Emergency numbers

Ambulance:______________________________

Fire:______________________________

Police:______________________________

Poison control:______________________________

Environment:______________________________

OHS Division:______________________________

Other:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

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________________________________________________________________________
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Introduction

This notebook will help you carry out your duties as an occupational health committee (OHC) member. Use it to:

- List concerns that apply to your workplace as you conduct inspections and discuss health and safety issues with supervisors and workers;
- Investigate incidents, dangerous occurrences and refusals to work;
- Plan meetings and prepare recommendations for corrective actions to send to the employer; and
- Track corrective actions taken by the employer.

This notebook is only a summary of your responsibilities. For more information, read the Committee Manual and other resources provided by WorkSafe Saskatchewan and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Division.

This notebook only covers workplaces under Saskatchewan jurisdiction. If you work in a federally-regulated industry, contact the Government of Canada for additional information.
Tips for taking good notes

Number concerns. Use a numbering system to identify and separate concerns.

**Be legible and organized.** Readable, well organized and consistent notes written in ink will help you to understand the facts. Always use the same format, abbreviations, etc.

**Be brief.** Carefully, but briefly, explain what is important. Leave space after each item to enter the details later. If more information is needed, write it on a separate page within 24 hours.

**Be precise.** Use precise words like bent, twisted, frayed, cracked, spilled and slippery. Avoid vague words that are open to interpretation, like unsafe. If confidentiality is not necessary, identify who raised each concern, when and where.

**Illustrate.** Make drawings and take photos to note the location of hazards and concerns.

**Follow up.** State what you have done with each concern. If you refer a concern to someone else, identify who is responsible for taking action. Later, check to see that the person responsible took action.
Shared responsibility

The Saskatchewan Employment Act (SEA) and The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996 (the regulations) are based on shared responsibility. This means that everyone in the workplace has a role in establishing and maintaining healthy and safe working conditions — to the extent that they have the authority, knowledge and ability.

The Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety’s OHS Division administers the legislation.

The employer’s duties

- Provide a safe and healthy workplace.
- Establish an OHC or designate a representative when required and ensure they are effective.
- Consult and cooperate with the OHC or representative.
- Provide the information and training needed to protect the health and safety of workers.
- Ensure OHC co-chairpersons or representative obtain training in their duties and functions.
- Ensure supervisors are competent and provide sufficient supervision.
• Arrange regular examination of the plant (includes tools and technologies of production to ensure their safety).

• Ensure tools, machinery and equipment are maintained properly.

• Ensure workers are not exposed to harassment.

• Enable the OHC or representative to inspect the workplace regularly.

• Promptly correct unsafe conditions, contraventions and activities reported by the OHC or representative.

• Ensure that the OHC or representative investigates incidents and dangerous occurrences as required by the legislation.

• Know and comply with health and safety requirements.

The supervisor’s duties

Supervisors are workers and bear all of the health and safety responsibilities assigned to workers. However, they are also agents of the employer and often are assigned significant responsibility for carrying out the employer’s duties under the legislation.
Supervisors have specific duties under the legislation:

• Ensure workers under their direction know and comply with health and safety requirements.

• Ensure workers under their direction receive sufficient supervision.

• Ensure workers know and follow health and safety requirements.

• Cooperate with the OHC or representative.

• Know and comply with health and safety requirements.

The worker’s rights

The SEA provides three basic rights:

1. The right to know about the hazards in the workplace, how to identify them and how to protect themselves.

2. The right to participate in making occupational health and safety decisions through consultation with OHCs, representatives and other workers.

3. The right to refuse work that the worker believes to be unusually dangerous.
The worker’s duties

- Understand and follow legislation and workplace health and safety requirements.
- Follow safe work procedures.
- Use safety equipment, machine guards, safety devices and personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Report unsafe acts and workplace procedures.
- Report incidents, near misses, injuries or illnesses immediately.
- Work and act safely and help others to work and act safely.
- Cooperate with the OHC and others on health and safety issues.
- Refrain from causing or participating in harassment.

