptions.
List those directly involved in the incident. If public is involved, go to them first as they will likely be first to leave.	For future contact.
Ask those first on incident scene to help develop witness list and approach these witnesses immediately.	Best chance at finding out who else was in the vicinity at the time of the incident.
Tell all witnesses that the purpose of the investigation is fact-finding, not fault-finding. Tell them that their help is needed to prevent the incident from happening again.	Witnesses may be reluctant to participate. They may be afraid of being blamed or feel they must point a finger at one of their co-workers. Assuring witnesses will encourage them to come forward and volunteer information.
Arrange interviews as soon as possible.	More information is forthcoming when memories are still fresh.
Ask each witness for a list of who may have seen or have knowledge of incident. Contact these witnesses if necessary.	Expands network of information.

SURVEY THE SCENE

Surveying the incident scene as soon as possible.

This is especially critical when the incident happened outdoors, because evidence such as slip, tire, or impact marks can be wiped out by weather conditions.

Your objectives are to:

- Collect and double-check evidence.
- Confirm witnesses' statements.
- Determine inconsistencies.
- Establish the cause(s) of the incident.

Use measuring tape, camera, and sketches to record the scene as found.

SURVEYING THE SCENE

Subject	Considerations
<p>Weather</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conditions. • Temperature. • Visibility. 	<p>Extreme high or low temperatures or high winds may put workers in danger. Poor light may limit workers' view and restrict communication. Glare or bright flashes of light can temporarily blind workers.</p>
<p>Incident surroundings</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there marks that could provide clues to the incident? • Anything out of the ordinary? 	<p>Skid marks, scratches on the floor can be keys to more evidence and contribute significantly to investigation.</p>
<p>Work site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Were floor and work areas clear and dry? • Was there a risk of slipping? • Could debris cause trips and falls? • Was the work area too confined? • Was access clear and open? 	<p>Slippery floors may not give workers or equipment proper footing. Lack of space may create additional materials handling or make workers work closer to the equipment than recommended.</p>
<p>Equipment, materials, and tools</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Confirm location in relation to injured worker. • Match damage or other marks on equipment or tools to damage or marks on floors and walls. Are they consistent? • Check safety devices such as guardrails and safety catches. • Are machinery controls on or off? • Photograph and record nameplate data, such as weights and load limits. • Check for equipment malfunction. • Check for structural damage as well as damage to equipment, piping, etc. 	<p>Safety guards are often removed.</p> <p>Establish consistency.</p> <p>Verify that what was said is correct. If not, there may be some problem with machine, equipment, or someone's familiarity with machine or equipment.</p>

About gathering evidence

There are two main kinds of evidence – physical evidence such as tire tracks, visible damage or impact points; and the testimony of those who were on the scene.

Physical evidence should be gathered as witnesses are being interviewed. The witness can then point to objects, equipment, and, together with the investigator, examine physical evidence. The key to collecting evidence is to be thorough and inquisitive.

About interviewing witnesses

Interviews are best done when memories are fresh. Try to conduct interviews as soon as possible after the incident. Your main goals are to confirm and explain what has happened, to corroborate other witnesses' accounts of the incident, and to get suggestions on how the incident can be prevented.

Pay attention to details of the events leading up to the incident. Often incidents occur as a result of the events preceding them.

An interview should help the investigator learn who was involved in the incident and who may know something about it. It will lead to a detailed sequence of events before, during, and after the incident.

About analyzing facts

Once the scene survey and interviews are completed, the information should be sorted and analyzed. This helps to identify and inventory what has been found, and anything that's missing, to determine your next course of action and to eliminate unnecessary duplication.

Use the matrix below to connect people, equipment, and materials in a sequence of events that makes sense. It's very important at this stage to separate facts from opinions and speculation.

Incidents often arise from hidden problems. Some problems are direct causes, some are indirect. All deficiencies must be accounted for when analyzing incident causes.

Investigators can then determine what happened step-by-step. Connections between details and the effect of one action on subsequent events should be understood.

Table 5: Investigation Matrix

Fall on Ice in Parking Lot			
	Before	During	After
People	Medical staff arriving for work, before maintenance staff	Slipped on ice, breaking wrist	Additional staff attended to injured party, called ambulance
Equipment	Salt spreading equipment available	N / A	Salt spread
Materials	Salt available	N / A	Salt effective in controlling hazard
Environment	Ice on parking lot not treated	N / A	
Processes	Maintenance staff not on until after arrival of medical staff	N / A	Call in instituted for salt spreading prior to arrival of medical staff when ice identified

PREPARING A REPORT

The final report is designed to help people learn from the incident. To prevent recurrence, recommendations made in the report must be evaluated and implemented by those with authority. The report should contain the following:

- Location, date and time of incident, and weather conditions.
- Description of incident, including people, equipment, material, and machinery involved.
- Names and addresses of the injured, and the nature of the injuries.
- Names and addresses of other persons involved.
- Names and addresses of employer(s).
- Materials damage, including costs.
- Names and addresses of witnesses.
- Attending physician.
- Immediate and underlying causes.
- Recommendations for corrective action.

