

# Health & safety of workers orientation & training



## Guide for employers

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## Please note

This publication is not designed to interpret Saskatchewan's Occupational Health and Safety legislation. Use [The Saskatchewan Employment Act](#) (the Act) and *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020* (the Regulations) whenever you wish to interpret or apply the law.

Occupational Health and Safety — industries under federal jurisdiction — such as transportation, broadcasting and telecommunications, are governed by the [Canada Labour Code](#). If you work in a federally regulated industry, contact the appropriate federal agency for information, or visit [Employment and Social Development Canada](#).

To order a paper copy of Saskatchewan's Occupational Health and Safety legislation, visit [Publications Saskatchewan](#).

## Introduction

*Orientation* is the process of introducing new, inexperienced and transferred workers to a workplace. This would include the other people in the workplace, such as their supervisors and co-workers, as well as their work areas and jobs.

The initial period of employment is critical. During this phase, each worker develops the knowledge, skills, attitudes and abilities that are necessary to work successfully. Unfortunately, workers are injured or killed every year because they are not properly informed about workplace hazards, or properly trained to do their jobs safely.

Planning and organizing an effective orientation is vital to preventing injuries and fatalities, particularly when a worker starts a new job or returns after an extended absence. Pay particular attention to workers who are:

- transferred to jobs or work areas they are unfamiliar with;
- returning from an extended period away from work;
- new to your workplace; and
- new to the work force.

[\*The Saskatchewan Employment Act\*](#) and Section 3-8 of *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020* state the requirements for training workers at a place of employment.

Section 3-8(1) requires employers to provide all workers who are new, inexperienced and transferred from one work activity or worksite to a different work activity or worksite with a basic orientation to keep them and everyone else in the workplace safe.

Under section 3-8(2) of the Regulations, orientation training must include

- procedures to be taken in the event of a fire or other emergency;
- the location of first aid facilities;
- identification of prohibited or restricted areas;
- precautions to be taken for the protection of the worker from physical, chemical or biological hazards;
- any procedures, plans, policies and programs that the employer is required to develop pursuant to the Act, or any regulations made pursuant to the Act that apply to the worker's work at the place of employment; and
- any other matters that are necessary to ensure the health and safety of the worker while the worker is at work.

Training must be on-going to protect the workers' health and safety. On-going training is important to:

- remind workers about hazards in the workplace, safe work processes and other policies and procedures;
- address changes in the workplace that may impact health and safety, like new equipment, new policies and procedures or changes in legislation; and
- provide an opportunity for workers to ask questions that may have arisen since their last training, and to share their experience with co-workers.

Orientation is usually provided by supervisors and/or human resource personnel. On-going and more technical training is often provided by a number of sources, including supervisors, managers, subject experts, suppliers and web-based training programs.

No matter how training is provided, it is always a good idea for an employer to keep a written record of all training and orientation provided to workers.

<sup>1</sup> **Train** means to give information and explanation to a worker with respect to a particular subject- matter and to require a practical demonstration that the worker has acquired knowledge or skill related to the subject matter (Section 3-1(1)(ff) of the Act).

## How to use this guide

This guide will help:

- employers and supervisors orient and train workers;
- workers understand what to look for in an orientation;
- occupational health committees (OHC), worker occupational health and safety representatives (OHS representative) and human resource personnel check the effectiveness of their workplaces' orientation and training; and
- teachers become more aware of what information should be provided to their work placement students.

Use the checklist located in the Appendix as a general guideline for orientation and training at your workplace. Remember that every workplace is unique. There may be other items to consider and include for your specific operations.

## Organizing an orientation

- Immediately
- During the first week or so
- Ongoing
- An example of how to organize an orientation

### Introduction

Since people learn at different rates and in different ways, it can be challenging to establish a firm orientation timetable or master lesson plan. However, you must have a systematic method to ensure every orientation provides the right material at the right time.

When you plan an orientation, try to avoid ‘information overload.’ Do not cover everything at once. Spread your orientation over several days, or a week or two. Give information in short, easy to understand sessions. Make your points brief and clear. Regularly repeat critical information to promote understanding.

