

Health and Safety Committee/Health and Safety Representative Manual

A resource manual for course facilitators, participants,
committee members and representatives

Archived

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Joint Work Site Health and Safety Committee/Health and Safety Representative Manual

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About this resource

This manual was developed as a resource for approved training agencies and facilitators to guide them in their development and delivery of approved Joint Work Site Health and Safety Committee (HSC) and health and safety (HS representative) training courses. The content found within this manual is referenced in the **Curriculum Standard** and will serve as a valuable reference for course developers, course participants, HSC members, employers and workers.

This information in this manual can help all workplace parties work together to keep the work environment healthy and safe by providing a broad overview of Alberta's occupational health and safety (OHS) requirements. "Health and safety" includes physical, psychological and social well-being.

The content of this document will assist HSC co-chairs and HS representatives in understanding their legislated duties and functions.

Each section addresses one of the prescribed learning objectives in the **Curriculum Standard**, though not in the same order. The sections contain a range of information from various sources that help the reader understand the concept being presented. There are a number of additional resources referenced. The last sections contain a glossary of commonly used terms and a selection of templates that are easily adaptable for your workplace.

Learning outcomes

Upon completing the HSC/HS representative course, participants should demonstrate understanding of the presented concepts by the following learning outcomes.

Section	Learning Outcome
1.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the purposes of the OHS Act, Regulation, and Code.
2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Describe the Internal Responsibility System.• Explain the three basic rights all workers have.• Apply procedures regarding right to refuse unsafe work to given situations.• Explain the prohibition against discriminatory action.
3.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the criteria to determine if an HSC or HS representative is required.• Identify the unique needs for HSC/HS representatives on multi-employer work sites.• Summarize the duties and functions of a committee and representative.
4.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the purpose of an HSC's rules of procedure (terms of reference).• Summarize training requirements for HSC members and representatives.• Explain the purpose of analyzing minutes from committee meetings.
5.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the HSC/HS representative role in hazard identification and control.
6.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the HSC/HS representative's role in workplace inspections.
7.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain the HSC/HS representative's role in incident investigations.
8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create appropriate HSC recommendations for employers.• Describe the roles and responsibilities of HSCs and HS representative, in addressing workplace violence and harassment.
9.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• List the traits of an effective HSC and explain the purpose of conducting an evaluation of the committee's effectiveness.

1. Health and Safety Legislation

1.1 Purpose of the OHS Act, Regulation and Code

A safe and healthy work environment is a goal everyone shares. For that reason Alberta's OHS Act is an important piece of legislation that affects you. The OHS Act sets standards to protect and promote the health and safety of workers throughout Alberta. It outlines your responsibilities as an employer, as well as the responsibilities of others working at, or involved with, the work site.

The OHS Act gives the government authority to make regulations and codes (or rules) about health and safety in the workplace. Under the legislative framework, the OHS Act prescribes basic duties and obligations of employers and workers.

Section 2 of the OHS Act, lists its purposes as follows:

- (a) the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, psychological and social well-being of workers
- (b) to prevent work site incidents, injuries, illnesses and diseases
- (c) the protection of workers from factors and conditions adverse to their health and safety,
- (d) to ensure that all workers have
 - i. the right to be informed of work site hazards and the means to eliminate or control those hazards
 - ii. the right to meaningful participation in health and safety activities pertaining to their work and work site, including the ability to express health and safety concerns
 - iii. the right to refuse dangerous work
 - iv. the ability to work without being subject to discriminatory action for exercising a right or fulfilling a duty imposed by this Act, the regulations or the OHS code

The OHS Regulation addresses requirements related to general administrative matters and health and safety rules and regulations.

The OHS Code specifies detailed technical standards and safety rules that employers and workers must comply with to fulfill their obligations. Technical requirements cover areas such as equipment safety, noise, chemical hazards and first aid, to name a few.

1.2 Requirements for training in the OHS Act

Section 29 of the OHS Act lists requirements for training of HSC co-chairs and HS representatives.

Training of committee members and representatives

29(1) Where a joint work site health and safety committee is established, an employer or prime contractor, as applicable, shall ensure that the co-chairs of the committee receive training respecting the duties and functions of a committee.

(2) Where a health and safety representative is designated, an employer shall ensure that the representative receives training respecting the duties and functions of a representative.

(3) Where a member of a joint work site health and safety committee or a health and safety representative gives reasonable notice, an employer shall permit the member or representative to take time away from the member's or the representative's regular duties to attend health and safety training programs, seminars or courses of instruction.

(4) The amount of time allowed annually for training under subsections (1), (2) and (3) is the greater of

(a) 16 hours, or

(b) the number of hours the worker normally works during 2 shifts.

This section of the act indicates that HSC co-chairs and HS representatives need to receive training respecting the duties and functions of committees and representatives.

1.3 Role of Health and Safety Committee and Health and Safety Representatives

An HSC is a group of worker and employer representatives working together to identify and solve health and safety concerns at the work site. They also promote awareness and interest in health and safety. An HS representative works with the employer to identify and solve health and safety concerns at the work site. HSC and HS representatives form an important part of the internal responsibility system and help ensure that work site parties are aware of their roles and responsibilities in the workplace.

HSC and HS representatives have a number of duties and functions outlined under Section 19 and 20 of the OHS Act to help prevent injuries and illness. These duties are to:

- receive and address concerns and complaints about the health and safety of workers;
- participate in the identification of hazards to workers or other persons arising out of, or in connection with, activities at the work site;
- develop and promote measures to protect the health and safety of persons at the work site and checking the effectiveness of the measures;
- cooperate with an OHS officer exercising their duties;
- develop and promote programs for education and information concerning health and safety;
- make recommendations to the employer, prime contractor or owner respecting the health and safety of workers;
- participate in investigations of serious injuries and incidents at the work site;
- maintain records in connection with concerns and complaints;
- attend to other matters relating to the duties of the HS representative, including work refusals; and
- other duties as may be specified in the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS Act), Regulations and Code.

Other duties of a HSC outlined in the Regulations and Code are to:

- establish a terms of reference;
- inspect each work site at least once before each quarterly meeting;
- consult with employer and review programs that address workplace violence and harassment;
- consult with the employer in the development and implementation of hazardous product procedures; and
- not disclose workers personal information unless disclosure is required by law.

2. Internal Responsibility System (IRS)

2.1 What is an IRS?

Everyone in the workplace has a role to play in keeping workplaces safe and healthy. Workers in the workplace who see unsafe acts or conditions have an obligation to report the situation to the employer or the supervisor. Employers and supervisors are, in turn, required to advise of all known or reasonably foreseeable hazards in the work they do. Because employers have the greatest degree of control over the workplace, they also have the greatest degree of legal responsibility for health and safety. But, this does not relieve supervisors and workers from their duty to cooperate in controlling workplace hazards and to take the necessary precautions to protect themselves and others from hazards.

The Internal Responsibility System (IRS) is the model for the OHS Act. The IRS puts in place an employee-employer partnership to ensure a safe and disease free workplace.

Every workplace party (worker, supervisor, manager, senior executive, etc.) is responsible for health and safety and has specific roles to maintain a safe and healthy workplace as well as improve unsafe working conditions if necessary. OHS obligations are identified in Part 1 of the OHS Act for the following parties that have a degree of control over the workplace:

- employers;
- supervisors;
- workers;
- suppliers;
- service providers;
- owners;
- contractors;
- prime contractors;
- self employed; and
- temporary staffing agencies.

Having health and safety responsibilities designated to various parties within the Act does not alone make an IRS successful. A successful IRS depends on a workplace culture that portrays positive attitude and cohesiveness. An acceptance and understanding of OHS responsibilities as well as an accountability system for these responsibilities is of utmost importance.

2.2 Due Diligence

Due diligence is the ability to demonstrate that a person did what could reasonably be expected under their circumstances, in order to satisfy a legal requirement. A due diligence defence depends on your ability to demonstrate the actions taken before an incident occurs, not after.

Due diligence is providing reasonable efforts to comply with the legislation. Even within the best health and safety systems, non-compliance may occur from time-to-time, and those incidents of non-compliance may result in a serious incident.

To prove that everything reasonable has been done and due diligence has been applied, it is necessary to consider the following items:

- 1) *Foreseeability* — could a reasonable person foresee that something could go wrong?
- 2) *Preventability* — is there an opportunity to prevent an injury or incident?
- 3) *Control* — who has the ability or responsibility to prevent an injury or incident from occurring?

2.3 The Three Rights of Workers

Right to know

Workers have the right to know about the potential hazards and have access to basic health and safety information in the workplace.

- All employers must inform workers about potential hazards.
- All work site parties must ensure information on health and safety hazards is available onsite.

Employers are responsible for making their workers aware of the workers' rights and duties under OHS legislation. Workers must also be made aware of any health and safety hazards at the work site. This awareness allows workers to actively participate in preventing and resolving OHS issues at the work site.

Right to participate

Workers have the right to be:

- involved in health and safety discussions: and
- participate in health and safety committees.

The right to participate ensures workers have an opportunity to participate in decisions that affect their health and safety at work. For most of Alberta's workers, this participation is through their HSC or HS representative, however, other workers may not have an HSC or HS representative, but they have options for how they can participate.

Right to refuse dangerous work

Under Section 31 of the OHS Act, workers have the right to refuse any work they believe on reasonable grounds that there is a dangerous condition at the work site or that the work constitutes a danger to the worker's health and safety or to the health and safety of another worker or another person. A work refusal is initiated by the worker and when initiated in good faith shall not result in discriminatory action by the employer.

The type of danger that would trigger a refusal could include:

- a danger that is not normal for the job;
- a danger that would normally stop work; or
- a situation for which the worker isn't properly trained, equipped or experienced.

If a worker believes that the assigned work is dangerous, the refusal and the reason for the refusal are to be promptly reported to the employer or supervisor. If the dangerous condition is not remedied immediately, the condition is inspected by the employer, the worker reporting the refusal and another worker.

- If you have an HSC, this worker will be the co-chair who represents the workers.
- If you have an HS representative, this will be the worker.
- If you have no HSC or HS representative, a worker will be selected by the worker refusing to do the work.

The legislation stipulates who the other worker shall be when it comes to the inspection depending on the circumstances of your workplace.

The employer is responsible to prepare a written report of the refusal to work, the inspection and any actions taken. This report must be given to the worker who refused the dangerous work, the HSC if one exists or the HS representative if one exists. The employer must ensure that this report does not contain any personal information related to the worker who refused dangerous work.

Until the dangerous condition is remedied the worker who reported may continue to refuse the dangerous work.

When a worker has refused dangerous work, the employer is not permitted to assign another worker to do the work. When the employer has determined that the work does not pose a danger to the health and safety of any person, they may assign another worker to perform the work. The employer shall advise the worker, in writing, of:

- the first worker's refusal;
- the reasons for the refusal;
- the reason why, in the opinion of the employer, the work does not constitute a danger to the health and safety of any person or that a dangerous condition is not present; and
- that worker's right to refuse to do dangerous work under this section.

Prohibition of discriminatory action

Section 31 of the OHS Act, outlines that workers have the right to refuse dangerous work and are protected from reprisal for exercising this right.

- Workers must continue to be paid while a work refusal is being investigated.
- Employers must ensure workers understand the hazards at the workplace, know what needs to be reported and have the support to exercise their right.
- Employers must investigate the matter in cooperation with the joint work site health and safety committee or health and safety representative, if applicable.
- Employers cannot take or threaten discriminatory action against a worker for exercising their rights and duties under the legislation.

3. Determining Health and Safety Representative and Committee Membership Requirements for Your Workplace

3.1 What is a Health and Safety Committee or Health and Safety representative?

An HSC is a group of worker and employer representatives working together to identify and solve health and safety concerns at the work site. HS representatives also promote awareness and interest in health and safety and take on many of the roles of an HSC.

All workers and employers are accountable for health and safety. HSC and HS representatives form an important part of this internal responsibility system and further ensure that work site parties are aware of their roles and responsibilities in the workplace.

3.2 Health and Safety Committee requirements

When 20 or more workers are at a work site and when work is expected to last 90 days or more, the employer is required to establish an HSC. On work sites where there are from five to 19 workers employed for more than 90 days, the employer shall ensure that there is a designated HS representative.