The investigator preparing the report should sign it.

STEP 7:
**LEADERSHIP
AND TRAINING**

STEP 7: LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING

Leadership is a critical component of your health and safety program. You need to lead by example, and you need to instill a culture of safety throughout your organization from the production floor to the boardroom table.

Education and training are cornerstones of a safety culture. Training in health and safety is about much more than compliance with regulations or to reduce insurance costs. Training and educating your workforce is about empowering your workers to take an active role in making the workplace safer.

MANAGEMENT TRAINING

Remember, leadership lays the foundation for a solid health and safety program. That makes it absolutely critical to have proper training for all levels of management. Refresh the training on an ongoing basis to keep safety knowledge and commitment fresh and top of mind.

Such training should provide the health and safety knowledge each manager needs to be effective at his or her level. For example, training for executives will need to concentrate on leadership and review functions. Middle managers will need to know how to organize and control. Line managers will need to know how to apply the program and get employees involved. Think about the impact each level has on the organization, and tailor specific training to that group. In some cases your company's compliance with the law could depend upon it.

Help with Training

Certain members of your team – the coordinator of your health and safety program (a very helpful role to have in an organization), and those who will be carrying out workplace inspections or incident investigations, have particular training needs. To meet these needs, you may want to provide training in occupational health and safety from a recognized agency. Contact us for a list of service providers.

HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE OR REPRESENTATIVE TRAINING

Members of your health and safety committee or your representative will need specific training, including:

- Your health and safety policy and program.
- OH&S legislation.
- Health and safety basics.
- Role of the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee.
- WHMIS.
- Hazard identification.
- Incident investigations.
- Workplace inspections.
- Effective meetings.
- Problem solving.

It's particularly important for committee members or representatives to stay current. Ongoing training is important. Review your training programs when you introduce new equipment or new processes.

EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Employees will need training to enable them to recognize hazards and to use the measures and procedures in place for their protection.

Be sure to consider job-specific training requirements, for workers working with or near hazardous materials. Remember the importance of written work procedures to facilitate job skills training and avoid injury.

All new employees to your organization should be trained, regardless of their experience in the industry. As with managers, be sure to re-assess ongoing needs and refresh training as needed.

Make certain to train your employees how to protect themselves from the hazards associated with their job.

Training is a simple concept but it is too often ignored. It is critical to provide an orientation to the workplace and to your health and safety policy and program. Employees need to understand how to work safely, and that there is an expectation that they do so. An employee or their supervisor might think they can learn a job simply by watching another do it, or that they can “figure it out” on their own. If you want an employee to work safely, you must teach them how. This means ensuring employees understand the job’s hazards, and how to avoid them. Provide safety training for all new employees and for any employee who switches jobs or takes on new tasks.

Even if they are experienced in the particular job, new employees should receive training in safe work practices to ensure that they are aware of all potential hazards. This training will often be a source of information for you, too. Experienced workers can relay information about safe work practices deployed with their past employers. Don’t forget to train workers who are taking on new tasks.

Encourage employees to attend training workshops, and develop in-house programs.

Training workshops not only improve skill sets for working safe, but also underline your commitment to a safety culture in your workplace.

TRANSFER KNOWLEDGE. BUILD SKILL. FOSTER SAFE PRACTICES AND ATTITUDES.

Training has a number of steps. There are many resources available to help you succeed in your training process.

Your training goals generally fall under one of three types of objectives:

Knowledge Objectives involve awareness and are the easiest to achieve. For example, it's rather simple to make employees aware of the risk of asbestos exposure.

Skill Objectives require more hands-on training to ensure mastery. Mastery of skills ensures that they have the technical skills to follow all safety procedures on the job.

Attitude Objectives are more difficult to achieve. They may involve challenging deeply held beliefs. Changing individual behaviour and objectives is achievable if attitude barriers are addressed and if performance, practice and on-the-job follow-up are built into your training.

Remember, leadership is critical. Even armed with the right skills and attitudes, without management support and the proper tools and equipment, it may be difficult for workers to actually follow safe work practices on the job.

The ultimate challenge, and your goal, is to instill proactive safety – that your workers (not you) are promoting safety with the support of supervisors and managers. This happens when workers gain the skills, confidence and will to insist on safety changes such as using less hazardous materials and demanding that all necessary environmental controls be used.

Safety goes for sub-contractors, too.

Managers may often deal with sub-contractors. It is critical that these sub-contractors receive and act upon the same safety information as your own employees.