The OHC’s role

OHCs help implement the right to participate. The OHC’s job is to monitor the employer’s workplace responsibility system (WRS) and help keep it effective:

- Help workers to get their concerns resolved by the employer.
- Inspect the workplace regularly.
• Investigate certain incidents, dangerous occurrences and refusals to work (SEA 3-31) to find the root cause and make recommendations to prevent similar incidents.

• Help the employer develop and maintain required occupational health and safety programs, policies, plans and procedures.

• Hold meetings to discuss concerns and prepare recommendations for the employer.

• Track corrective action taken by the employer to see that it has been effective.

You are protected

SEA 3-35 prohibits employers from acting against OHC members and others for fulfilling responsibilities or exercising their rights under the legislation.
Conducting inspections

*What to inspect*

**People**, including:

- Orientation, training and job experience;
- Work practices, rules and procedures; and
- Adequacy of health and safety supervision.

**Vehicles, tools and equipment**, including proper use and upkeep of:

- Electrical equipment, switches, circuits, etc.;
- Elevators, hoists and lifts;
- Engines, electric motors and other power supplying equipment;
- Fire protection and emergency response devices such as fire extinguishers and water supplies;
- First-aid stations and emergency equipment such as eye wash stations;
- Hand tools and equipment such as wrenches and power tools;
- Machines and powered mobile equipment;
- PPE and clothing;
- Production machine tools and related equipment;
- Walkways, ramps, docks, parking lots, roadways, etc.; and
- Storage sheds and areas.
Chemical and biological substances, including proper use, storage, labelling and disposal of:

- Products controlled under Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS 2015);
- SDSs and container labels;
- Biological substances; and
- Other materials of concern to workers.

Work environment, including:

- Air quality, noise, dust, fumes and vapours;
- Space and work area design; and
- Illumination and hot and cold conditions.

Policies, plans and procedures, such as:

- Harassment policies;
- Violence policies;
- Elements of any occupational health and safety program required at the workplace;
- Fire and emergency plans;
- Requirements of any code of practice applying to the workplace; and
- Plans dealing with the control of exposure to chemicals and infectious substances (if required).

Common issues that concern workers.
Filing claims with the Workers’ Compensation Board (WCB)

If you are injured at work, take the following steps:

Get medical attention if you need it. Your employer should provide appropriate first aid and arrange immediate transportation so you can receive treatment from a qualified health care professional.

Have your caregiver report to the WCB.

Report the incident to your employer immediately. Your employer is expected to submit an Employer’s Initial Report of Injury (E1) within five days.

Complete and submit the Worker’s Initial Report of Injury (W1) as soon as possible. Filing your claim online or faxing it will help the WCB process your claim promptly.

Participate with your employer, caregiver and the WCB in setting up a personalized return-to-work plan. The plan usually includes treatment, employment services and suitable work duties.

Training and education

WorkSafe Saskatchewan offers training for OHCs, representatives and supervisors. Visit the WorkSafe Saskatchewan website at www.worksafesask.ca for more information.
Investigating incidents

The employer reports incidents and information listed in regulations 8 and 9.

The employer and co-chairs (or designates) investigate as required by regulations 29 and 31.

- Describe the incident or dangerous occurrence.
- Include any photos, drawings, other evidence, etc.
- Determine the cause or causes.
- State what corrective action was taken to prevent a recurrence.
- State the long-term measures taken to remove the root cause.

The employer writes final report in consultation with the co-chairs.

The employer provides a copy of the report to an occupational health officer if asked.

We encourage employers to investigate any incident that does (or could have) hurt someone.
How to investigate

Use the acronym CART (collect evidence, analyze evidence, report and take action) to remember the steps in the investigation.

1. Collect evidence
   - **Physical evidence**, such as the positions of incident debris, broken parts, skid marks and the type of damage done to tools, machinery and equipment.
   - **Documents**, such as equipment manuals, SDSs, work procedures, computer files and legislation.
   - **Witnesses**, such as those who saw the incident, were first on the scene and specialists familiar with the technology and work practices associated with the incident. Include workers and supervisors working on shifts before the incident and those working in nearby areas.

