
Tips on selecting an OHS consultant

OHS information for employers

This resource provides tips on selecting an occupational health and safety (OHS) consultant.

KEY INFORMATION

- Employers are required to protect the health and safety of their workers and other people at the work site.
- In some situations, such as when special expertise is needed, employers may choose to hire a consultant to assist them in ensuring the work site is healthy and safe.

Why might I want to hire an OHS consultant?

Under the OHS legislation, employers are required to protect the health and safety of their workers and other people at the work site. Often, employers rely upon themselves or their workers to ensure the work site is healthy and safe. In some situations, an employer may choose to hire a consultant to assist them, such as when special expertise would help address a complex or technical issue.

Enlisting the services of a consultant does not relieve employers of their responsibility to ensure the health and safety of their workers and other people present at the work site. For this reason, it's important for employers to select a consultant who is properly qualified to provide the necessary services within any specific timelines that are required.

Categories of consulting services

OHS consulting services may be available for a variety of topics. Some common examples of these topics are:

- Occupational hygiene
- Occupational health
- Workplace safety
- Safety engineering
- Ergonomics
- Security

Tables 1 and 2 on the next pages provide additional details about these common categories, including examples of the types of consulting work in each category, the credentials of consultants who typically do such work, and which categories various OHS subject areas fall under.

TABLE 1: EXAMPLE CATEGORIES OF OHS CONSULTING ¹

OHS consulting category	Examples of consulting work	Examples of consultant credentials ²
Occupational hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify hazardous environmental conditions and recommend ways to prevent injury or illness to workers. • Measure and improve environmental air quality. • Perform noise exposure assessments. • Perform chemical exposure assessments. • Recommend ways to reduce exposure to chemical, biological, physical, or ergonomic hazards. • Inspect asbestos abatement projects. • Prepare hazardous materials assessment. • Conduct radiation measurements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designations such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Registered Occupational Hygienist (ROH). – Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH). – Registered Occupational Hygiene Technologist (ROHT). – Occupational Health and Safety Technologist (OHST). • Degrees or diplomas with coursework in occupational hygiene, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bachelor of Science (BSc). – Master of Engineering (MEng). – Master of Public Health (MPH). – Diploma in Industrial or Occupational Hygiene.
Occupational health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop measures to enhance the physical, mental, and social well-being of workers and prevent work-related injuries and illnesses. • Advise on Workers' Compensation Board claims involving disability case management and return-to-work programs, as well as claims not related to work. • Conduct employee health assessments. • Promote active worker participation in health and wellness activities. • Assist with monitoring and evaluation of health and safety programs. • Conduct radiation dose assessments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered Nurse designations, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Certified Occupational Health Nurse (COHN). – Certified Occupational Health Nurse (Canada) (COHN(C)). • Degrees with coursework in occupational health, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BScN). – Bachelor of Nursing (BN). • Physician designation, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Fellow of The Royal College of Physicians of Canada, specializing in Occupational Medicine (FRCPC (Occ. Med.)). • Radiation designation, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Doctorate in Medical Physics (PhD) with specialization in radiation.
Workplace safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop procedural controls to prevent injury to workers or loss of property. • Identify hazards and recommend ways to prevent injuries. • Investigate incidents. • Conduct radiation safety audits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designations such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Canadian Registered Safety Professional (CRSP). – Certified Safety Professional (CSP). – Occupational Health and Safety Technologist (OHST). • A degree or diploma related to OHS with two or more years of related work experience.
Safety engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, manufacture and operation of structures, machines, processes, products, and systems. • Assess the safety of a piece of equipment (or re-certify it) and provide best practices on its operation and maintenance. • Classify areas under the Canadian Electrical Code. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designations such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Professional Engineer (P. Eng.) with specialization in area related to consulting service. – Professional Technologist (Engineering) (P. Tech. (Eng.)). • Bachelor of Engineering degree (B. Eng.).

¹ The services and expertise offered by a consultant in one consulting category may overlap with those of another category, and a mix of several categories of expertise may be available at individual consulting firms.

² This is not an exhaustive list of credentials. In some instances, OHS legislation may require specific expertise or credentials (e.g., Professional Engineer); in those cases, the relevant legislation must be followed.