SAFETY RULES AND YOUR DISCIPLINARY SYSTEM

Your commitment to health and safety cannot be simply words on paper. Employees must feel they have “permission to work safely,” but your safety system must also have safety rules and a mechanism to ensure employees follow the rules. It must be backed up by action, and integrated into your human resources policies. When you develop a rule, be sure it is explicit and clear in its wording. Follow your rules up with training to ensure understanding and commitment, action and discipline.

Rules are likely to be specific to your industry. However, some common samples would include:

- A requirement that any unsafe condition or incident is reported immediately to a supervisor.
- Clearly prohibiting work while under the influence of alcohol or drugs.
- Clear requirement to use safe work practices.
- Clear rules on use of personal protective equipment such as hard-toe boots, hard hats, gloves, respirators or safety goggles.

Often, rules will intersect with provincial or federal Health and Safety law. But it's important to make your rules accessible and understandable to all workers, every day on the job.

Establish a progressive disciplinary system (Verbal Warning, Written Warning, Suspension, Dismissal) to deal fairly and effectively with those who endanger themselves or co-workers by breaking safety rules.

STEPS TO SAFETY LEADERSHIP

What are the broad strokes to safety leadership? It's different in every industry and in every organization. Implementing your health and safety policy, program and the other steps of the Preventing Workplace Injuries model helps create the basic structure for an effective safety system. Making it active in the workplace is critical, as a policy and program without action is not a safety system at all. The following activities checklist can help get your program started and moving in the right direction.

1. Be sure all Senior Management have completed safety orientation, and are a part of strategic planning.
2. Establish a Project Leader or Champion for your approach to safety.
3. Involve others such as employees, employee representatives, supervisors, managers (JOHSC).
4. Understanding where you are now:
 - Review your history of injury and WCB claims.
 - Audit your current health and safety system.
 - Review current Policies, Programs and Procedures.
 - Assess hazards and work practices.
 - Assess your compliance with the OH&S Act.
 - Assess what gaps may exist.
5. Set measurable goals for health and safety to achieve the vision set out in your OH&S Policy.
6. Develop action plans to achieve your goals, and empower your management team to do so. Prioritize and create a workable plan.
7. Enact your plan, and measure progress along the way.
8. Celebrate success.
9. Continuously improve the process.

STEPS TO A HEALTHIER WORKPLACE

Preventing workplace injury is only one part of a comprehensive approach to making your workplace a healthy and safe place to be. Among other objectives, the proactive protection of your employees' health can lead to a long-term healthier workplace, reduced time off, increased productivity, and happier, safety-prone workers.

These strategies have proven effective in promoting improved health outcomes for individual workers. They have resulted in higher levels of organizational and work team cohesion, and reduced organizational health costs.

1. Demonstrate management support of health promotion by developing a corporate health promotion mission statement, or include it as part of a health and safety policy.
2. Implement Employee Lifestyle Change Programs (i.e. improved nutrition, smoking cessation, physical fitness activities, stress reduction, back care).
3. Institute a Corporate Health Risk Appraisal and Counseling Service.
4. Create an organizational culture that is flexible, supportive and responsive to employees' needs (i.e. training in conflict resolution, team-building and violence prevention skills).
5. Establish and maintain an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to assist employees with health and personal concerns.
6. Offer a program of flexible medical and disease prevention benefits that include clinical preventive services (i.e. immunizations, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar readings).
7. Monitor health promotion programs' effectiveness, participation rates, benefits and costs.
8. Offer health education and training targeted to the requirements of particular tasks or jobs known to put employees at a health risk.
9. Conduct workplace environmental quality audits at regular intervals and address identified problem areas (i.e. ensuring closer adherence to clean air standards, safety requirements and ergonomic issues).
10. Make workplace health a regular part of employee communication (through newsletters, meetings, posters, signage, e-mail, payroll inserts, etc.).

THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT

Training and policies are critical to health and safety in your organization. But what's even more important is buy-in and leadership of safety from the highest levels of your company.

The initiative to make significant change or improvements in the effective management of health and safety may very well represent a new paradigm for some organizations. Senior management leadership is a key factor in making it happen. Leadership sets the direction, aligns people, and provides motivation and inspiration which energizes people. Leaders determine resource allocation and set the standard as to what practices are expected and acceptable. Actions speak louder than words, and employees that see evidence that senior management is committed to safety will act accordingly. Stopping unsafe work, ensuring guards are in place, taking the time to praise use of personal protective equipment and rewarding supervisors for ensuring that safety is a top priority, are just a few visible signs of commitment.

Successful companies put safety on the agenda at every board room meeting, and they realize that an improved health and safety record can translate into happier more productive workers, less lost time, and reduced Workers' Compensation costs.

Keys to success are not unlike other proven leadership techniques:

- Involve people in a plan to accomplish your safety program and goals. Don't present it as a finished product.
- Embrace safety as leaders, and be a role model. For example, a CEO wearing a hardhat and protective gloves during a plant tour can say a lot.
- Provide coaching and feedback.
- Recognize and reward health and safety success.