2. Analyze the evidence
   Organize the facts, then find the:
   1. **Direct causes.** Determine what led directly to the incident. Cause of injury is associated usually with statements like caught in, caught on, fall on same level, fall to lower height, struck by, struck against, slip, overcome by, contact with, etc.
2. **Indirect causes.** Next, identify what conditions set the stage for the incident (i.e., unsafe acts or unsafe conditions that contributed to the incident).

3. **Root/Basic causes.** Examine the employer’s occupational health and safety system (e.g., policies, procedures, plans, etc.) to see if there are any fundamental flaws.

3. **Report**

   Once you are satisfied that you know what happened and why, write the report.
   
   • Explain what happened and why.
   
   • Propose what to do immediately to prevent the incident from happening again. Address the direct and indirect causes of the incident.
   
   • Propose what to do in the longer term to remove fundamental weaknesses that lead to the incident. Address the indirect and root causes.

4. **Take action**

   The employer takes action.

For more information, read the Incident Investigations Guide, available online at [www.worksafesask.ca](http://www.worksafesask.ca).
Investigating concerns

OHC’s can be invaluable in encouraging workers to discuss concerns and suggest solutions before they become refusals.

- Workers bring specific concerns to their supervisor and general concerns to the OHC.
- OHC member looks into unresolved concerns.
- Co-chairs investigate concerns the OHC member cannot resolve.
- The OHC meets (next meeting or a special meeting) to discuss concerns the co-chairs cannot resolve.
- Contact OHS Division if the OHC and employer need help or cannot resolve the concern.
- Tell workers what was done.
- Check effectiveness of corrective action.
Investigating refusals

Under SEA 3-31, each worker has the right to refuse work that they believe is unusually dangerous. The unusual danger may threaten the worker or others. An unusual danger 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.

SEA 3-31 applies only to occupational health and safety issues and is an individual decision that has to be based on a personal belief that the work is unusually dangerous. During a refusal, the refusing worker is protected from discriminatory action, as defined in SEA 3-1(1)(i) and described in SEA 3-35.

The employer must inform replacement workers and workers who are expected to do the same job on other shifts about the refusal and the reasons for it.

OHCs must investigate refusals when required. While anyone involved may contact OHS Division for help and advice during a refusal, the OHC should try to resolve the matter internally first.
The investigation — refusals

Worker has reasonable grounds to believe that the job is unusually dangerous.

Step 1: Supervisor
Refusing worker informs supervisor that job is being refused for health and safety reasons. Supervisor and worker attempt to resolve concern - supervisor may reassign worker during investigation. Worker does not leave the worksite without permission of employer.

Worker satisfied?

Yes → Back to work.

No →

Step 2: Co-chairs
Co-chairs investigate and attempt to resolve the concern, but do not rule on the refusal.

Worker satisfied?

Yes → Back to work.

No →
Step 3: Emergency OHC meeting

OHC investigates. A unanimous vote by a quorum is required to rule on a refusal. OHC sends recommendations to the employer. Employer responds. Document a refusal.

Worker satisfied?

Yes → Back to work.

No →

Step 4: OHS Division

An OHO investigates and delivers a ruling.

Appeal

Anyone directly affected may appeal the OHO’s decision. The decision remains in force during the appeal, unless suspended.

Keep workers informed as to what has been done.

Follow up.
OHC meetings

Meet at least once every three months. Hold extra, or special, meetings when needed.

Ensure that a quorum is present. At least half of the OHC membership is present. Half the members who attend must represent the workers and at least one employer member must be present.

Manage the meeting

- Get consensus on the agenda.
- Deal with unfinished and new business.
- Provide adequate time to discuss each agenda item.
- Prepare recommendations.
- Prepare OHC minutes.

Present recommendations to the employer. Employer responds (regulation 28).

Follow up on corrective action

- Does each person know what to do and when?
- Are deadlines realistic?
- Are resources identified and provided?
- Is there a contingency plan?
- Is implementation monitored?
- Are results monitored and evaluated?