Ask a reliable, safety conscious worker to be the new worker’s ‘safety buddy’ or partner in case the worker has questions. A buddy system should help the new, inexperienced or transferred worker adopt safety conscious attitudes and work practices, as well as respect for the hazards of the job.

### Immediately

When the worker starts with the organization, or is transferred to a new job within the organization:

1. Give general health and safety information about your business, your products and services, and the job.
2. Provide health and safety information required by the legislation.
3. Tell the worker that you will be available for questions afterwards.

## During the first week or so

1. Arrange training that will cover:
  - your workplace's health and safety expectations;
  - a description of the job and its hazards; and
  - the safety requirements for the use of tools, equipment, machinery, personal protective equipment and materials.
2. Address any questions from the worker and make sure they understand critical information.
3. Plan any general training the worker will need to work safely at your workplace. For example, arrange for the worker to receive general workplace hazardous materials information system (WHMIS) training.
4. Begin workplace-specific training. Assign an experienced employee to the new worker as a 'safety buddy.'
5. Supervise the worker closely to ensure understanding. Remember that new and inexperienced workers require more supervision than experienced workers.
6. Correct unsafe activities and reinforce safe work practices.
7. Monitor performance to ensure that work is being done safely. Regularly repeat critical information to make sure the worker does not forget it.

## Ongoing

1. Update workplace orientation and training as conditions change (e.g., new equipment is introduced, work procedures are implemented/updated etc.).
2. Continue to provide additional training as workers' assigned tasks expand.
3. Provide refresher training.



## An example of how to organize orientation training

The following flowchart shows one way of organizing orientation. You can adapt it to suit your needs.

General orientation:					
Hours of work and time keeping	Pay procedures	Collective agreement	Annual vacation	Public holidays	Sickness and absences
Employment contract	Telephone numbers	Parking and public transport	Specific work rules of the employer	Lunch facilities	Locker rooms and toilets
Workplace tour and introductions	Personal information form	Computer use	Security	Social activities	



General health and safety orientation – required information:					
Workplace hazards	General duties of employer	General duties of worker	Right to know, participate and refuse	How to address health and safety concerns	Procedure for exercising right to refuse
Role of worker in OHS system	Safety and performance evaluation	Policies, programs and procedures	Harassment policy	Violence policy	OHS program
OHS regulations applying to job	Location of legislation	Workplace OHC or representative	How to contact OHC or representative	OHC bulletin board	Right to contact an occupational health officer



Workplace-specific health and safety training:					
Emergency procedures	First aid supplies and facilities	Prohibited or restricted areas	Associated safety rules	Housekeeping requirements	General WHMIS information
SDS and how to access them	Specific WHMIS training	Reporting accidents and dangerous occurrences	Handling controlled products	Handling other products	Personal protective equipment (PPE)
How to use emergency eye wash stations and showers	Smoking restrictions	Introduction of the worker's 'safety buddy'	How to do the job safely	Specific OHS regulations	

## Providing information and training

- What information must be provided?
- What training must be provided?
- How can the employer follow up?

### Introduction

This section reviews general information and training that orientation must include to meet OHS regulatory requirements.

The Appendix contains an orientation planning checklist that highlights the key requirements of the Act and the Regulations. Remember that every workplace is unique. There may be other items to consider and include for your specific operations.

### What information must be provided?

Tell workers about:

- anything in your organization that could affect their health and safety, such as hazards in the workplace and in their jobs;
- their rights under the legislation including the right to know, participate and refuse unusually dangerous tasks;
- how they will be involved in health and safety (introduce the worker to a member of your OHC or your safety representative);
- any prohibited or restricted areas, tools, equipment and machinery;
- required health and safety procedures, plans, policies and programs in the workplace;
- precautions the workers must take to protect themselves from physical, chemical or biological hazards at the workplace; and
- the location of first aid supplies and facilities.

### Tell workers how to handle health and safety concerns

When new or inexperienced workers see a hazard<sup>2</sup>, they should be encouraged to follow these steps:

1. Control the hazard if the worker has the authority, training and experience to do so.
2. If the worker cannot control the hazard, report it to the supervisor for corrective action.
3. If the problem is not corrected, contact the OHC or the safety representative.