If there are 20 or more workers from two or more employers/self-employed persons and the work is expected to last 90 days or more, the prime contractor will coordinate the establishment of an HSC for that work site. If there is no prime contractor, all employers and self-employed persons are collectively responsible to ensure that an HSC is established.

The number of workers must be determined by the full-time and part-time workers (including any self-employed persons) at the work site on a daily basis. This includes the total number of workers on all shifts.

3.3 Health and Safety Representative requirements

On work sites where there are from five to 19 workers employed for more than 90 days, the employer shall ensure there is a designated HS representative.

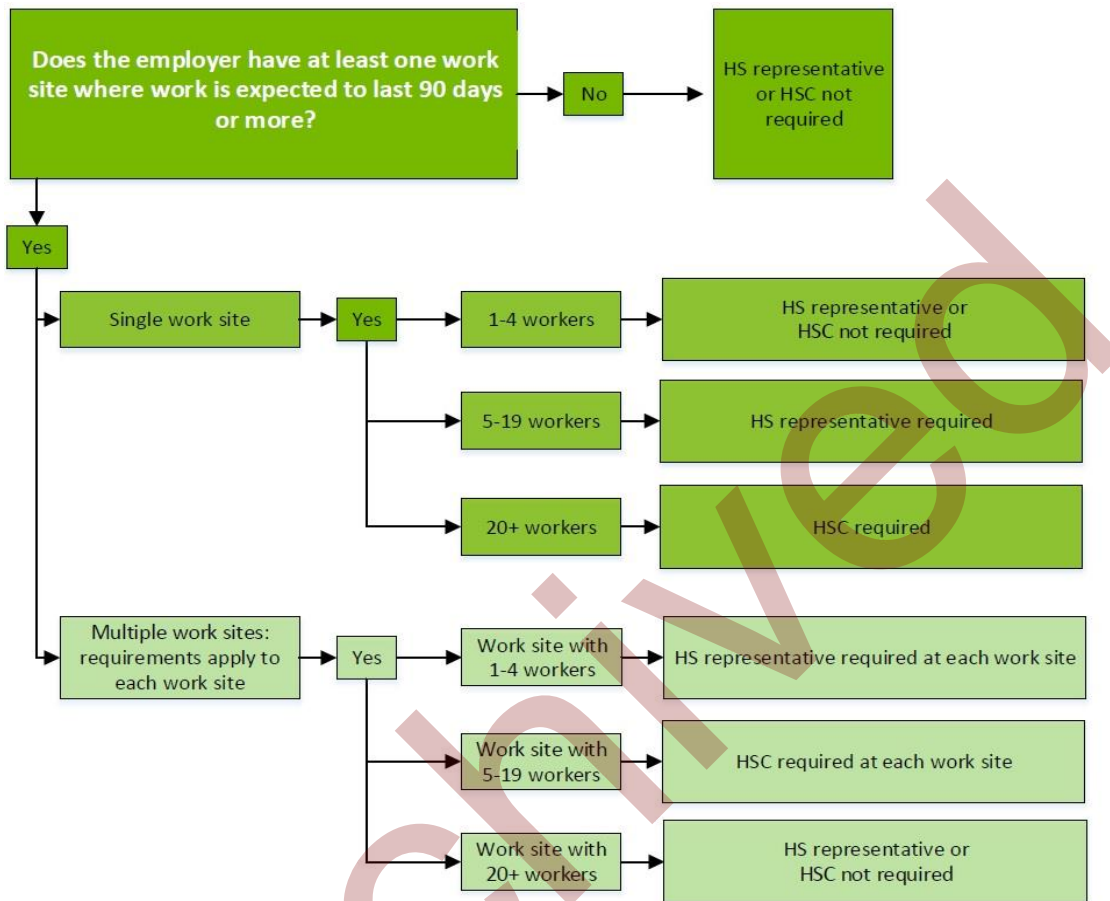
If there are five to 19 workers total, from two or more employers/self-employed persons and the work is expected to last 90 days or more, the prime contractor will coordinate the appointment of a HS representative for that work site. If there is no prime contractor, all employers and self-employed persons shall coordinate the appointment of an HS representative.

The decision trees on the following pages can be used to help determine the need for an HSC or an HS representative.

Figure 1 – Single Employer Decision Tree

Figure 2 – Multiple Employer Decision Tree

Figure 1 - Single Employer Decision Tree – single employer with single or multiple work sites



Notes:

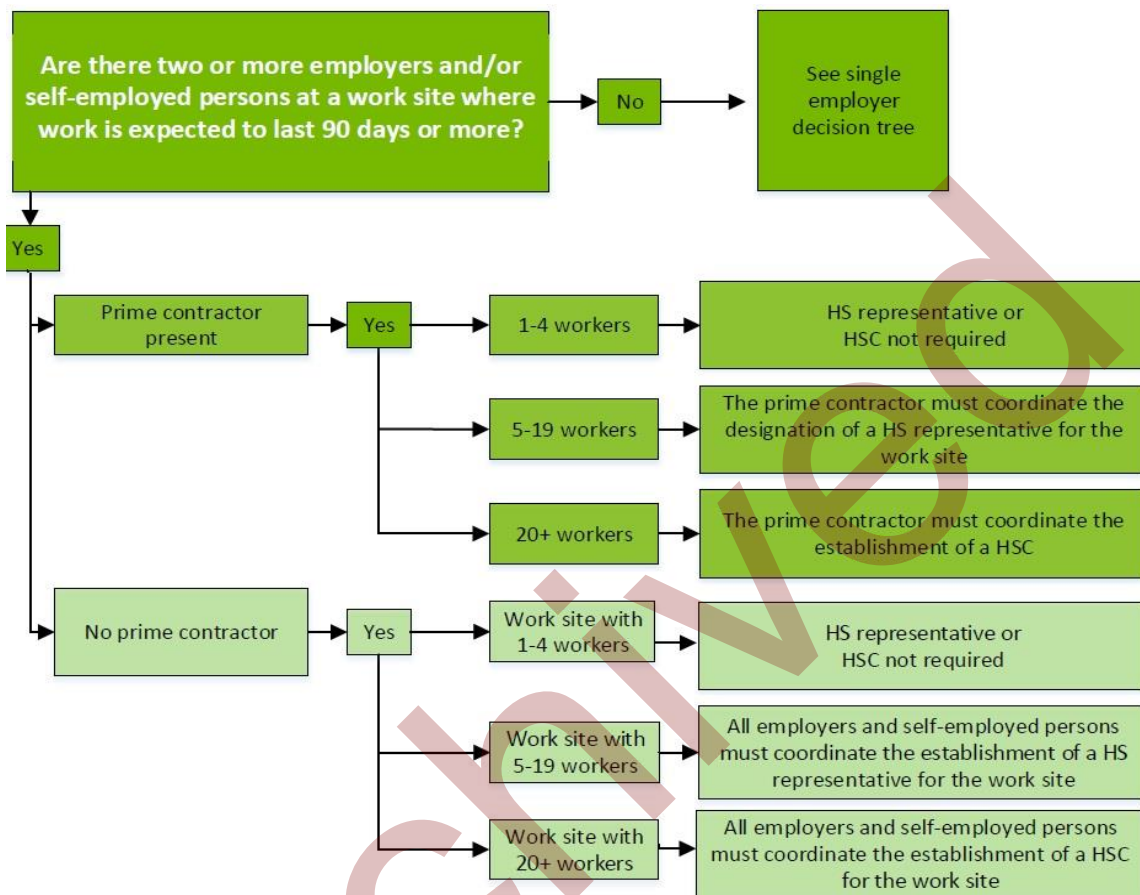
(1) An employer may apply for an approval for variations to the form and function of the HSC under Section 16(4) of the OHS Act or under Section 17(1) for an alternative to HS representative. The alternate measure must ensure the health and safety of workers.

(2) A work site is defined in Section 1(bbb) of the OHS Act as “a location where a worker is, or is likely to be, engage in any occupation and includes any vehicle or mobile equipment used by a worker in any occupation.”

(3) the number of workers is determined by Section 18 of the OHS Act, which states that “the number of workers must be determined by the average number of full-time and part-time workers employed by the employer and self employed persons at the work site on a daily basis on each working day.”

(4) a self-employed person is defined in Section 1(qq) of the OHS Act as “a person who engages in an occupation, but not in the service of an employer for that occupation.”

Figure 2 - Multiple Employer Decision Tree – multiple employers and/or self-employed person



(1) An employer may apply for an approval for variations to the form and function of the HSC under Section 16(4) of the OHS Act or under Section 17(1) for an alternative to HS representative. The alternate measure must ensure the health and safety of workers.

(2) A work site is defined in Section 1(bbb) of the OHS Act as “a location where a worker is, or is likely to be, engage in any occupation and includes any vehicle or mobile equipment used by a worker in any occupation.

(3) the number of workers is determined by Section 18 of the OHS Act, which states that “the number of workers must be determined by the average number of full-time and part-time workers employed by the employer and self employed persons at the work site on a daily basis on each working day.”

(4) section 10(1) of the OHS Act requires that “every construction and oil and gas work site or a class of worksites designated by a Director must have a prime contractor if there are two or more employers or self-employed persons, or one or more employers and one or more self-employed persons involved in work at the work site.

(5) a self-employed person is defined in Section 1(qq) of the OHS Act as “a person who engages in an occupation, but not in the service of an employer for that occupation.”

4. Composition of the Health and Safety Committee

4.1 Committee membership

Number of committee representatives

The minimum number of HSC members required is four, of whom at least half must represent workers who are not associated with the management of the work site. Large employers and complex work sites may require more HSC members to adequately represent the health and safety interests of both workers and the employer. Any decision about the number of members required to create an effective HSC rests with the employer or prime contractor. No upper limit for the size of the committee is prescribed in the Act.

Factors to consider when deciding on committee size should include:

- degree of hazards in the workplace;
- number of employees;
- number of departments;
- number of unions/collective agreements; and
- need to represent different shifts.

Committee co-chairs

Each HSC must have two co-chairs. The co-chairs are responsible for calling meetings and making sure that meetings operate effectively. An employer co-chair is chosen by employer members of the committee; the worker co-chair is chosen by the worker members. The co-chairs shall alternate in serving as chair at the meetings.

Worker members

Worker members of the HSC must be appointed in accordance with the constitution of the union or bargaining agent agreement. If there are two or more unions that have members working for an employer or at a work site, the appointments are made by agreement of the unions. At a work site where there is no union, worker representatives must be selected by the workers they represent.

A worker member of an HSC must:

- (a) work at the work site; or
- (b) in the case of an employer who operates at multiple work sites, be a person directly employed by the employer.

Employer members

An employer member of an HSC must be appointed to the committee by the employer or prime contractor, as applicable.

An employer member of an HSC must:

- (a) be employed at the work site; or
- (b) in the case of an employer who operates at multiple work sites, be a person directly employed by the employer.

4.2 Training requirements

HSC co-chairs and HS representatives must be trained to be able to fulfill their duties and responsibilities. This means that the HSC co-chairs and the HS representative must receive training specific to their duties and functions. To ensure this is accomplished, an employer must use an organization approved by the Minister to deliver this training.

The OHS Act does not require the employer to provide this training to the remaining HSC members; however, an employer shall also permit other HSC members to attend health and safety training programs, seminars, or courses of instruction to advance their overall health and safety knowledge.

The amount of time allowed annually for individual members of the HSC or the HS representative to attend training, is the greater of 16 hours or the number of hours the worker normally worked during two shifts.

Employers can exceed the specified training limits and provide additional training time. During training, HSC members are deemed to be at work and must be paid at the applicable rate of pay.

HSC members and HS representatives are entitled to take time away from their regular duties to perform their required HSC or HS representative work.

HSC members and HS representatives must give the employer reasonable notice to take time away from work for training and performing their HSC duties. It is up to the employer or prime contractor to decide how to maintain work continuity during these periods of time.