In short, leadership is the foundation upon which all your safety success will be built. As you implement your health and safety program, keep leaders informed and strive for their buy-in. You need safety champions across your company at all levels, from the plant floor to the boardroom table.

Remember: Preventing injuries and returning injured workers to the job in an early and safe manner is now more than ever a determining factor on your costs. The fewer injuries you have and the harder you work to bring injured workers back to work, the lower your WCB premiums will be over the long term. Safety isn't just better for your employees. It's better for business.

STEP 8:
**ESTABLISH
A RETURN
TO WORK
PROGRAM**

STEP 8: ESTABLISH A RETURN TO WORK PROGRAM

Every workplace injury is preventable. There are no accidents. With proper foresight and consideration of all variables, all injuries are preventable.

The reality, especially in Nova Scotia, is that workplace injury happens far too often. A Return to Work Program is a proactive way to help injured workers return to productive employment as soon as it's safe to do so. In fact, getting workers back on the job can often be an important part in their healing process.

Return to Work is a partnership involving employers, workers, health care providers, unions, Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committees and the Workers' Compensation Board. The partnership has one shared goal: to return injured workers to safe and suitable work.

Workplace injuries are costly to all members of today's workplace partnership. While injury prevention is the best way to reduce overall costs, the implementation of an effective Return to Work Program is the best way to manage costs after an injury has occurred. The Workers' Compensation Board is entirely funded through employer premiums, so reducing injuries and controlling costs when an injury occurs is the most effective means of reducing premiums.

A Return-to-Work Program helps to guarantee that each injured worker receives prompt health care and early assistance during both the initial stages of recovery and the subsequent return to productive employment. Reducing the duration of a claim directly impacts costs to the system and the individual employer.

Return to Work Programs benefit all members of the workplace partnership:

- Employers retain experienced workers and reduce incident and workplace costs.
- Injured workers maintain employment security, seniority and benefits while they receive personalized and effective treatment during the return to work process. In addition, they maintain necessary job skills and the lifestyle to which they have grown accustomed.
- Health care providers are supported in their decisions and treatment strategies.
- Unions maintain the employment rights of their membership.
- Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committees are assured that the health and safety of workers is maintained at and near the workplace.
- The Workers' Compensation Board manages rising costs and continues to provide a high level of service to injured workers and employers.

SUPPORT FOR YOUR RETURN TO WORK PROGRAM

The Workers' Compensation Board can provide advice, support and guidance throughout the establishment, development and maintenance of your Return to Work program, as well as during future enhancements. A representative will visit your workplace and help you get started.

In addition, the Workers' Compensation Board has produced a Workplace Development Manual for Return to Work Programs. It is available to workplaces throughout Nova Scotia who are interested in establishing their own customized programs. This user-friendly "how to" manual can help you create, design and implement your own workplace Return to Work Program.

PARTNERSHIP: THE GUIDING PRINCIPLE

The key to a successful Return to Work Program is a strong partnership between employers, workers, health care providers, unions, Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committees and the Workers' Compensation Board. This, coupled with a shared commitment to achieve the goal of returning injured workers to safe and suitable employment, will ensure your program's success.

Key Steps to a Successful Return to Work Program

- Involve and communicate with your workforce.
- Organize a Joint Return to Work Committee.
- Select a Disability Management Coordinator.
- Evaluate the needs of your workplace.
- Develop a return to work policy and define the program's scope.
- Formulate the objectives of your Return to Work Program.
- Review your worksite accident history.
- Create rules and processes.
- Conduct a job hazard analysis.
- Develop suitable alternate work assignments.
- Create an information package.
- Organize a Return to Work Team.
- Facilitate communication, education and promotion.
- Evaluate and assess your program.

CONTACT US. WE ARE HERE TO HELP.

Contact us with questions about injury prevention and return to work at any time.

Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia (Prevention Services)

5595 Fenwick Street
P.O. Box 1150
Halifax, NS B3J 2Y2

Toll free in mainland Nova Scotia: 1-800-870-3331

Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia (Sydney)

336 Kings Road, Suite 117
Sydney, NS B1S 1A9

Toll free in Cape Breton: 1-800-880-0003

Many documents and helpful information are available online. Visit our website at:

www.wcb.ns.ca

Special thanks to our partners and affiliated agencies for their participation, information and support.

Nova Scotia Environment and Labour

Toll free: 1-800-952-2687
www.gov.ns.ca/enla

Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

**Workplace Health and Safety and
Compensation Commission, New Brunswick**

**Canadian Centre for Occupational Health
and Safety, Ontario**

HEALTH AND SAFETY CHECKLIST



**WORKERS'
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DRIVING OUR AGENCY FORWARD WITH RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

