

# Health and safety programs

## OHS information for employers, prime contractors and workers

This resource provides an overview of health and safety program requirements from section 37 of the Alberta *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act*, and some related best practices and tools.

As of June 1, 2018, employers who have 20 or more workers are required to implement an OHS program.

Read **Do I need a health and safety program? (LI036-1)** to help determine if you need a health and safety program.



### What are OHS programs?



A health and safety program means a coordinated system of procedures, processes and other measures implemented by an organization to promote continuous improvement in occupational health and safety.

-OHS Act, section 1(w)

The objective of an OHS program is to integrate health and safety into employer practices. An OHS program is a tool to promote health and safety and minimize the risk of injury and illness.

OHS programs, along with joint work site health and safety committees (HSCs) or health and safety (HS) representatives, help build an internal responsibility system by encouraging work site parties to know their roles and responsibilities. OHS programs are developed in consultation with the HSC, if there is one.

### Required elements

A health and safety program required by the *OHS Act* must have the following 10 elements.

#### 1. A health and safety policy

A work site health and safety policy

- demonstrates management commitment,
- guides actions to protect and maintain the health and safety of workers at the work site, and
- is often combined with the statement of OHS responsibilities (see Element 4).

As a best practice, a health and safety policy may also include:

- a statement of the employer's commitment to health and safety, and
- the goals and objectives for health and safety.

For a sample policy, see the templates and samples section at the end of this bulletin. (Also available online as a Word document - link in "For more information" on page 5.)



#### 2. Hazard assessment

A hazard assessment

- identifies existing and potential hazards at the work site,
- includes physical, chemical, biological, and psychosocial hazards, and
- states measures made to eliminate or control those hazards.

Employers with fewer than 20 workers must still involve affected workers and the health and safety representative, if one exists, in hazard assessment and control.

### Learn about health and safety programs

Find more information in **Hazard Assessment and Control: a handbook for Alberta employers and workers (BP-018)**.



### 3. Emergency response plan (ERP)

An ERP identifies the people, resources and procedures needed to deal with emergencies.

The ERP must meet the requirements in the OHS Code Part 7 which include:

- the identification of potential emergencies,
- procedures for dealing with the identified emergencies,
- the identification of, location of, and operational procedures for emergency equipment,
- the emergency response training requirements,
- the location and use of emergency facilities,
- the fire protection requirements,
- the alarm and emergency communication requirements,
- the first aid services required,
- procedures for rescue and evacuation, and
- the designated rescue and evacuation workers.

A sample ERP is included in the templates and samples section the end of this bulletin. (Also available online as a Word document - link in “For more information” on page 5.)



### 4. Statement of OHS responsibilities for the employer, supervisors, and workers at the work site

Employers, supervisors, and workers have a legal responsibility for health and safety in the workplace.

Creating a statement of responsibilities ensures that each party knows their responsibilities. The statement of OHS responsibilities is often included in the health and safety policy.

### 5. Work site inspection schedule and procedures

Work site inspections help to identify and record hazards for corrective action.

Inspection frequency should consider

- type of work site
- work performed
- hazards encountered
- size of the work site
- number of workers



OHS Code Part 13 states work sites with an HSC must conduct quarterly meetings (required by section 27(1)) of the Act) in order to identify health and safety hazards that are not controlled.

For more on inspections, see the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety **OHS Answers: Effective Workplace Inspections** resource in “For more information” on page 5.



### 6. Procedures to follow when another employer or self-employed person is working at the work site



In addition to protecting workers, employers have an obligation to protect, as far as reasonably practicable, “other persons at or in the vicinity of the work site who may be affected by hazards originating from the work site”.

-OHS Act 3(1)(a)(iii)

The prime contractor, if there is one, is responsible for coordinating the health and safety programs of employers or self-employed persons on the work site.

- Prime contractors are required in construction, oil and gas work sites, or any other projects designated by an OHS Director.

If there is no prime contractor, works sites with multiple employers and/or self-employed persons

will work together to coordinate their health and safety responsibilities.

### Coordinating health and safety for multiple work site parties

When many employers or self-employed persons are at a work site, several OHS programs may need to be coordinated.

Establishing and communicating site-specific health and safety procedures to all employers and self-employed persons at the work site will help to control hazards and ensure consistency.

### Evaluation and selection criteria

Procedures must include criteria for evaluating and selecting other employers and self-employed persons at the work site.

### Regular Monitoring

Procedures must include criteria for regular monitoring of employers and self-employed persons at the work site.

Regular monitoring may include inspections or any other activity that verifies compliance with work site specific health and safety policies and the *OHS Act*, Regulations, and Code.

Other considerations when establishing procedures for multiple employers included in the templates and samples section the end of this bulletin. (Also available online as a Word document - link in "For more information" on page 5.)



