

Occupational health and safety & the non-profit sector

What you should know

OHS and non-profit organizations

- Health and safety for a non-profit should be a common sense approach (what is reasonably practical under the circumstances) so that everyone knows what they need to do and how to support others.
- It is important for non-profit organizations and their volunteers to discuss the hazards they may face. It is also important to talk about how the hazards are being controlled.
- This may include:
 - Holding a meeting before the work begins to identify ways a volunteer could potentially get hurt and how to avoid it
 - Hosting orientation sessions for new volunteers
 - Working together to eliminate the hazards that could lead to illness or injury during work/volunteer activities.
- Non-profit organizations need to ensure volunteers are capable (i.e. competent) of doing the work they are being asked to do – to protect their health and safety and that of the other volunteers and the public.
- Volunteer supervisors should understand what work is happening, the risks of the work, and how to avoid illness or injury.
- Because volunteers sometimes have limited experience, supervisors should:
 - Regularly monitor them to make sure the work is being done safely
 - Ensure they are using protective equipment if required
 - Answer questions or respond to concerns the volunteer may raise

Occupational health and safety

- The purpose of occupational health and safety (OHS) is to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of workers – whether or not they are employees or volunteers.
- OHS considers non-profit organizations employers because they engage a worker and/or a volunteer to do an activity.
- OHS generally considers volunteers to be workers. When an organization asks for volunteers, the organization accepts that the volunteers will do the work and the volunteer shows up to do the work.
- A director or officer of a corporation could be the employer depending on their level of control over the worksite.

We're here to help

If you have questions

- OHS Contact Centre toll free at 1-866-415-8690
- Visit: <http://www.alberta.ca/ohs-resources.aspx>