4.3 Contact information

Workers and other parties at the work site who want to contact a member of the HSC or the HS representative with a concern or question, need to know who those persons are and how to contact them. It is required that the employer or prime contractor, if there is one, post the names and contact information of HSC members and the HS representative. The information must be posted in a conspicuous location at every work site where workers are represented by an HSC or HS representative.

4.4 Membership term

HSC members or HS representatives are expected to fulfill their duties and hold office for a minimum of one year. They may continue to hold office until a successor is appointed or selected. At workplaces where there is already a union agreement in place, the term of office specified in the union's constitution applies. Where there are multiple unions at a work site, the term of office is to be determined by agreement of all the unions.

4.5 Terms of reference

A terms of reference document is a written set of procedures for how the HSC functions. It is required that the HSC develop a terms of reference to develop structure, roles and responsibilities and terms of office.

An HSC must establish terms of reference that:

- ensures the committee's membership represents all OHS concerns at their work site
- sets out a process for replacing members of the committee if they depart
- establishes a dispute resolution process to use if the committee fails to reach a consensus about recommendations to be put forward; and
- creates a process for coordinating with other HSCs established by the same employer (or prime contractor).

The terms of reference may also address other items to support the effective operation of the committee.

[A terms of reference template and sample are provided in Appendix 2](#)

4.6 Meeting frequency and minutes

HSC meeting frequency

An HSC must meet within 10 days of being established and at least quarterly after that, but can meet more often if they choose to do so. Special meetings may be called at the request of either co-chair to deal with urgent concerns at the work site. An HSC must also convene a special meeting if requested to do so by an OHS officer. Meetings must be held during normal working hours.

The minimum requirement for meetings is intended to encourage the resolution of concerns and issues at regular intervals rather than being allowed to go unresolved for long periods of time.

Health and safety committee meeting minutes

HSC co-chairs must record the minutes of each meeting. Minutes are a written record of what went on at the meeting. The meeting minutes must be:

- (a) recorded and approved. “Approved” is understood as meaning that the minutes are reviewed by those who attended the meeting and are considered to be an accurate record of what happened at the meeting;
- (b) given to the employer or prime contractor within seven days after the meeting;
- (c) posted or provided electronically at the work site within seven days after the meeting;
- (d) saved by the employer or, if there is a prime contractor, the prime contractor, for a period of two years; and
- (e) kept readily available for inspection by an HSC member or an officer, along with any other relevant documents produced by the HSC.

[Meeting minute templates and sample are provided in Appendix 2](#)

Health and safety representative meeting frequency

The HS representative must meet regularly with the employer or, where there is a prime contractor, the prime contractor, to discuss health and safety matters. The OHS Act does not prescribe a minimum number of required meetings. The employer or prime contractor, together with the HS representative, should determine how often meetings should happen.

The HS representative can request a special meeting with the employer or prime contractor. Special meetings allow urgent concerns or issues to be discussed and resolved as needed.

4.6 Quorum

Quorum is the minimum number of members of the HSC that must be present at its meetings to make the proceedings of that meeting valid. Quorum consists of at least half of the committee members as long as representatives from both the employer and workers are present and at least half of the persons present represent workers. A meeting that takes place without a quorum is not considered to be a “valid” meeting of the committee. Because of this, any decisions or recommendations made at the meeting are not binding.

4.7 Employer contractor and prime contractor obligations

Section 200 of the OHS Code states that the employer, contractor and prime contractor, if there is one, must:

- consult and cooperate with all HSC’s and all HS representatives for their work sites to develop policies, procedures and codes of practice required by the Act, regulations and Code;
- provide all members of HSCs and all HS representatives with reasonable opportunity to inform workers on matters affecting OHS;
- ensure records, policies, plans, procedures, codes of practice, reports or manufacturer specifications that must be maintained under the Act, Regulations and Code are available for examination by HSC members and HS representatives; and
- distribute any information or documents addressed to the HSC or HS representative as soon as reasonably practicable.

As stated in section 1.2 of this manual the HSC or HS representative must bring health and safety matters to the attention of the employer, prime contractor or self-employed person responsible for the work site. The OHS Act does not specify timelines for this. How quickly this happens often depends on the health and safety issue of concern and how quickly it needs to be addressed and resolved. Some concerns such as a leaking tank, malfunctioning equipment in frequent use, or missing safeguards need to be brought to the employer’s attention as soon as they are identified. Others may not present an immediate hazard and can be addressed through routine inspections or meetings with the employer.

The following actions are to be taken by the employer, self-employed person, or prime contractor once a matter is brought to their attention:

- if the matter can be resolved within 30 days, employer, self-employed person, or prime contractor proceeds with resolution and informs the HSC or HS representative of the issue and outcomes;
- if resolution will take more than 30 days, inform the HSC or HS representative in writing how and when the concern will be addressed. This must include a timetable for implementing changes to address the matter and identifying any interim control measures;
- when the employer, self-employed person, or prime contractor disagrees with the recommendations of the HSC or HS representative or doesn't accept or believe there is a health and safety concern they must explain reasons for disagreement, lack of acceptance, or disbelief; and
- in cases where the parties involved cannot resolve a problem or address a concern, the matter may be referred to an OHS officer. The officer must review the matter and take appropriate action, if any is required.

5. Hazard Identification and Control

5.1 Hazard assessment duties

An employer must involve affected workers in the hazard assessment and in the control or elimination of the hazards identified. HSCs and HS representatives are required to participate in the identification of hazards to workers or other persons arising out of activities at the work site. HSCs are also assigned the duty to develop and promote measures to protect the health and safety of persons at the work site and checking the effectiveness of such measures.

The OHS Act states that employers are required to identify existing and potential hazards to workers at the work site including harassment, violence, physical, biological and chemical or radiological hazards and measures that will be taken to eliminate, reduce or control their hazards. An employer is required to consult with the HSC to accomplish this. OHS Act, s. 37(1)(b)

The OHS Code goes into further detail outlining what is required of the employer's hazard assessment process.

- An employer must assess a work site and identify existing and potential hazards before work begins at the work site or prior to the construction of a new work site.
- An employer must prepare a report of the results of a hazard assessment and the methods used to control or eliminate the hazards identified.
- An employer must ensure that the date on which the hazard assessment is prepared or revised is recorded on it.
- An employer must ensure that the hazard assessment is repeated:
 - at reasonably practicable intervals to prevent the development of unsafe and unhealthy working conditions
 - when a new work process is introduced
 - when a work process or operation changes
 - before the construction of significant additions or alterations to a work site

Because of the prevalence of hazardous chemical and products in most workplaces, the federal and provincial governments have developed a program to specifically address chemical hazards. The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS 2015) and the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS) program promotes chemical safety by helping suppliers, employers and users of controlled products, hazard identification and product classification, labelling, safety data sheets, and worker education and training.

5.2 Hazard identification

Introduction

Hazard assessment is an essential part of an effective health and safety program. When considering your health and safety system as a whole, hazard assessment is the foundation that the rest of the house is built on.

There are many ways to do a hazard assessment. Employers should customize the process based on their business operations. Two common types of hazard assessments are formal and site-specific. Formal and site-specific hazard assessments may work separately, but are most effective when they are used together.

A formal hazard assessment takes a close look at the overall operations of an organization to identify hazards, measure risk (to help prioritize hazards), and develop, implement and monitor related controls. Worker jobs or types of work are broken down into separate tasks. Formal hazard assessments are detailed, can involve many people, and will require time to complete.

Completing a formal hazard assessment can be broken down into nine steps:

1. determine what people do;
2. list all work tasks/activities;
3. identify hazards of each task;
4. rank the hazards according to risk;
5. find ways to eliminate or control the hazards;
6. implement the selected controls;
7. communicate the hazards and follow the controls;
8. monitor the controls for effectiveness; and
9. review and revise hazard assessment as needed.

A site-specific hazard assessment is performed before work starts at a site and at a site where conditions change or when non-routine work is added. This flags hazards identified at the location (e.g. overhead powerlines, poor lighting, wet surfaces, the presence of wildlife), or introduced by a change at the work site (e.g. scaffolding, unfamiliar chemicals, introduction of new equipment). Any hazards identified are to be eliminated or controlled right away, before work begins or continues.

Site-specific hazard assessments are also known as field level hazard assessments, or FLHAs, and are for use in any dynamic work situation, not just “the field”.

Use FLHAs in addition to, not instead of, formal hazard assessments.

Completing a site specific hazard assessment can be broken down into five steps:

1. look at the site and the day or shift tasks;
2. identify hazards;
3. eliminate or control the identified hazards;
4. communicate – make sure all workers on site are aware of the hazards and understand the controls; and
5. redo the FLHAs if there are unanticipated changes.

Identifying hazards

Keeping workers healthy and safe involves identifying both health and safety hazards.

- *Health Hazard* – anything that could harm someone’s health, either immediately or over time. Examples of health hazards include; exposure to things like asbestos, smoke, lead and the sun.
- *Safety Hazard* – anything that could cause injury or damage. Examples of safety hazards include working at heights, lifting heavy objects and exposure to sharp edges or moving equipment. Injuries caused by a safety hazard are usually immediate (e.g. a broken bone, a sprain or a cut).

Workplace hazards can be grouped into four categories. They may include, but are not limited to:



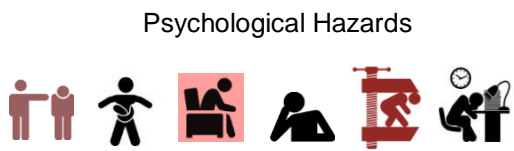
- lifting heavy loads
- repetitive motions
- vibrations
- slipping/tripping
- working at heights
- working around moving equipment/vehicles
- extreme temperatures
- poor lighting
- working alone
- noise
- violence
- radiological energy sources



- chemicals (battery acids, solvents, cleaners)
- fumes
- vapours (spray paint)
- gases
- by-products/waste products from a process



- viruses
- fungi
- bacteria
- moulds
- bodily fluids
- sewage
- animal/pest waste
- pandemic/influenza



- harassment
- stress
- fatigue
- shift work

Hazard Assessment and Control: a handbook for Alberta's employers and workers offers guidelines on how you might perform each type as well as templates. It can be downloaded from the OHS Resource portal at ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bp018

5.3 Hazard control

The OHS Code states that:

9(1) If an existing or potential hazard to workers is identified during a hazard assessment, an employer must take measures to:

(a) eliminate the hazards, or

(b) if elimination is not reasonably practicable, control the hazard.

(2) If reasonably practicable, an employer must eliminate or control a hazard through the use of engineering controls.

(3) If a hazard cannot be eliminated or controlled under subsection (2), the employer must use administrative controls that control the hazard to a level as low as reasonably achievable.




(4) If the hazard cannot be eliminated or controlled under subsections (2) or (3), the employer must ensure that the appropriate personal protective equipment is used by workers affected by the hazard.

(5) If the hazard cannot be eliminated or controlled under subsections (2), (3) or (4), the employer may use a combination of engineering controls, administrative controls or personal protective equipment if there is a greater level of worker safety because a combination is used.

As a first step in hazard control, determine if the hazards can be controlled at their source (i.e., where the problem is created) through applied engineering. If this does not work, try to put controls between the source and the worker. The closer a control is to the source of the hazard, the better. If this is not possible, hazards must be controlled at the level of the worker. Example: Workers can be required to use a specific work procedure to prevent harm.


One type of hazard control may not be effective on its own. A combination of several types of hazard controls often works well. Whatever method you use, the HSC or HS representative should try to find the root cause of each hazard and simply not control the symptoms. Example: It might be better to redesign a work process than improve a work procedure. It is better to replace, redesign, isolate or quiet a noisy machine than to issue nearby workers with hearing protectors.

Control at the source

- *Elimination* – First, try eliminating the hazard. Getting rid of a hazardous job, tool, process, machine or substance may be the best way of protecting workers. Example: A salvage firm might decide to stop buying and cutting up scrapped bulk fuel tanks due to explosion hazards. 
- *Substitution* – If elimination is not practical, try replacing hazardous substances with something less dangerous. Example: Replace a hazardous chemical with a less hazardous one. A safer work practice can be used. Be sure to also identify, assess and control the substitute's hazards. 
- *Redesign* – Sometimes engineering can be used to redesign the layout of the workplace, workstations, work processes and jobs to prevent ergonomic hazards. Example: Redesign containers to be easier to hold and lift. Engineering may be able to improve workplace lighting, ventilation, temperature or process controls.
- *Isolation* – Isolating, containing or enclosing the hazard is often used to control chemical hazards and biohazards. Example: Negative pressure glove boxes are used in medical labs to isolate biohazards.
- *Automation* – Dangerous processes can sometimes be automated or mechanized. Example: Automated welding robots can assemble pipe flanges reducing exposure to the welding hazards and knocking hours of labour hours from each part. Care must be taken to protect workers from robotic hazards. 