## 7. Health and safety orientation and training for workers and supervisors

Workers with less than six months experience are three times more likely to be injured than workers with a year or more of experience (Alberta Workers Compensation Board and Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey 2017 datasets). A timely and comprehensive worker orientation is important to help prepare workers to perform their jobs safely.

Section 3(2) of the *OHS Act* states an employer must ensure a worker is adequately trained in all matters necessary to protect their health and safety including before they perform a new work activity,

use new equipment, perform a new process, or is moved to another area or work site.

Training may need to be customized for each work site and job and should assess a worker's competency at completion.

Supervisors likely need additional training on their specific responsibilities and the hazards experienced by their workers.

A sample Worker Orientation Record and a Summary Records of Training template are included in the templates and samples section at the end of this bulletin. (Also available online as a Word document - link in "For more information" on page 5.)



## 8. Procedures for investigating incidents, injuries, and refusals to work



Serious injuries or incidents must be reported to OHS. The definition of serious injuries and incidents is outlined in the *OHS Act* section 40. Any incident that causes an injury or had the potential of causing serious injury to a person must also be reported to OHS.

Any injury that occurs at work must also be reported to the Workers' Compensation Board.

Investigation procedures allow everyone to understand their responsibilities before an incident occurs. Consider the following components when developing investigation procedures:

- the objective of the investigation
- who is responsible for the investigation
- who participates in the investigation
- type of training the investigators will receive
- who receives written investigation reports
- who follows up on corrective action
- internal reporting procedures
- procedures for reporting to OHS
- who maintains documents and records, etc.

For more about incident investigations, see the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety **OHS Answers: Incident Investigation** resource in “For more information” on page 5.



The program must also include a procedure for investigating work refusals as per section 31 of *OHS Act*.

### 9. Procedures for worker participation in work site health and safety, including inspections and investigations

It is important for workers to be involved in efforts to prevent injuries and occupational illnesses.

The OHS program must include procedures for worker participation in work site health and safety, including when safe to do, participation workers to in inspections, and investigations of incidents, injuries and work refusals.

As part of the program, encourage workers to suggest ways to make the workplace safer and healthier.

HSC and HS representatives are one way workers can participate in health and safety.

For more information on HSCs and HS representatives, see **Health and safety committees and representatives (LI060)**.



### 10. Procedures for reviewing and revising the OHS program

Maintaining the program will ensure it continues to support health and safety.

The OHS program must be reviewed every three years or more often if there is a change in circumstance at the work site that creates or could create hazards to workers.

Examples of changes to consider include introduction of new technology or production methods and discovery of new risks associated with existing conditions.

Out of date

## Contact Us

### OHS Contact Centre

Anywhere in Alberta

- 1-866-415-8690

Edmonton & area

- 780-415-8690

Deaf or hearing impaired:

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

### PSI Online Reporting Service

[alberta.ca/report-potentially-serious-incidents.aspx](http://alberta.ca/report-potentially-serious-incidents.aspx)

### Website

[alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety.aspx](http://alberta.ca/occupational-health-safety.aspx)

## For more information

**Do I need a health and safety program? OHS information for employers, prime contractors and workers (LI036-1)**

<https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li036-1>

**Hazard Assessment and Control: a handbook for Alberta employers and workers (BP018)**

[ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bp018](https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bp018)

**OHS Answers: Effective Workplace Inspections**

[www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/prevention/effectiv.html](http://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/prevention/effectiv.html)

**OHS Answers: Incident Investigation**

<https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/investig.html>

**Health and safety committees and representatives: OHS information for employers, prime contractors and workers (LI060)**

<https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li060>

## Get copies of the *OHS Act*, Regulation and Code

Alberta Queen's Printer

[qp.gov.ab.ca](http://qp.gov.ab.ca)

Occupational Health and Safety

[alberta.ca/ohs-act-regulation-code.aspx](http://alberta.ca/ohs-act-regulation-code.aspx)

© 2019 Government of Alberta

This material is for information only. The information provided in this material is solely for the user's information and convenience and, while thought to be accurate and functional, it is provided without warranty of any kind. The Crown, its agents, employees or contractors will not be liable to you for any damages, direct or indirect, arising out of your use of the information contained in this material. If in doubt with respect to any information contained within this material, or for confirmation of legal requirements, please refer to the current edition of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, Regulation and Code or other applicable legislation. Further, if there is any inconsistency or conflict between any of the information contained in this material and the applicable legislative requirement, the legislative requirement shall prevail. This material is current to October 2019. The law is constantly changing with new legislation, amendments to existing legislation, and decisions from the courts. It is important that you keep yourself informed of the current law. This material may be used, reproduced, stored or transmitted for non-commercial purposes. The source of this material must be acknowledged when publishing or issuing it to others. This material is not to be

## Learn about health and safety programs

©2019 Government of Alberta | Published: October 2019 | LI042 | ISBN: 978-1-4601-3824-3





## Health and Safety Policy (Sample)

Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_

### Company Health and Safety Policy

This company is committed to a health and safety program that protects our workers, others (i.e. contractors) who enter onto our property, and the general public.