<sup>2</sup> CCOHS defines a **hazard** as any source of potential damage, harm or adverse health effects on something or someone.

## What training must be provided?

Train workers about how to protect themselves and others from hazards in the workplace and in their jobs. This must include:

- training to protect themselves from physical, chemical and biological hazards at the workplace, including general and workplace-specific WHMIS training;
- safe work procedures, including:
  - the use, maintenance and limitations of any personal protective equipment (PPE) they must use;
  - health and safety requirements for any tools, equipment, machinery, and prohibited or restricted areas;
  - what to do if there is a fire or other emergency; and
  - what to do, who to see and where to go if they need first aid.

## How can the employer follow up?

Make sure new or inexperienced workers:

- have a competent<sup>3</sup> supervisor who can spend sufficient time with them until they can work safely;
- follow your requirements (such as rules and safe work procedures);
- understand and comply with applicable legislation; and
- ask for help and advice when in doubt.

Ask the OHC or the safety representative to help you monitor the effectiveness of your orientation. Ask recently trained workers to suggest improvements. Review and update your orientation information, plans and procedures regularly to meet changing circumstances.

<sup>3</sup> **Competent** means possessing knowledge, experience and training to perform a specific duty (Section 3-1(e) of the Act).

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## Orientation checklist

Employee:	Supervisor or person providing orientation:
Work area:	Date of orientation:

Topic	Covered	
	Yes	No
<b>1. Fire and other emergencies</b>		
a) Types of fire and emergency plans in the organization:		
b) Location of where the fire safety plan is posted:		
c) Location of stairwells to be used for evacuation:		
d) Location of fire hoses and extinguishers:		
e) Name or means of identifying the workplaces' emergency coordinators:		
f) What to do if there is a fire or emergency, including evacuation procedures:		
<b>2. First aid</b>		
a) Where first aid kits and logs are located in the work area:		
b) Names of those with first aid training in the work area:		
c) Procedure for using first aid supplies and entering information in the first aid log:		
d) Procedures for reporting accidents and dangerous occurrences (see regulations 2-2 and 2-3):		
<b>3. Prohibited or restricted areas, tools, equipment and machinery</b>		
a) List: (e.g., confined spaces, roofs, electrical closets, use of certain substances, tools and equipment)		

Topic	Covered	
	Yes	No
b) List training worker will be required to complete before undertaking certain tasks or entering certain areas. Examples:		
• Safe lifting and material handling		
• Selection and safe use of ladders		
• Fall protection		
• Lock-out procedures		
• Powered mobile equipment operator (PME)		
• Confined space		
• H <sub>2</sub> S (hydrogen sulfide) awareness		
• Respiratory fit testing		
• Scaffold erection		
• High voltage for electrical workers		
• Safe work procedures related to other workplace processes and equipment		
<b>4. Hazards in the worker's work area and job, how they could cause harm and what precautions must be taken. Examples:</b>		
a) Dangerous tools, equipment, machinery, moving parts and so forth (e.g. pinch points, rotating parts):		
b) Dangerous processes, procedures and jobs – including infrequently performed tasks (e.g., confined space entry, lock-out processes):		
c) Dangerous situations, such as working alone or extreme thermal environments:		
d) Dangerous conditions, such as the potential presence of noxious gas, falling objects, unguarded holes or ledges, electrical hazards, traffic and asbestos:		

Topic	Covered	
	Yes	No
<b>5. Chemical hazards</b>		
a) Dangerous chemicals to which the worker could be exposed and how they may cause harm:		
b) Handling, labelling and transportation procedures:		
c) Location of Safety Data Sheets (SDS):		
d) Generic and workplace-specific WHMIS training to be offered:		
e) Training about the content of SDS, container labels and associated safe work:		
<b>6. Biological hazards</b>		
a) Biological substances to which the worker could be exposed, and how they may cause harm:		
b) Handling, labelling and transportation requirements:		
<b>7. Any other industry-specific hazards not already covered:</b>		
<b>8. Procedures, policies, plans and programs that the employer must have at the place of employment</b>		
a) Procedures		
i) Safe work procedures for performing certain tasks:		
ii) Required PPE (e.g., foot, head, eye, hearing and respiratory protection, fire resistant and/or high visibility clothing):		