Control along the path from the hazard to the worker

Hazards that cannot be isolated, replaced, enclosed or automated can sometimes be removed, blocked, absorbed or diluted before they reach workers. Usually, the further a control keeps hazards away from workers, the more effective it is.

- *Barriers* – A hazard can be blocked. Example: Proper equipment guarding can protect workers from contacting moving parts. Screens and barriers can block welding flash from reaching workers. Machinery lockout systems can protect maintenance workers from physical agents such as electricity, heat, pressure and radiation. 
- *Dilution* – Some hazards can be diluted or dissipated. Example: General (dilution) ventilation might dilute the concentration of a hazardous gas with clean, tempered air from the outside. Dilution ventilation is often quite suitable for less toxic products, however, it is not effective for substances that are harmful in low concentrations. It may also spread dust through the workplace rather than completely removing them.

Control at the level of the worker

Control at the level of the worker usually does not remove the risk posed by a hazard. It only reduces the risk of the hazard injuring the worker and lessens the potential seriousness of an injury. Therefore, most safety experts consider control at the level of the worker to be the least effective means of protecting workers.

- *Administrative controls* – These include introducing new policies, improving work procedures and requiring workers to use specific personal protective equipment (PPE) and hygiene practices. Example: Job rotations and scheduling can reduce the time that workers are exposed to a hazard. Rotate workers through jobs requiring repetitive tendon and muscle movements to prevent musculoskeletal injuries. Noisy processes can be scheduled when few workers are in the workplace. Standardized written work procedures can ensure that work is done safely. Workers can be required to use shower and change facilities to prevent absorption of chemical contaminants. The employer is responsible for enforcing administrative controls.
- *Work procedures, training and supervision* – Train supervisors to apply modern safety management and supervisory practices. Train workers to use standardized safe work practices. Periodically assist the employer to review and update operating procedures and worker training. Refresher training should be offered periodically. Ensure that workers follow safe work practices.
- *Emergency planning* – Implement written plans to handle fires, chemical spills and other emergencies. Train workers to follow these procedures and use appropriate equipment. Provide refresher training regularly.
- *Housekeeping, repair and maintenance programs* – Housekeeping includes cleaning, waste disposal and spill cleanup. Tools, equipment and machinery are less likely to cause injury if they are kept clean and well maintained.
- *Hygiene practices and facilities* – Hygiene practices can reduce the risk of toxic materials being absorbed by workers or carried home to their families. Keep street clothing in separate lockers to avoid contamination from work clothing. Segregate eating areas from work areas. Forbid eating, drinking and smoking in toxic work areas. Where applicable, workers may be required to shower and change clothes at the end of the shift.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) and clothing – Use PPE and clothing when:

- other controls aren't feasible (e.g., to protect workers from noise exposure when using chainsaws);
- where additional protection is needed; and
- where the task or process is temporary (e.g., periodic maintenance work).

PPE is less effective than engineering controls since it does not eliminate the hazard. It must be used properly and consistently to be effective. Awkward or bulky PPE may prevent a worker from working safely. In some cases, PPE can even create hazards, such as heat stress.

The employer must require workers to use PPE wherever it's prescribed by the regulations or organizational work procedures. Workers must be trained to use, store and maintain their equipment properly. The employer, supervisor and workers must understand the limitations of their personal protective equipment.

Selecting controls

Selecting a control often involves:

- evaluating and selecting temporary and permanent controls;
- implementing temporary measures until permanent (engineering) controls can be put in place; and
- implementing permanent controls when reasonably practicable

Example: A noise hazard is identified. Temporary measures might require workers to use hearing protection. Long-term, quieter equipment could replace the current piece or it could be enclosed to isolate the noise source.

Monitoring the effectiveness of controls

Sometimes hazard controls do not work as well as expected. HSC or HS representatives need to monitor the effectiveness of the corrective action taken by the employer during inspections and other activities. Ask these questions:

- Have the controls solved the problem?
- Is the risk posed by the original hazard contained?
- Have any new hazards been created?
- Are new hazards appropriately controlled?
- Are monitoring processes adequate?
- Have workers been informed adequately about the situation?
- Have training programs been modified to deal with the new situation?

Document the effectiveness of hazard controls in HSC minutes and on work site inspection forms.

6. Work Site Inspections

6.1 Work site inspection duties

Section 198 of the OHS Code states that an HSC must inspect each work site at least once before each quarterly meeting.

An HS representative must inspect the work site at regular intervals. An HS representative is required to perform inspections at reasonable intervals as determined with a representative of the employer.

An employer who employs 20 or more workers shall establish, in consultation with the HSC, a health and safety program that includes, at a minimum, the following elements:

- a schedule and procedures for regular inspection of the work site; and
- procedures for worker participation in work site health and safety, including inspections.

6.2 Conducting work site inspections

An inspection is a planned walk-through or examination of a work site that looks at hazards, machinery, tools, equipment and work practices. Regular inspections reduce incidents and occupational illnesses. This is why the HSC must inspect each work site on a quarterly basis prior to the HSC meeting and develop an inspection schedule in conjunction with the employer. All workplace parties have a duty to report hazards and cooperate.

Inspections help the HSC to:

- compare existing conditions with standards, such as regulations and industry practices;
- determine if gaps exist between workplace practices and standards set by the organization, industry or legislation;
- identify the root causes for any gaps; and
- develop recommendations for corrective action.

The HSC can support employers and workers by finding defects they have become used to. Examples: Housekeeping hazards, unsafe work practices and hazards in out-of-the-way places, like storage areas.

Inspections are an excellent way of HSC communicating with workers, and finding and correcting problems before they cause harm. During an inspection, ask workers about their concerns. Knowing about problems is the first step in resolving them.

Publicizing an inspection schedule may encourage people to hide hazards and unsafe work practices. Some HSCs meet shortly after each inspection, providing a chance to discuss the root causes for what was found while memories are still fresh. Effective inspections concentrate on fact finding and not fault finding or blame fixing.

Training for Inspections

The employer, HSC members and HS representatives should be familiar with:

- the training and information needed to work safely;
- work processes and work areas;
- workplace hazards and hazardous areas;
- applicable PPE and its limitations;
- engineering controls in the workplace;
- applicable health and safety standards and legislation;
- the recommendations of equipment and material suppliers;
- how to record information; and
- how to report and deal with concerns.

Planning inspections

The effectiveness of each inspection depends on the ability to measure existing conditions against clearly defined standards. Gather standards from equipment manuals, trade publications, legislation, suppliers and industry associations.

Build standards into checklists and other inspection reporting systems. When planning inspections consider:

- What hazards are likely to be encountered and where?
- What needs to be inspected?
- What aspects of each item need to be looked at and how?
- What conditions and work practices need to be inspected?
- How often must the HSC inspect these items, conditions and work practices?
- Who will conduct the inspections (co-chairs, experienced workers or outside experts)?

Consider the effect of the inspection on work schedules. Example: Will a machine have to be shut down for inspection? Watch for unexpected hazards, like welding outside of designated areas.

Inventories and checklists

An inventory (equipment, materials) tells you what to inspect. A checklist tells you what to look for when you are inspecting each item in the inventory. The HSC can help the employer prepare an inventory of what to inspect.

Prepare checklists using legislation, industry standards, equipment manuals and by interviewing experienced workers. Checklists should be updated regularly.

HSC inspectors must know exactly what to look for. Checklist questions should be as precise as possible. Clearly identify and describe what to inspect in each item and part.

Checklists for jobs that are rarely performed usually will be more detailed than checklists for jobs that are frequently inspected. Look beyond checklists and identify root causes of problems.

[Workplace Inspection Template can be found in Appendix 2](#)

What to inspect

Four things should be inspected regularly.

1. People
 - training
 - work practices, work rules and safety procedures
 - supervision
 - experience

2. Vehicles, tools and equipment
 - machines and mobile equipment
 - production, machine tools and related equipment
 - engines, electric motors and other power supplying equipment
 - electrical equipment, switches, circuits
 - hand tools and equipment, such as wrenches and power tools
 - PPE and clothing
 - first-aid stations and emergency equipment, such as eye washes
 - fire protection and emergency response devices, such as fire extinguishers and water supplies
 - walkways, ramps, docks, parking lots, roadways

- elevators, hoists and lifts
 - storage sheds and areas
3. Chemicals and biological substances
- products controlled under WHMIS
 - biological substances
 - other materials of concern to workers
4. Work environment
- housekeeping
 - dust, fumes and vapours
 - work area design
 - light
 - hot and cold conditions

Pre-inspection meetings

Before the inspection, review documents that may help to identify, assess and control hazards.

Examples:

- *Inspection reports and records of concerns* – These files may show degenerative trends, recurring concerns and ongoing problems.
- *Incident reports, Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) claims and first-aid registers* – These may show where and how people are injured or made sick.
- *Product documentation* – Documents for chemicals, machinery, equipment and tools can help identify hazards and suggest controls. Safety data sheets (SDSs), OHS publications and industry literature can also provide assistance.
- *Plans and diagrams* – Review work process and floor plans to identify hazards, such as work area design flaws.

What to do during inspections

- *Follow up* – Ask workers about the effectiveness of corrective action taken since the last inspection. See if workers, supervisors and maintenance personnel are performing necessary inspections.
- *Communicate with workers* – Ask workers about their concerns.

- *Use monitoring equipment* – Noise monitors, chemical sensing equipment and other devices may be required to detect and evaluate specific hazards. If monitoring is required, the employer must provide equipment and training. If consultants are used, the HSC is to be involved.
- *Take careful notes* – Carefully describe each hazard, its seriousness and where it was found. Note all hazards, even those corrected at once. Precisely explain how to fix each problem.
- *Communicate with supervisors* – HSC members, conducting the inspection, should discuss with the supervisor what they found. The employer should ensure supervisors have a clear idea of what is expected of them and what they should do when a problem is reported. Employers and managers can support supervisors by ensuring they have the authority and resources needed to take corrective action.

6.3 Corrective actions

Handling the results

Reports should help the HSC and employer to identify problems, assess their probability and severity, and take action. Keep careful records of inspections. Inspection records can be useful in tracking the progress of corrective action and identifying degenerative trends.

Report inspection results regularly. Clearly explain each hazard or concern and identify its location precisely.

Add the inspection results and any unresolved concerns on the agenda. Classify and rank the hazards in order of importance. The HSC discusses the agenda and develops proposals for corrective action. Keep some record of the concerns discussed. The co-chairs should discuss the recommendations with the employer.

File copies of each inspection report. Reports may be needed later for WCB claims and investigations, or used by an officer. Post a copy in the workplace to let workers know what is being done about their concerns. Inform workers who have raised concerns.

When an unsafe condition is found

The HSC is expected to bring health and safety concerns to the employer. These include hazards and concerns identified during an inspection or investigation. When the HSC reports an unsafe condition, the employer is expected to:

- protect the health and safety of workers at risk until the unsafe condition or hazard is corrected;
- correct the root cause of the problem; and
- inform workers and the HSC about the corrective action taken or planned.

When the HSC submits a concern to the employer, the employer is expected to deal with it. If a concern is not dealt with, the employer is to provide the HSC with a written explanation.

Work site inspection summary

Inspections compare conditions with standards. They allow the HSC to identify hazards in the workplace, communicate with workers and help the employer correct problems. An effective inspection program can prevent incidents and improve the IRS. Inspections are an essential responsibility of every HSC.

HSCs are involved in regular, planned inspections of the workplace and those conducted by officers. Encourage HSCs to conduct special inspections when necessary. HSC inspections should complement those performed by managers, supervisors and workers.