TABLE 1: EXAMPLE CATEGORIES OF OHS CONSULTING (CONTINUED)

OHS consulting category	Examples of consulting work	Examples of consultant credentials
Ergonomics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and arrange work tasks, environment, conditions, and equipment so workers can interact efficiently, comfortably, and safely. • Design work and layouts to prevent repetitive strain injuries and back pain. • Incorporate ergonomic principles into design of a product or machinery to prevent injuries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designations such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Canadian Certified Professional Ergonomist (CCPE). – Certified Professional Ergonomist (CPE). • Bachelor's or Master's degree in Ergonomics, Kinesiology, Engineering, or Occupational Therapy.
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and review violence and harassment prevention and mitigation programs. • Develop personal security procedures for employees who travel. • Train employees to deal with emergencies and disasters. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designations such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Certified Protection Professional (CPP). – Certified Security Consultant (CSC). – Registered Psychologist (RP). • A degree in Psychology or Criminology. • Police or emergency preparedness work experience.

TABLE 2: COMMON SUBJECT AREAS OF OHS CONSULTING ¹

Subject area	Example categories of consulting expertise					
	Occupational hygiene	Occupational health	Workplace safety	Safety engineering	Ergonomics	Security
Air quality	•					
Asbestos	•	•				
Audiometry		•				
Audits			•			
Biological and medical monitoring		•				
Chemical exposure	•	•				
Course development	•		•			
Cranes			•	•		
Electromagnetic radiation	•					
Emergency response planning	•		•			•
Engineering				•		
Environmental health	•	•				
Ergonomics		•			•	
Fall protection			•	•		
Fire/explosion			•	•		•
First aid		•				
General safety	•	•	•		•	•
Hazard Assessment	•	•	•	•	•	•
Hearing conservation	•	•				
Incident investigations	•		•	•		•
Indoor air quality	•					
Laboratory analysis	•					
Mould	•					
SDS preparation	•					
Noise measurement and control	•					
Occupational health nursing		•				

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TABLE 2: COMMON SUBJECT AREAS OF OHS CONSULTING (CONTINUED)

Subject area	Example categories of consulting expertise					
	Occupational hygiene	Occupational health	Workplace safety	Safety engineering	Ergonomics	Security
Occupational hygiene	•					
Occupational physicians		•				
Publication development	•	•	•		•	
Radiation health and safety	•	•	•			
Respiratory protection	•	•				
Risk management	•	•	•	•	•	•
Road safety			•	•		•
Site inspection and assessment	•		•	•		•
Standards development	•	•	•	•	•	
Toxicology	•	•				
Training	•	•	•		•	•
Transportation of dangerous goods	•					
Ventilation systems	•			•		
WCB claims management		•				
WHMIS	•					

Industry associations and health and safety associations

Industry associations or health and safety associations may offer a variety of OHS services, such as:

- Health and safety training specific to your industry.
- Providing information or guidance on a variety of OHS topics.
- Health and safety advisory services specific for your company.

A list of health and safety associations that are certifying partners in Alberta's voluntary Certificate of Recognition program is available at alberta.ca/find-certifying-partner.aspx.

Contact us

OHS Contact Centre

Anywhere in Alberta

- 1-866-415-8690

Edmonton and surrounding area

- 780-415-8690

Deaf or hard of hearing (TTY)

- 1-800-232-7215 (Alberta)
- 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)

Notify OHS of health and safety concerns

alberta.ca/file-complaint-online.aspx

Call the OHS Contact Centre if you have concerns that involve immediate danger to a person on a work site.

For more information

Certificate of Recognition certifying partners

alberta.ca/find-certifying-partner.aspx

Guide to OHS: Employers (LI009)

ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li009

OHS approved training

alberta.ca/ohs-approved-training.aspx

Report a workplace incident to OHS

alberta.ca/ohs-complaints-incidents.aspx

Website

alberta.ca/ohs

Get copies of the OHS Act, Regulation and Code

Alberta Queen's Printer

qp.gov.ab.ca

OHS

alberta.ca/ohs-act-regulation-code.aspx

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