Topic	Covered	
	Yes	No
b) Policies		
i) Harassment policy (mandatory for all employers)		
(1) Define harassment		
(2) Review policy requirements and provide a copy of policy		
(3) Discuss how to deal with harassment complaints and who to contact		
ii) Violence policy (mandatory for some employers per regulation 3-26 (2)). Review policy, determine risk to worker and review procedures		
iii) Employer's computer use policy		
(1) Conditions for using the organization's computers		
(2) Identify the hazards of computer use (e.g., repetitive strain injuries and eye strain)		
iv) Smoking		
c) Plans Discuss any required plans, such as an exposure control plan required by regulation 6-22(1), or a hearing conservation plan set out under regulation 8-6:		
d) Programs		
i) Requirements of any Occupational Health and Safety program at the workplace:		
<b>9. Where to find a copy of <i>The Saskatchewan Employment Act</i> and <i>The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020</i></b>		
<b>10. The worker's right to know, participate and refuse, including procedures for filing a refusal to work</b>		
<b>11. Responsibilities of the worker to:</b>		
a) work and act safely		
i) follow safe work procedures		
ii) report hazards		
iii) use required personal protective equipment		
b) not participate in harassment		
c) co-operate with the workplace's committee or representative		



Topic	Covered	
	Yes	No
<b>12. Any regulations applying to the worker's work that have not already been discussed</b>		
<b>13. Any additional standards applying to the worker's work, such as industry best practices, use of equipment and how to inspect tools, equipment or machinery</b>		
<b>14. The local occupational health committee or worker occupational health and safety representative</b>		
a) Location of the committee bulletin board where names of the committee members and minutes are posted.		
<b>15. Procedure for dealing with health and safety concerns</b>		
a) Control the hazard if they have the authority, training and experience to do so.		
b) If they cannot control the hazard, report it to the supervisor for corrective action.		
c) If the problem is not corrected, contact the occupational health committee or worker health and safety representative.		
<b>14. Anything else the worker must know</b>		
Employee's signature: _____		
Supervisor's signature: _____		
Copy given to worker: _____		
Date: _____		

# Legislation

## The Saskatchewan Employment Act

### Duty to provide information

**3-16(1)** In this section, “**required information**”:

- (a) means any information that an employer, contractor, owner or supplier knows or may reasonably be expected to know and that:
    - (i) may affect the health or safety of any person who works at a place of employment; or
    - (ii) is necessary to identify and control any existing or potential hazards with respect to any plant or any process, procedure, biological substance or chemical substance used at a place of employment; and
  - (b) includes any prescribed information.
- (2) Subject to section 3-17 and Division 7, an employer shall keep readily available all required information and provide that information to the following at a place of employment:
- (a) the occupational health committee;
  - (b) the occupational health and safety representative;
  - (c) the workers, if there is no occupational health committee and no occupational health and safety representative.
- (3) Subject to Division 7, every contractor shall provide all required information to:
- (a) every employer and self-employed person with whom the contractor has a contract; and
  - (b) any occupational health committee established by the contractor.
- (4) Subject to Division 7, an owner of a plant used as a place of employment shall provide all required information to every contractor, every employer who employs workers who work in or on the plant, and every self-employed person who works in or on the plant.
- (5) Subject to Division 7, every supplier shall provide prescribed written instructions and any other prescribed information to every employer to whom the supplier supplies any prescribed biological substance, chemical substance or plant.

## *The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020*

### **General duties of employers**

**3-1** The duties of an employer at a place of employment include:

- (a) the provision and maintenance of plant, systems of work and working environments that ensure, as far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare at work of the employer's workers;
- (b) arrangements for the use, handling, storage and transport of articles and substances in a manner that protects the health and safety of workers;
- (c) the provision of any information, instruction, training and supervision that is necessary to protect the health and safety of workers at work; and
- (d) the provision and maintenance of a safe means of entrance to, and exit from, the place of employment and all worksites and work-related areas in or on the place of employment.