The employer can help the HSC to carry out inspections:

- providing training;
- providing resources and time;
- helping plan and schedule inspections;
- helping develop inspection checklists; and
- encouraging the HSC to look for the root causes of problems.

Plan to inspect:

- people;
- vehicles, tools and equipment;
- chemical and biological substances; and
- the work environment.

During each inspection:

- follow up on corrective action;
- carefully identify and describe concerns;
- use appropriate monitoring equipment and inspection tools; and
- communicate with workers and supervisors.

Classify and rank concerns, in order of importance, and place them on the agenda. Discuss the results of the inspection at an HSC meeting and develop recommendations for corrective action. Have the co-chairs discuss the recommendations with the employer. The employer must:

- take corrective action to protect the health and safety of workers until the hazard is corrected;
- correct the root cause of the problem; and
- advise the HSC and workers about the corrective action.

If the employer does not agree with the HSC's recommendations, the employer must provide a written explanation to the HSC.

7. Incident Investigation

7.1 Incident investigation duties

Incident reporting duties

The types of incidents and injuries reportable to government are:

- serious injury or incident;
- Potentially Serious Incident (PSI); and
- incident at a mine or mine site.

It is the responsibility of the prime contractor, or if there isn't one, the employer of the work site, to report these incidents.

What is a serious injury or incident?

Serious injuries and incidents that must be reported are ones that:

- result in the death of a worker;
- result in a worker being admitted to hospital;
- involve an unplanned or uncontrolled explosion, fire or flood that causes, or has the potential of causing, a serious injury;
- involve the collapse or upset of a crane, derrick or hoist; and
- involve the collapse or failure of any component of a building or structure necessary for its structural integrity.

An incident is any unplanned event that causes injury. A dangerous occurrence (regulation 9) is any event that could have caused injury but did not. Dangerous occurrences are often called near misses.

A serious injury or incident must be reported as soon as possible to the OHS Contact Centre at 1-866-415-8690.

What is a Potentially Serious Incident (PSI)?

A PSI is any event where a reasonable and informed person would determine that under slightly different circumstances, there would be a high likelihood for a serious injury to a person.

A PSI is not limited to workers and it does not require the occurrence of an injury.

When determining whether an incident is a PSI, the following factors should be taken into consideration:

- actual circumstances of the incident (person, place, time, work practices being followed);
- hazards present at the time of the incident;
- appropriate controls in place at the time of the incident;
- slightly different circumstances (timing, distance, body position, etc.) that may have resulted in a serious injury; and
- similar incidents that have occurred within the employer or prime contractor's operations in the past two years that resulted in a serious injury.

Reports are to be submitted as soon as possible using the PSI Online Reporting Service. The online form can be found at <https://psi.labour.alberta.ca/>.

What types of incidents must be reported that occur at a mine or mine site?

Mines and mine sites must report serious injuries and incidents as well as PSIs. Section 40 of the Act outlines additional incident circumstances that must be reported.

There are separate requirements for reporting injuries to the WCB. These are covered under the *Workers' Compensation Act*, which is different from OHS legislation. For more information and access to WCB publications and forms go to www.wcb.ca.

Investigation duties

In section 1.2 of this manual we learned that the participation in investigations of serious injuries and incidents at the work site is a legislated duty of HSCs and HS representatives.

Section 37 of the Act outlines that employers shall establish procedures for investigating incidents, injuries or refusals to work and ensure these procedures address worker participation.

Section 40(5) of the Act sets out the steps that employers must follow should a serious injury or incident, PSI or mining incident occur. The employer shall:

- report the time, place and nature of the incident to a Director of Inspections;
- carry out an investigation into the circumstances surrounding the injury or incident.
- prepare a report outlining the circumstances of the injury or incident and the corrective action, if any, undertaken to prevent a recurrence of the injury or incident;
- ensure that a copy of the report is readily available and provided to an officer on demand;
- provide a copy of the report to a Director of Inspection, the HSC or HS representative, if applicable, or, if there is no committee or representative, make it available to workers once the investigation is complete.

The employer is required to conduct this investigation with the participation of the HSC or HS representative if there is one and to retain the report on file for a period of no less than two years.

It is also important to know that the law states no person shall disturb or conduct work at the scene of an injury or incident unless permitted to do so by a Director of Inspection, OHS Officer or a police officer unless the person is:

- attending to persons injured or killed;
- preventing further injuries or incidents; and
- protecting property that is endangered as a result of the injury or incident.

7.2 Incident investigation process

Introduction

Investigations identify health and safety problems, and help prevent future injuries and incidents. An investigation should not be a blame-finding exercise. Each incident usually has several contributing factors, not all of which are obvious. Investigators must look for the deeper causes and simply not record events. Staff responsible for completing the investigation process should

receive formal training. Thorough and effective cause analysis requires a particular skill set and takes more than just using common sense.

It is important to note the value in reporting all incidents to your employer and investigating all incidents as well, not just incidents that are reportable by law. This includes near misses which are undesired events that under slightly different circumstances could have resulted in personal harm, property damage or loss. A successful incident investigation will identify the cause(s) of the incident and find ways to prevent similar incidents.

By following a standardized process, a completed investigation should be able to answer these questions:

Who was involved or injured?

What occurred?

Where did the incident occur?

When did the incident occur?

Why was the unsafe act or condition allowed?

How can a similar incident be prevented?

Planning investigations

The employer works with the HSC to prepare an investigation plan setting out the following.

Investigations – What incidents and dangerous occurrences will the HSC investigate besides those listed by legislation? The employer and HSC should investigate all incidents and any dangerous occurrence that could have hurt someone.

Procedures – How will the HSC investigate incidents and dangerous occurrences? Employers, HSC members, workers and supervisors should know exactly what to do if an incident or dangerous occurrence happens.

Training – The employer must ensure that HSC members receive training respecting their duties and responsibilities. Each co-chair should attend workshops on how to investigate incidents and dangerous occurrences. Employers are also encouraged to attend training.

Resources – The employer should ensure that the necessary tools and PPE are available.

Incidents and dangerous occurrences often happen because of departures from accepted standards. Example: Sometimes safety devices are disabled to increase production, contrary to the rules.

Generally, investigations should:

- compare what should have happened with what actually happened;
- determine what gap exists between the two;
- determine why the gap developed; and
- recommend appropriate corrective action to prevent a recurrence.

Use legislation, company standards and industry publications to decide what standards should have been in place. This data can also help to decide what corrective action is required.

Carrying out investigations

1. Secure the scene and report the incident or dangerous occurrence

- Assess and stabilize the situation.
- Make the area safe for emergency crews and investigators.
- Deal with the injured.
- Secure the scene and protect evidence until an investigation starts.
- Get the names of witnesses.
- Keep witnesses from talking with each other until they can be interviewed (to keep viewpoints distinct).
- Report any incident or dangerous occurrence listed in the legislation to OHS.

2. Study the scene

All evidence should be identified before it is collected to ensure a thorough investigation. There are four categories of evidence:

1. People
2. Positions
3. Parts
4. Papers

For information to be classified as evidence it has to be verified by the investigator as a contributing factor. Information that cannot be verified will not be classified as evidence.

People

- People are the sources of eye or ear witness testimony to the pre-contact, contact and post-contact phases of an incident.
- People evidence is recorded through their powers of observation and memory.
- People evidence is most fragile because it is subject to:
 - forgetfulness;
 - rationalization;
 - influence by others; and
 - personal conflicts.

Positions

- Positions provide information about physical relationships and sequences during the pre-contact and post-contact phases of an incident.
- The post-contact position information is vulnerable because of movement by emergency crews such as medical teams, firefighters and other people involved in the incident.
- Positions of equipment, structures, objects, etc. are also subject to compromise by:
 - the investigators;
 - bystanders and clean-up workers; and
 - production people in their eagerness to resume full operation.

Parts

- While less fragile in these respects than people and positions, parts are subject to pilferage, corrosion, marring and misplacement.
- The fragility of parts evidence has many facets:
 - internal defects;
 - proper/improper installation;
 - manufacturing standards and tolerances;
 - use of correct parts and materials; and
 - willful or inadvertent abuse.

Papers

- Paper evidence or documents are a potential source of information and the investigator should also collect relevant documents before they are misplaced or altered.
- Paper evidence can include:
 - written job standards;
 - training records;
 - operating instructions; and
 - maintenance records or log books.

3. Collect evidence

Evidence that is collected from people, positions, parts and papers can be supported by collection tools such as sketches, photographs, drawings, diagrams, videotapes, personal notes, reports, documents and interviews to aid the investigator. When collecting evidence the investigator must answer six basic questions: Who? What? Where? When? How? Why?

Who? Learn the names of all the people involved in the incident, not only the person or persons injured, but also any witnesses, others in the area, supervisors, others doing the same kind of work. While you may only speak briefly with them during your initial contact, make sure you know how to get in touch with them later.

What? Describe what happened. Include in your description details of any equipment or materials involved. Be sure you include the exact names of any chemicals. Check the equipment for defects. In your initial description, try to be clear about the sequence of events.

Where? Describe the exact location of the incident. Use a camera to take photographs from several different angles. Make a drawing of the scene. If necessary, include diagrams of specific smaller areas of the scene. Note exits, ventilation, vehicle paths and lighting on the diagram.

When? Specify the time the incident occurred. Note anything significant about the time: "just at shift change," "first day back after layoff." Note weather conditions at the time, if relevant.

How? Describe the sequence of events that led to the incident and its "presumed" causes. Your assessment of how it happened may change as your investigation proceeds, but start with your initial impressions.

Why? This is the hardest part of your investigation, but it is also the reason for it. Start with your initial impressions, but do not stop asking questions until you are satisfied that you know all the causes, direct, indirect and underlying.

4. Interview Witnesses

Accurate interview records help reconstruct what happened and why. Therefore, the employer and HSC should reach an agreement about how to interview witnesses. Example: If the RCMP, police or an OHS Officer have already interviewed witnesses, further statement taking may not be needed.

Contact everyone who can provide information.

- Interview eyewitnesses in private when possible, while memories are still fresh.
- Consider their emotional state, particularly if someone has been killed or seriously injured.
- Use open-ended questions and let the witnesses explain events in their own words.
- Avoid interrupting during their statements. Ask clarifying questions later if necessary.
- Use photographs and drawings to help witnesses remember.

If possible, have each witness visit the scene and show you what he or she saw. Witnesses will have seen events from different perspectives and their statements will often disagree. After you've interviewed eyewitnesses, talk to technical specialists, suppliers and experts. At the end of every interview:

- ask each witness to review their statement;
- clear up anything you do not understand;
- get the phone number and address of each witness; and
- thank each witness.

5. Investigate the Physical Evidence

Study the tools, equipment and product damages. Find out what the physical evidence indicates and why. Look at the details of the work environment. Consider visibility, noise, temperature, humidity and exposure to hazardous substances. Take photographs and make detailed drawings. Describe everything involved in detail, including work procedures and safety policies.