The employer, supervisors and workers at every level are responsible and accountable for the company's health and safety performance. Active participation by everyone, every day, in every job is necessary for the health and safety excellence that this company expects. Health and safety excellence includes the promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, psychological, and social well-being of all employees. Our goal is a healthy, injury-free workplace for all workers. By working together we can achieve this goal.

#### The employer

- Will ensure:
  - the health, safety, and welfare of workers at the work site,
  - the health, safety and welfare of other persons at or near the work site who may be affected by hazards originating from the work site,
  - that workers are aware of their OHS rights and duties,
  - that workers are not subjected to or participate in harassment or violence at the work site,
  - that workers are supervised by a person who is competent and familiar with the OHS Act, Regulations, and Code,
  - they consult and cooperate with the HSC,
  - that health and safety concerns are resolved in a timely manner,
  - where a prime contractor is required, the prime contractor is advised of all the supervisors and workers names, and
  - that supervisors and workers are adequately trained for the protection of health and safety at the work site.

#### Supervisors

- Will ensure:
  - they are competent to supervise the workers under their supervision,
  - the workers under their supervision work in accordance with procedures and measures required by the OHS Act, Regulations, and Code,
  - the workers under their supervision use all hazard controls and properly uses or wears the personal protective equipment required by the employer or under the *OHS Act*, Regulation or Code, and
  - that workers are not subjected to or participate in harassment or violence at the work site.
- Take all precautions necessary to protect the health and safety of every worker under their supervision.
- Advise every worker under their supervision of all known or reasonably foreseeable hazards to health and safety in the area where the worker is performing work.
- Report concerns about an unsafe or harmful work site act or condition that occurs/exists or has occurred/existed to the employer.

## Appendix – Templates and samples

Workers will:

- Protect the health and safety of themselves and other people at or near the work site.
- Cooperate with their supervisors and employers to protect the health and safety of themselves and others.
- Use and wear devices and personal protective equipment required by the employer or the *OHS Act*, Regulation or Code.
- Refrain from causing or participating in harassment or violence.
- Report concerns about an unsafe or harmful work site act or condition that occurs/exists or has occurred/existed to the employer or supervisor.

In addition, employers, supervisors and workers will:

- Cooperate with any person exercising a duty imposed by the *OHS Act*, Regulations, or Code, and
- Comply with the *OHS Act*, Regulation, and Code and any site policies, procedures, and codes of practice.

Other workers (e.g. contractors, suppliers, or service providers) will comply with the *OHS Act*, Regulation and Code and site policies.

Workers at every level must be familiar with the requirements of the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety legislation as it relates to their work.

-----  
Signed

-----  
Date

This form is for example purposes only. Completing this form alone will not necessarily put you in compliance with the legislation. It is important and necessary that you customize this document to meet the unique circumstances of your work site. Further, it is essential that this document is not only completed, but is used, communicated, and implemented in accordance with the legislation. The Crown, its agents, employees or contractors will not be liable to you for any damages, direct or indirect, arising out of your use of this form.

## Emergency Response Plan – Template (Sample)

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Address or Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Potential Emergencies</b> (Refer to your hazard assessment to determine which hazards could require rescue or evacuation)	The following are identified as potential emergencies:
<b>Emergency Procedures</b> (Detail procedures to be followed for each identified emergency)	If an emergency (identified above) occurs, these steps need to be taken by the assigned personnel:
<b>Locations of Emergency Equipment</b>	Emergency equipment is located at:
	Fire Alarm:
	Fire Extinguisher:
	Fire Hose:
	Panic Button:
Other:	



Appendix – Templates and samples

<b>Emergency Response Equipment Training &amp; Requirements</b>  (List the names of workers trained to use each type of emergency equipment)	<b>Name:</b>	<b>Training Received:</b>	<b>Frequency:</b>
<b>Location and Use of Emergency Facilities</b>	The nearest emergency services are located at:		
	Fire Station:		
	Ambulance:		
	Police:		
	Hospital:		
Other:			
<b>Fire Protection Requirements</b>	Fire protection equipment listed below can be accessed by trained personnel at the following locations:		
<b>Alarm and Emergency Communication Requirements</b>			
<b>First Aid</b>	First Aid Kit Type:		
	Location:		
	Other Supplies:		
	First Aiders are:		
	Work Station & Shift:		
Transportation Arrangements:			
<b>Procedures for Rescue and Evacuation</b>			

View the current version of this publication at <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/li042-health-and-safety-programs>

## Appendix – Templates and samples

Designated Rescue and Evacuation Workers	The following workers are trained in rescue and evacuation: (Name and area of expertise)

This form is for example purposes only. Completing this form alone will not necessarily put you in compliance with the legislation. It is important and necessary that you customize this document to meet the unique circumstances of your work site. Further, it is essential that this document is not only completed, but is used, communicated, and implemented in accordance with the legislation. The Crown, its agents, employees or contractors will not be liable to you for any damages, direct or indirect, arising out of your use of this form.