### **Duty of employer or contractor to provide information**

**3-4** An employer or contractor shall:

- (a) make readily available for reference by workers a copy of:
  - (i) the Act;
  - (ii) any regulations made pursuant to the Act that apply to the place of employment or to any work done there; and
  - (iii) any standards adopted in the regulations that address work practices or procedures, and that apply to the place of employment or to any work done there; and
- (b) if the information mentioned in clause (a) or in section 3-16 of the Act will be posted, provide a suitable bulletin board to be used primarily to post information on health and safety, related to the place of employment.

### **Duty of contractor to inform**

**3-5(1)** A contractor shall give notice in writing to every employer, worker or self-employed person at the place of employment, setting out:

- (a) the name of the person who is supervising the work on behalf of the contractor;
- (b) any emergency facilities provided by the contractor for the use of the employers' workers or self-employed persons; and
- (c) the existence of a committee or representative, if any, at the place of employment and the means to contact the committee or representative.

(2) Subsection (1) applies only to contractors at major construction projects and to contractors involved in those activities to which Part 29 applies.

## **Supervision of work**

**3-6(1)** An employer or contractor shall ensure that:

- (a) all work at a place of employment is sufficiently and competently supervised;
- (b) supervisors have sufficient knowledge of all of the following with respect to matters that are within the scope of the supervisor's responsibility:
  - (i) the Act and any regulations made pursuant to the Act that apply to the place of employment;
  - (ii) any occupational health and safety program at the place of employment;
  - (iii) the safe handling, use, storage, production and disposal of chemical and biological substances;
  - (iv) the need for, and safe use of, personal protective equipment;
  - (v) emergency procedures required by these regulations;
  - (vi) any other matters that are necessary to ensure the health and safety of workers under the supervisor's direction; and
- (c) supervisors comply with the Act and any regulations made pursuant to the Act that apply to the place of employment, and ensure that the workers under their direction comply with the Act and those regulations.

(2) A supervisor shall ensure that the workers under the supervisor's direction comply with the Act and any regulations made pursuant to the Act that apply to the place of employment.

## **Duty to inform workers**

**3-7** An employer shall ensure that each worker:

- (a) is informed of the provisions of the Act and any regulations pursuant to the Act that apply to the worker's work at the place of employment; and
- (b) complies with the Act and those regulations.

## **Training of workers**

**3-8(1)** An employer shall ensure that a worker is trained in all matters that are necessary to protect the health and safety of the worker, when the worker:

- (a) begins work at a place of employment; or
- (b) is moved from one work activity or worksite to another that differs with respect to hazards, facilities or procedures.

(2) The training required by subsection (1) must include:

- (a) procedures to be taken in the event of a fire or other emergency;
- (b) the location of first aid facilities;
- (c) identification of prohibited or restricted areas;

- (d) precautions to be taken for the protection of the worker from physical, chemical or biological hazards;
  - (e) any procedures, plans, policies and programs that the employer is required to develop pursuant to the Act, or any regulations made pursuant to the Act that apply to the worker's work at the place of employment; and
  - (f) any other matters that are necessary to ensure the health and safety of the worker while the worker is at work.
- (3) An employer shall ensure that:
- (a) the time spent by a worker in the training required by subsection (1) is credited to the worker as time at work; and
  - (b) the worker does not lose pay or other benefits with respect to that time.
- (4) An employer shall ensure that no worker is permitted to perform work unless the worker:
- (a) has been trained, and has sufficient experience, to perform the work safely and in compliance with the Act and the regulations; or
  - (b) is under close and competent supervision.

## Resources

Visit the following organizations' websites for additional information and tools to help make your workplace healthy and safe.

- [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](#)
- [Canadian Standards Association](#)
- [National Institute of Occupational Health and Safety](#)
- [Publications Saskatchewan](#)
- [Saskatchewan Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety](#)
- [Saskatchewan Safety Associations](#)
- [WorkSafe Saskatchewan](#)

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