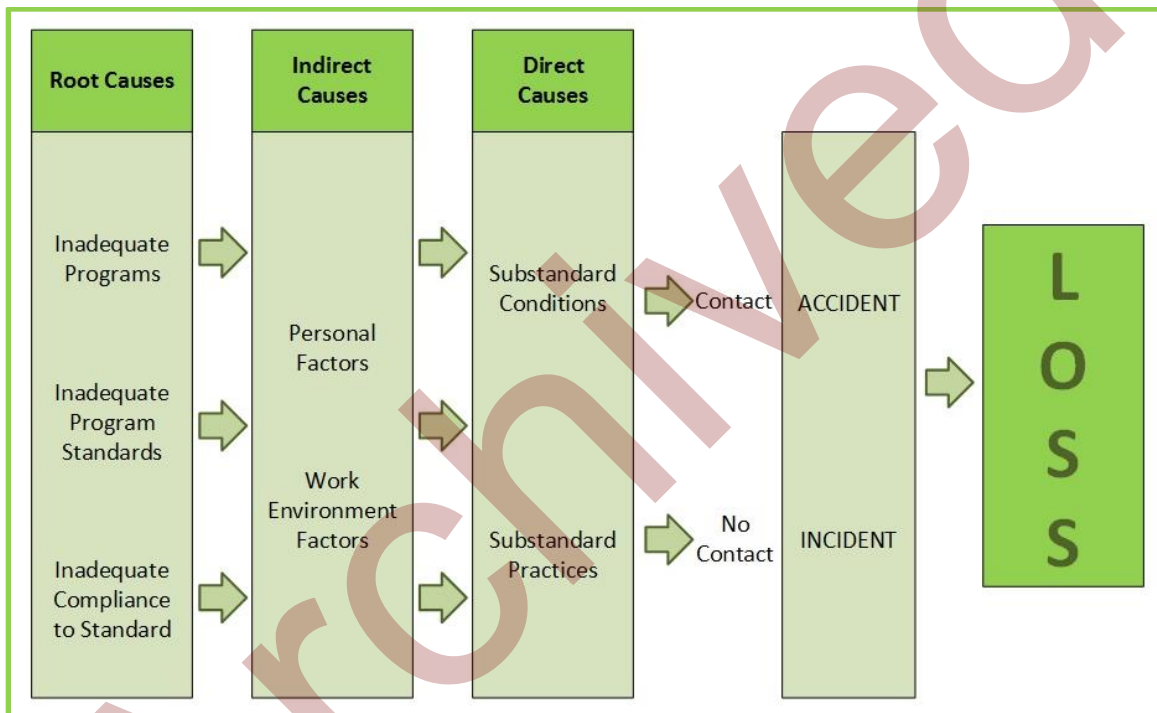
Collect product documentation, including the exact names of substances involved. Gather SDSs, blueprints and workflow diagrams that might help. Find out if any changes in design, products or work procedures were introduced before the incident or dangerous occurrence.

Compare what happened with the requirements of applicable standards. If requirements were not met, find out why.

6. Find the Causes

Usually there are several factors that cause or contribute to an incident. It is important not to focus only on the direct causes, but also look for other factors that may have contributed to the incident. If you do this, you will be more able to improve and prevent reoccurrences.

There are numerous loss causation models available to the incident investigator. A model that has been widely used and referenced, was established by Bird and Gremain and is illustrated below.



Loss causation model adapted from Bird and Germain (*Loss Control Leadership: The Conservation of People, Property, Process and Profits*, Institute Publishing 1985).

A direct cause is an action, event or force that is the immediate, initiating or primary agent which leads to the incident. Direct causes in general relate to substandard conditions and/or practices. There may be several direct causes for an incident.

Substandard Practices	Substandard Conditions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operating equipment without authority ▪ Failure to warn ▪ Failure to secure ▪ Operating at improper speed ▪ Making safety devices inoperable ▪ Removing safety devices ▪ Using defective equipment ▪ Using equipment improperly ▪ Failing to use personal protective equipment properly ▪ Improper loading ▪ Improper placement ▪ Improper lifting ▪ Improper position for task ▪ Servicing equipment in operation ▪ Horseplay ▪ Under influence of alcohol and/or drugs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inadequate guards or barriers ▪ Inadequate or improper protective equipment ▪ Defective tools, equipment or materials ▪ Congestion or restricted action ▪ Inadequate warning systems ▪ Fire and explosion hazards ▪ Poor housekeeping; disorderly workplace ▪ Hazardous environmental conditions; gases, dusts, smokes, fumes, vapors ▪ Noise exposure ▪ Radiation exposure ▪ High or low temperature exposures ▪ Inadequate or excessive illumination ▪ Inadequate ventilation

Once you have identified the direct cause(s) it's time to examine what the indirect cause might be. Indirect causes can be divided into personal factors and work environment factors. Indirect causes alone do not cause the incidents, however, they contribute to the outcomes. There may be several indirect causes for an incident.

Personal Factors	Work Environment Factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inadequate physical/physiological capability ▪ Inadequate mental/psychological capability ▪ Lack of knowledge ▪ Lack of skill ▪ Physical/ physiological stress ▪ Mental/psychological stress ▪ Improper motivation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Inadequate leadership and/or supervision ▪ Inadequate engineering ▪ Inadequate purchasing ▪ Inadequate maintenance ▪ Inadequate tools, equipment, materials ▪ Inadequate work standards ▪ Wear and tear ▪ Abuse or misuse

The root causes of the incident are the source of each of the direct and indirect causes; the most basic conditions that allowed them to occur. Control measures that address the root causes are best able to prevent future incidents. In general, root causes fall into one or more of three categories.

Root Causes

- Inadequate programs
- Inadequate program standards
- Inadequate compliance with standards

7. Take Action

Review what happened at each step in the incident or dangerous occurrence. Prepare a report to describe events and recommend corrective action. Use photos and drawings to illustrate key points.

- Describe the work being done.
- Describe the immediate (direct) cause(s) of the incident or dangerous occurrence;
- Describe the indirect cause(s).
- Explain why the incident happened (the root cause).
- Recommend corrective action, including both short- and long-term controls, to prevent the same thing from happening again (short-term controls should prevent a recurrence until longer-term controls can remove the fundamental causes).
- File a copy of the report and post summaries.

The employer should take appropriate corrective action based on the report and inform the HSC. Inspect the effectiveness of the corrective action.

Review

Incidents hurt people and damage property. Dangerous occurrences are near-incidents that could have hurt someone but did not. Pay particular attention to finding and correcting the causes of dangerous occurrences in order to prevent incidents.

Investigations can identify fundamental weaknesses in hazard controls, suggest improvements and prevent a recurrence. The employer is expected to involve the HSC in investigations.

The employer and HSC should prepare a plan to investigate incidents and dangerous occurrences before one occurs. Include the necessary procedures, personnel and resources.

Begin an investigation by securing the scene and reporting the incident or dangerous occurrence to OHS, when applicable. Identify witnesses and keep them from talking to each other. Next, note everything involved in the incident or dangerous occurrence. Take pictures of anything that could be of significance. Describe and photograph the scene. Interview each witness individually. Study and record the damage done to property and describe the scene in detail. Compare what happened with applicable standards.

Next, analyze the evidence. Find out what directly caused the event. Trace each direct cause back to the underlying causes. Write a report once you are sure that you have found the root cause. Include recommendations for corrective action in the report. The employer should take corrective action and the HSC can follow up.

[Incident Investigation Template can be found in Appendix 2](#)

8. Supporting OHS in the Workplace

8.1 Violence and harassment

Introduction

The potential for work-related violence and harassment is increasingly recognized as a hazard. The OHS Act states that violence, whether at the work site or work related, means the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm, and includes domestic or sexual violence.

Violence, whether at a work site or work related, is defined by the OHS Act as the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm, and includes domestic or sexual violence. Domestic violence is a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another with whom a person has or has had a personal relationship.

Harassment is defined as any single incident or repeated incidents of objectionable or unwelcome conduct, comment, bullying or action by a person that the person knows or ought reasonably to know will or would cause offence or humiliation to a worker, or adversely affects the worker's health and safety and includes:

- conduct, comment, bullying or action because of race, religious beliefs, colour, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation; and
- A sexual solicitation or advance, but excludes any reasonable conduct of an employer or supervisor in respect of the management of workers or a work site.

Legal duties

Section 390.3 of the Code says that when an employer is aware that a worker is or is likely to be exposed to domestic violence at a work site, the employer must take reasonable precautions to protect the worker and any other persons at the work site likely to be affected.

Section 390.4 of the Code indicates that employers must develop and implement a violence and prevention plan in consultation with the HSC or HS representative. The plan must include a violence prevention policy and violence prevention procedures.

Section 390.5 of the Code states that the employer must also develop a harassment prevention plan in consultation with the HSC or HS representative. The plan must include a harassment prevention policy and harassment prevention procedures.

Section 390.7 goes on to state that an employer has the obligation to review these plans and revise the plans if necessary in consultation with the HSC or HS representative. The review of these plans must take place when an incident of violence or harassment occurs or if the HSC recommends a review of the plans – whichever comes first.

8.2 Worker concerns

HSC and HS representatives have been assigned the duty of the receipt, consideration and disposition of concerns and complaints respecting the health and safety of workers.

An HSC can be invaluable in encouraging workers to discuss their concerns and suggest solutions. Methods include:

- Conversations;
- contacts during inspections and investigations; and
- meetings.

Steps in dealing with concerns

1. Encourage workers to bring specific concerns to their supervisor and general concerns to the HSC. Example: A defect in a machine should be drawn promptly to the attention of the supervisor. A concern about the adequacy of training provided to new workers can be brought to the HSC.
2. If the problem cannot be resolved with the supervisor (i.e., management), take it to the HSC for investigation. Keep the worker and supervisor informed during the investigation.
3. If the HSC cannot resolve the concern, call in the co-chairs.
4. If the co-chairs cannot resolve the problem and if the concern is serious, such as a dangerous circumstance or other imminent hazard, call an emergency HSC meeting. If the concern is not an imminent hazard, then it can be tabled at the next meeting.
5. The HSC helps the worker and employer by gathering information on the risks posed by each identified hazard and various alternative courses of action. Collect information from industry safety associations, OHS, equipment, tool and material suppliers. Recommendations should be taken to the employer for corrective action. Keep workers informed.
6. The employer is expected to act on the HSC's recommendation in a timely manner. When the employer takes corrective action, he or she should send the HSC a written

- report describing what has been done. The HSC should file a copy of the employer's report with the meeting minutes.
7. If the HSC cannot resolve the concern with the employer, an OHS Officer should be asked for help.
 8. The status and final resolution of the concern should be communicated to everyone involved. Post meeting minutes, distribute bulletins or hold discussions with workers, supervisors and managers.
 9. The HSC can help everyone concerned by monitoring the effectiveness of the corrective action taken by the employer.

8.3 Recommendations

As we've acknowledged, the making of recommendations to the employer, prime contractor or owner respecting the health and safety of workers is a legislated duty of the HSC and HS representative.

A recommendation form should be developed to assist in standardizing the process and to encourage timely corrective actions by the employer.

When completing a recommendation form:

1. precisely describe the item or problem and its location. Identify the workers affected by the problem;
2. provide any necessary background information and research performed by the HSC to quantify the problem. In the example provided, the HSC monitored noise levels to quantify the exact noise levels workers are exposed to while on the job;
3. state what could happen if the problem is not resolved;
4. precisely describe the proposal. Include the estimated timelines and costs for each recommendation;
5. provide information to support each proposal. In the example provided, the HSC noted why each recommendation is proposed, what services will be required, who can provide them and when;
6. if warranted, propose both short-term (immediate) and long-term (engineering) solutions. In the example, the HSC has suggested a number of actions that can be taken immediately. It has also proposed a long-term engineering solution (sound-insulated control room); and
7. note who will follow up on the corrective action and when.

[Committee Recommendation Template can be found in Appendix 2](#)

8.4 Promoting safety

The Act has assigned HSCs and HS representatives with the duty of developing and promoting programs for education and information concerning health and safety.

8.5 Cooperating with officers

HSC members are required to cooperate with an officer exercising duties under the OHS Act, Regulations and Code. If an officer attends a work site they may request that the HSC worker co-chair, worker co-chair designate, or an HS representative to accompany them on an inspection. An employer is required to provide that person with time away to attend the inspection.

8.6 Maintenance of records

Confidentiality

An HSC, its individual members, or a HS representative, must not disclose a worker's personal information about an identifiable individual unless the disclosure is required by law.

OHS Record Retention

OHS documentation must be retained by the employer for a minimum of two years.

9. Effective HSC characteristics

9.1 Traits of effective health and safety committees and health and safety representatives

Attributes of a good committee member:

- always be ready to listen to the concerns of other workers;
- be sure you use safe work practices yourself, and follow all safety rules;
- ensures that all unsafe equipment and conditions identified are addressed appropriately;
- do not give up on any concern that is unresolved;
- do not become involved in matters that are not health and safety concerns;
- do not exceed your authority;
- do not interfere with equipment controls;
- get help in situations you don't understand.

9.2 Meeting management

Be sure to:

- meet at a set frequency;
- set a meeting time that is convenient for all committee members;
- create an agenda to organize the discussion and ensure members come prepared;
- try to have full attendance at each meeting;
- postpone meetings for emergency reasons only;
- meet at a location that is free from interruptions; and
- run a well-organized meeting that stays on schedule.