Out of date

## Multiple employers or self-employed persons at the work site – Additional Considerations

### Coordinating health and safety for multiple work site parties:

Examples of OHS program components that may require a coordinated, site-specific approach include:

- Hazard assessments
- Emergency response plans
- Inspection procedure and schedule
- Health and safety orientation and training for workers and supervisors
- Procedures for investigating incidents, injuries and refusals to work
- Others, depending on the work being performed at the work site and the work site parties involved

### Criteria for evaluation and selection of other employers and self-employed persons:

When hiring other employers or self-employed persons, the employer must consider health and safety criteria in the selection process.

Evaluation and selection procedures with pass/fail criteria may be developed in consultation with the HSC or HS representative. Alternatively, a third party health and safety evaluation service or audit tool may be utilized.

The employer may request documentation such as:

- Health and safety program handbook or manual
- Health and safety policy
- Safe work policies and procedures
- WCB information (premium rate statement, clearance letter, employer report card)
- Certificate of Recognition (COR)
- Health and safety program audit results
- Hazard assessments
- HSC meeting minutes
- Safety meeting minutes, toolbox talks, or pre-job tailgate meeting records
- Worker and supervisor training and certification records
- Other, depending on the work being performed at the work site and the work site parties involved

This documentation may form part of a contractor pre-qualification process that the employer uses to ensure that other employers and self-employed persons equipped to address the health and safety requirements of the job.

### Regular Monitoring

The procedures for monitoring other employers and self-employed persons at the work site could include:

- Defining regular intervals, depending on the type and nature of the work being done at the work site.
- Note: If there is an HSC at the work site, the HSC must inspect the work site at least once before each quarterly meeting. This is the minimum requirement for inspections by the HSC; an employer can exceed that minimum.
- Scheduled formal inspections and occasional visual checks (scheduled and unscheduled).
- Assess the employer's performance against their own written procedures, work site specific health and safety policies, as well as the *OHS Act*, Regulations and Code
- Processes for dealing with non-compliances

*Please note: These are suggested processes and should be modified to suit individual employer's needs depending on the type and duration of the work being done.*

## Worker Orientation Record – Template (Sample)

This is an example of a checklist you may wish to use when training new workers on health and safety in your workplace.

Worker's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Hire: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Orientation: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Orientation Topics Covered?	Yes	No
Rights of workers:		
• Right to know	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Right to participate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Right to refuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Company's health and safety policy	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and safety responsibilities for each work site party	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Health and safety rules	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Site orientation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Review of hazards	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to report unsafe conditions and other health and safety concerns	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to report incidents	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Workplace violence prevention plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Harassment prevention plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Emergency procedures	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Review the ERP	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Location of fire exit(s) and fire extinguisher(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How to get first aid treatment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Location of first aid kit(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Written work procedures (list them here):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Other topics covered (list them here):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Comments:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix – Templates and samples

WHMIS training (if applicable)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Location of Safety Data Sheets (SDSs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of personal protective equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Completion of this form does not indicate competency of workers. It may be used as a record that training has occurred.

This form is for example purposes only. Completing this form alone will not necessarily put you in compliance with the legislation. It is important and necessary that you customize this document to meet the unique circumstances of your work site. Further, it is essential that this document is not only completed, but is used, communicated, and implemented in accordance with the legislation. The Crown, its agents, employees or contractors will not be liable to you for any damages, direct or indirect, arising out of your use of this form.

Out of date

## Summary Record of Training – Template (Sample)

Company: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee's Name	Training Completion Date						Comments	
	Site Orientation	First Aid		Emergency Response Plan	WHMIS	Work Procedures		Other
		Initial	Retraining					



Completion of this form does not indicate competency of workers. It may be used as a record that training has occurred.

This form is for example purposes only. Completing this form alone will not necessarily put you in compliance with the legislation. It is important and necessary that you customize this document to meet the unique circumstances of your work site. Further, it is essential that this document is not only completed, but is used, communicated, and implemented in accordance with the legislation. The Crown, its agents, employees or contractors will not be liable to you for any damages, direct or indirect, arising out of your use of this form.

View the current version of this publication at <https://open.alberta.ca/publications/li042-health-and-safety-programs>