9.3 Periodic evaluations

One way to measure effectiveness is to find the answers to these questions:

- Do workers know who their representative is or who members of the HSC are?
- Are the duties and authority known to the workers?
- Is the HSC or HS representative seen by workers and the employer as being useful in providing leadership in safety?
- Are members seen as enforcers or advisors?
- Do workers make suggestions to the HSC or HS representative?
- How many recommendations have been implemented?

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Appendix 1: Glossary

Contractor: Means a person, partnership or group of persons who, through a contract, an agreement or ownership, directs the activities of one or more employers or self-employed persons involved in work at a work site.

Curriculum Standard: means prescribed curriculum content approved training agencies must deliver.

Director of Inspection: means a person appointed under Section 42 of the OHS Act, as a Director of Inspection.

Domestic violence: is a pattern of behaviour used by one person to gain power and control over another with whom a person has or has had a personal relationship.

Harassment is any single incident or repeated incidents of objectionable or unwelcome conduct, comment, bullying or action by a person that the person knows or ought reasonably to know will or would cause offence or humiliation to a worker, or adversely affects the worker's health and safety, and includes; conduct, comments, bullying or actions because of race, religious beliefs, colour, physical disability, mental disability, age, ancestry, place of origin, marital status, source of income, family status, gender, gender identity, gender expression and sexual orientation; and a sexual solicitation or advance, but excludes any reasonable conduct of an employer or supervisor related to the normal management of workers or a work site.

Health and safety: includes physical, psychological and social well-being.

Health and safety program: means a coordinated system of procedures, processes and other measures that is designed to be implemented by organizations in order to promote continuous improvement in occupational health and safety.

Health and safety representative (HS representative): means a worker representative designated under Section 17 of the OHS Act.

Hazard: means a situation, condition or thing that may be dangerous to health and safety.

Hazardous: means likely to cause harm or injury in certain circumstances.

Joint work site health and safety committee (HSC): means a committee established pursuant to Section 16 of the OHS Act.

Minister: means the Minister determined under Section 16 of the *Government Organization Act* as the Minister responsible for the OHS Act.

Training Agency Standard: means the prescribed criteria training agencies must meet to be considered before being approved by the Minister for the delivery of HSC/HS representative training.

Violence, whether at a work site or work related, is defined by the OHS Act as the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm, and includes domestic or sexual violence.

Work site: means a location where a worker is, or is likely to be, engaged in any occupation and includes any vehicle or mobile equipment used by a worker in an occupation.

Appendix 2: Templates and Samples

The following templates and samples have been adapted with permission from WorkSafeBC (Workers' Compensation Board)

- 2.1 Terms of Reference - Template
- 2.1.1 Terms of Reference - Sample
- 2.2 Agenda - Template
- 2.3 Meeting Minutes - Template and Sample
- 2.4 Inspection checklist - Template
- 2.5 Inspection Report - Template
- 2.6 HSC recommendation - Template

2.1 - Terms of reference - template

Joint Work Site Health and Safety Committee Terms of Reference

Introduction

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1
- 1.2
- 1.3

2.0 Membership

- 2.1
- 2.2
- 2.3

3.0 Term of Office

- 3.1

4.0 Functions

- 4.1
- 4.2
- 4.3

5.0 Member Responsibilities

- 5.1
- 5.2
- 5.3
- 5.4

6.0 Entitlements of HSC members

- 6.1 Time to Fulfil HSC Duties
- 6.2 Accompany OHS Officer
- 6.3 Investigations and Work Refusals

7.0 Administrative Processes

- 7.1 Meetings
- 7.2 Minutes
- 7.3 Agenda
- 7.4 Guests
- 7.5 Record keeping
- 7.6 Dispute resolution

8.0 Training

- 8.1
- 8.2
- 8.3

9.0 Review and approval of the terms of reference

9.1 These terms of reference should be reviewed annually and will remain in force and in effect until new terms of reference are entered into.

9.2 These terms of references were last amended on < _date_ > and approved by:

_____	_____
Worker Co-Chair	Date
_____	_____
Management Co-Chair	Date

Distribution: Copy 1 – Workplace Senior Management, Copy 2 – HSC Files, Copy 3 – HSC members

2.1.1 - Terms of reference - sample

Joint Work Site Health and Safety Committee Terms of Reference

Introduction

Alberta's *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act* requires that under certain circumstances an employer establish an HSC in the workplace. In order to work effectively, the HSC's role must be clearly defined, understood and accepted. Detailed terms of reference that set out the mandate, structure and functions of the HSC ensure that its important work can be done.

HSCs are important forums for workers to participate in OHS. They ensure supervisors and workers discuss health and safety issues in the workplace and work collaboratively to find ways to address them. Committees allow workers to participate in OHS and support the three basic rights of workers:

- the right to know;
- the right to participate; and
- the right to refuse dangerous work.

Vital to developing and maintaining healthy and safe workplaces is an effective internal responsibility system (IRS). An IRS functions best when it recognizes the roles and responsibilities of all work site parties and encourages joint participation in recommending solutions to health and safety issues. The HSC is an important part of the IRS in a workplace, representing the collective contributions of workers and employers.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The HSC identifies opportunities and recommends initiatives to promote physical and psychological health and safety and continuous improvement in the operation and effectiveness of the *Insert Employer Name* Health and Safety Program.
- 1.2 The HSC helps department management fulfill their obligation to address employee concerns related to hazardous activities or conditions that affect employee health and safety across the department's business operations.

- 1.3 The Committee promotes and encourages employees to participate in health and safety committees and events at the workplace.
- 1.4 It is understood that these terms of reference shall not amend, alter, subtract from, add to or qualify in any way, the OHS Act, or the terms of collective agreements between the Employer and the union that is the certified bargaining agents.
- 1.5 Any amendments to the OHS Act or collective agreement provisions will be incorporated into the terms of reference, as applicable.

2.0 Membership

- 2.1 A committee consists of a minimum of four members in total with half of the members representing workers and half of the members representing management.
- 2.2 The union that is the certified bargaining agent shall select the worker member(s) of the HSC. If the workplace also includes non-represented workers, the non-represented workers shall have the opportunity to select a worker member from among the non-represented workers in the workplace.
- 2.3 The employer shall select the employer member(s) of the HSC.
- 2.4 A worker member who ceases to be employed at the workplace ceases to be a member of the HSC and shall be replaced as soon as practicable.

Co-Chairs

- 2.5 Each HSC must have two co-chairs; one chosen by the employer members on the committees and the other chosen by the worker members on the committee. The co-chairs shall alternate in serving as chair at meetings of the HSC and shall participate in all decisions of the committee.

Posting of names

- 2.6 The names and contact information of the HSC members or representatives are posted conspicuously at every work site.

3.0 Term of office

- 3.1 The term of office for the HSC members is not less than one year and they may continue to hold office until their successors are selected or appointed. If a union exists and the union's constitution specifies a term of office for the worker members of the HSC committee or the HS representative, the term of office is the term specified in the union's constitution.

4.0 Functions

4.1 The HSC is an advisory body and its main function is to identify, evaluate and make recommendations concerning health and safety hazards and issues in the workplace.

4.2 The HSC will encourage workers to discuss any OHS concern with their manager/supervisor before bringing it to the attention of the HSC.

4.3 All HSC members will strive to fulfil their roles and responsibilities by working cooperatively, following the processes in these terms of reference, and make every effort to reach consensus on issues for the effective operation of the committee

5.0 Member responsibilities

Co-chairs

5.1 Co-facilitate HSC meetings by:

- a) taking a leadership role in guiding Committee discussions towards definite conclusions;
- b) ensuring meeting start and end on time and are conducted in accordance with the established agenda and process;
- c) strive to achieve consensus;
- d) reviewing previous minutes and materials prior to each meeting;
- e) prepare and distribute meeting agenda and materials; and
- f) posts meeting materials to the designated location(s).

5.2 Complete and maintain the HSC minutes

Committee members

5.3 Attend all HSC meetings and, when unable to attend ensure all relevant correspondence and documents are reviewed and any assigned tasks are acknowledged.

5.4 Participate and contribute to the team by representing employees in their respective area of the organization.

5.5 Prior to the meetings review meeting materials.

5.6 Seek input from staff regarding the programs, gaps issues and questions.

Workplace inspections

5.7 A worker member designated by the worker member(s) on the HSC shall inspect the physical condition of the entire workplace every three months.

5.8 A different worker member may conduct each inspection. Where practical, the worker conducting the inspection should be accompanied by a management person for the work area being inspected, or a management member of the HSC.

5.9 The inspections should be undertaken in accordance with a schedule developed by the HSC.

5.10 The schedule should be distributed to all HSC members, the manager(s) of the area(s) being inspected, and posted as appropriate.

5.11 All OHS concerns raised during the physical inspection should be recorded on an appropriate workplace inspection report form.

5.12 The workplace inspection form should be forwarded to all HSC members within one week of the workplace inspection.

Recommendations to the employer

5.12 The HSC will make recommendations to the employer (senior manager or management designee) to improve the health and safety of employees and follow up on the status of the recommendations.

Recommendations could include but are not limited to:

- a) improvements pertaining to health and safety in the workplace;
- b) improvements in response to incidents/accidents in the workplace; and
- c) improvements pertaining to workplace inspections or review of local workplace programs

5.13 The HSC will review responses to their written recommendations.

- a) **Note:** The employer (senior manager or management designee) must provide a written response within thirty (30) days. The response shall contain a timetable for implementation of acceptable recommendations or give reasons for not accepting recommendations.

6.0 Entitlements of HSC members

Time to fulfil HSC duties

6.1 In each workplace, one worker member of the HSC, and not necessarily the same member on each occasion, shall be afforded time from work to inspect the workplace as per the inspection schedule.

Members of an HSC are entitled to:

- a) pre-meeting preparation time;
- b) such time as is necessary to attend meetings of the HSC; and
- c) such time as is necessary to carry out the members' functions and entitlements as outlined in these terms of reference.

6.2 HSC members shall be deemed at work when carrying out HSC functions and entitlements, and shall be paid at the regular or premium rate as appropriate.

Accompany OHS officer

6.3 A worker member of the HSC shall be afforded the opportunity to accompany an OHS officer during an inspection of the workplace.

Investigations and work refusals

6.4 A worker member, designated by the worker members of HSC, shall be afforded the opportunity to investigate the circumstances where a worker from the workplace has been killed or seriously injured, and will report his or her findings to the HSC and to the Ministry of Labour.

6.5 A worker member shall be made available to be present at any inspection into a work refusal by a worker from the workplace and shall attend such inspection without delay.

7.0 Administrative processes

Meetings

7.1 HSC meetings shall be held at least once every three months. A schedule of meetings will be developed by the HSC.

7.2 The HSC shall have a quorum of at least one half of the members if a) both worker and employer members are present and b) at least one half of those present are worker members.

Agenda

7.3 The co-chairs will jointly prepare an agenda and forward a copy of the agenda to all HSC members in advance of scheduled meetings.

7.4 Unresolved items raised from the agenda in meetings will be placed on the agenda for the next meeting.

Guest(s)

7.5 With the consent of the co-chairs, guest(s) may be invited to attend a HSC meeting, as a resource, to provide advice or expertise on specific items.

Minutes

7.6 The HSC will designate a member to take minutes for the meeting.

7.7 All items raised in meetings will be reported in the minutes, along with information as to whether they were resolved or follow-up is required.

7.8 Names of HSC members will not be used in the minutes except to record attendance, or to record the name of the HSC member responsible for completing an identified action.

7.9 Minutes of meetings will be reviewed, edited where necessary and signed by the co-chairs, and circulated within a few days of the meeting to all HSC members with a copy forwarded to the senior manager or management designee of the workplace.

7.10 Minutes should be posted in the workplace within seven days of the meeting and remain posted until the next meeting.

Record keeping

7.11 The HSC shall maintain and keep all agenda and meeting minutes, completed workplace inspection reports, and workplace inspection schedule for review by an OHS officer.

7.12 The HSC shall maintain and keep these terms of reference.

Dispute resolution

7.13 If the HSC fails after trying in good faith to reach consensus about making recommendations to the employer, either co-chair of the HSC has the power to make unilateral written recommendations to the employer.

8.0 Training

8.1 An employer or prime contractor as applicable shall ensure that HSC co-chairs and HS representatives receive training with respect to the duties and functions of a HSC. HSC members, co-chairs and health and safety representatives are to be permitted time away from regular duties to attend training

8.2 The amount of time allowed annually for training is 16 hours or the number of hours the worker normally works during two shifts

9.0 Review and approval of the terms of reference

9.1 These terms of reference should be reviewed annually and will remain in force and in effect until new terms of reference are entered into.

9.2 These terms of references were last amended on < date > and approved by:

_____	_____
Worker Co-Chair	Date
_____	_____
Management Co-Chair	Date

Distribution: Copy 1 – Senior Management, Copy 2 – HSC Files, Copies – HSC members

2.2 Agenda – template

Joint Work Site Health and Safety Committee Meeting Agenda

Date:	
Time:	
Location:	
Roll call:	
Adoption of minutes of last meeting:	
Reports	
First aid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Incidents (non-reportable)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incidents requiring investigation • Optional: property damage incidents, environmental impact incidents, threats of violence
Potentially Serious Incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Serious Incidents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •
Internal Inspections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment • Facilities • Work practices
Other OHS inspections or reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alberta OHS • Health and safety association • COR audit
Training and education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New and young worker training • Equipment and work procedures training • WHMIS • First aid • HSC co-chair and members

Old business

- Review and updates on outstanding business from previous meeting(s)

New business

Adjourn

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2.3 Meeting minutes – template and sample

YOUR LOGO	<h1 style="margin: 0;">Minutes</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">Joint Work Site Health and Safety Committee</p>							
Complete all information in top section: Type or handwrite								
Name of business								
Mailing address				Phone:	Total # of workers in workplace			
Postal Code								
Work site address				Phone:	Meeting date			
				Fax:				
Employer				Worker				
Co-chairperson				Co-chairperson				
Management members	Occupation	Present	Absent		Worker members	Occupation	Present	Absent
Old business:								

Item Date & No.	Problem or Concern	Action Taken or Proposed	Target Date
1. Date 2. Date			
New business:			
Item Date & No.	Problem or Concern	Action Taken or Proposed	Target Date
1. Date 2. Date			
Other Business (including correspondence, HSC administration, etc.)			
Distribute copies as follows: Copy 1 - Permanent Committee Files Copy 2 – Employer Copy Copy 3 – Post on Committee Board for workers' information	In my opinion the above is an accurate record of this meeting <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="text-align: center;"> _____ Employer Co-chairperson </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> _____ Worker Co-chairperson </div> </div> <div style="text-align: right; margin-top: 20px;"> Page ____ of ____ </div>		

YOUR LOGO				<h1 style="margin: 0;">Minutes</h1> <p style="margin: 0;">Joint Work Site Health and Safety Committee</p>				
Complete all information in top section: Type or handwrite								
Name of business								
Mailing address					Total # of workers in workplace			
Postal Code	Phone:							
Work site address	10808 – 99 Avenue				Meeting date			
	Phone: 780-644-8222							
	Edmonton							
	Fax:							
Employer _____				Worker _____				
Co-chairperson _____				Co-chairperson _____				
Management members	Occupation	Present	Absent		Worker members	Occupation	Present	Absent
Old business:								

Item Date & No.	Problem or Concern	Action Taken or Proposed	Target Date
1. Jun 12/18	Air quality in office remains a concern. Three workers off sick with headaches. CO2 levels were tested at 5800 ppm.	Schedule 1 of OHS Code shows allowable carbon dioxide 8-hour average as 5000 ppm. Rhonda inspected and cleaned the HVAC system on June 16. Staff are feeling better. Additional defects noted during the inspection are scheduled to be complete in two weeks.	
New business:			
Item Date & No.	Problem or Concern	Action Taken or Proposed	Target Date
1. Date	July 26 inspection found guards on widget milling machines were removed.	Contravention of Sec.??? Guards replaced. Wayne to review machine guarding with operators during next weeks shift cycle.	
Other Business (including correspondence, HSC administration, etc.)			
Distribute copies as follows: Copy 1 - Permanent Committee Files Copy 2 – Employer Copy Copy 3 – Post on Committee Board for workers' information	In my opinion the above is an accurate record of this meeting <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;"> <div style="border-top: 1px solid black; width: 40%;"></div> <div style="border-top: 1px solid black; width: 40%;"></div> </div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; margin-top: 10px;"> Employer Co-chairperson Worker Co-chairperson </div>		

2.4 Inspection checklist -template

The following inspection checklist is provided to help guide the process of regular workplace health and safety inspections. The template is a guideline only, outlining the most common areas of focus for a workplace safety inspection. The template can be customized to meet the needs of each workplace.

Note that these general safety inspections do not replace the regular pre-use and scheduled inspections required for certain types of tools and equipment.

Inspection completed by: _____

Date and time: _____

For any item identified as deficient (N), use the **Inspection Report** at the end of this checklist to document details of the problem and recommended action.

		Y	N	n/a
#	Facilities and equipment			
	Emergency equipment and procedures			
1	Equipment present and working:			
2	• Fire extinguishers			
3	• Fire detection & suppression systems			
4	• First aid kits			
5	• Eye wash stations			
6	• Emergency lighting			
7	• Alarms			
8	Escape routes and muster points signed			
9	Emergency procedures signed			
10	Emergency contact information posted			
11	Emergency drill performed in last 12 months			
	Floors, walkways, and stairways			
12	Well-lit			
13	No blind corners			

		Y	N	n/a
14	Free of tripping hazards (e.g., clutter, damaged mats, uneven flooring, uncovered cables)			
15	Dry, clean and free of slipping hazards			
16	Railings and guardrails in place and secure			
Entrances and parking lots				
17	Well-lit			
18	Clear of obstructions			
19	Entrances are secured			
20	Clear signage in parking lot (no parking, speed limits, direction of traffic, etc.)			
Shop floors and work yards				
21	Appropriate lighting for work tasks			
22	Air flow and ventilation appropriate for work tasks			
23	Piping for gas, compressed air, etc. clearly labelled			
24	Electrical control boxes have clear access			
25	Circuit breakers and starter switches clearly marked			
26	Adequate heating and cooling			
27	Safe noise levels or hearing protection provided as required			
28	Pedestrian traffic separated from vehicle traffic where practical			
Materials				
29	Stacked materials are stable (interlocked, strapped or other means of restraint)			
30	Stacked materials are not near ignition sources			
31	Stacked materials do not obstruct sprinkler systems			
32	Containers and storage racks undamaged and appropriate for materials			
33	Hazardous materials are properly labelled			
34	Flammable and hazardous materials secured and stored in approved containers			
35	Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) available and less than three years old			
Tools and equipment				
36	Maintenance log up-to-date			
37	Inspection log up-to-date			
38	Warning signage for physical hazards created by equipment and processes			
39	Hazardous points of operation adequately guarded			
40	Safeguards in place, in good condition and cannot be easily removed by workers			
41	Lockout procedures posted			
42	Equipment positioned to avoid endangering other workers			
43	Workers protected from materials ejected from tools or equipment			
44	Equipment controls clearly labelled and within easy reach, but protected from inadvertent activation			

		Y	N	n/a
45	Defective tools and equipment tagged and removed from service			
46	Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) available as required for all workers			
	Ladders			
47	Ladders are appropriate for the work task			
48	Ladders are in good condition with no obvious signs of wear and tear			
	Mobile equipment			
49	Maintenance logs up-to-date			
50	Pre-use inspection logs up-to-date			
51	Operators are trained			
	Vehicles			
52	Maintenance logs up-to-date			
53	Inspection logs up-to-date			
	Other areas of focus			
54	Problems identified in previous inspection(s):			
55	Priority areas as defined by the HSC:			
#	Workplace practices			
	Work practices — general			
56	Workers trained for specific work tasks			
57	Workers supervised for work tasks			
58	Tools used for their designed purposes only			
	Personal protective equipment (PPE)			
59	Workers are trained in correct PPE use			
60	Used consistently and correctly			
61	Maintained in good working order			
62	Inspected and replaced on schedule			
	Ladder use			
63	Workers are not required to carry materials up and down ladders			
64	Ladders are used only for non-routine activities completed in 15 minutes or less			
65	Fall protection used when required			
66	3-point contact maintained			
	Slipping and tripping avoidance			
67	Handrails are used			

		Y	N	n/a
68	Spills cleaned immediately			
69	Well-fitting, non-slip footwear worn			
Ergonomics				
70	Available assistive equipment and/or mechanical aids used			
71	Tasks are varied or rotated to minimize repetitive movement			
72	Loads assessed before lifting or pulling			
73	Loads maintained close to body			
74	Lifting with legs			
75	Upper body kept erect			
76	Natural reaching without having to over-extend			
77	Work stations and seating at proper height			
Safe work practices for high-risk work conform to regulatory requirements and are followed for:				
78	Working at elevation			
79	Asbestos exposure			
80	Exposure to hazardous materials			
81	Working in excavations			
82	Entry into confined space			
83	Working near combustible dust			
84	Hand falling or bucking			
85	Use of explosives, or flammable or combustible materials			
86	De-energization, lockout and safeguarding			
87	Exposure to violence			
Other areas of focus				
88	Problems identified in previous inspection(s):			
89	Priority areas as defined by the HSC:			

2.5 Inspection report -template

Item #	Description of hazard: <i>(specific location and/or equipment, nature of hazard)</i>	
Recommended action: <i>(detailed action, taking account of hierarchy of controls, two or more options where appropriate)</i>		
Person responsible:		Target date:
Item #	Description of hazard: <i>(specific location and/or equipment, nature of hazard)</i>	
Recommended action: <i>(detailed action, taking account of hierarchy of controls, two or more options where appropriate)</i>		
Person responsible:		Target date:
Item #	Description of hazard: <i>(specific location and/or equipment, nature of hazard)</i>	

<p>Recommended action: <i>(detailed action, taking account of hierarchy of controls, two or more options where appropriate)</i></p>	
<p>Person responsible:</p>	<p>Target date:</p>
<p>Report reviewed by: (senior management)</p>	<p>Date:</p>
<p>Comments:</p>	

Archived

2.6 Health and safety committees recommendation - template

HSC Recommendation

Recommendation # _____

Date _____

To: (Owner/Manager) _____

Please respond in writing by _____ (30 days)

Issue

- Give a clear and complete description of the issue.
- Describe what, why, who, where, when and how.
- Reference the relevant section(s) of the occupational Health and Safety Act, Regulation and/or Code where applicable.

Committee recommendation

- Make sure the recommendation deals with workplace health and safety.
- Include rationale for your recommendation.
- If applicable, include options and pros and cons of each.
- For complex issues, include steps involved and suggest timeframe for implementation.

Committee decision

- Indicate if this recommendation was voted on or decided by consensus.

Additional resources and contacts

Health and Safety Committee and Health and Safety Representative bulletins

Do I need a joint work site health and safety committee or a health and safety representative?
OHS information for workers, employers, and prime contractors

<https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li037>

Health and safety representatives - OHS information for workers, employers, and prime contractors

<https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li040>

Worker participation in health and safety - OHS information for workers, employers, and prime contractors, without health and safety committees or representatives

<https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li041>

Hazard Assessment and Control: a handbook for Alberta employers and workers

<https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bp018>

Reporting and Investigating Injuries and Incidents

<https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/Li016>

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) – Alberta Health & Safety Committees and Representatives eLearning

ccohs.ca/distributors/alberta

OHS Contact Centre

Throughout Alberta • 1-866-415-8690

Edmonton & Surrounding area • 780-415-8690

Deaf or hearing impaired: • 1-800-232-7215 (Alberta) • 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)

PSI Online Reporting Service alberta.ca/report-potentiallyserious-incidents.aspx

Website alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety.aspx

Get Copies of OHS Act, Regulation and Code

Alberta Queen's Printer

qp.gov.ab.ca

Occupational Health and Safety

work.alberta.ca/ohs-legislation