

Creating and Managing a Healthy and Safe Workplace



About WorkSafeBC

At WorkSafeBC, we're dedicated to promoting safe and healthy workplaces across B.C. We partner with workers and employers to save lives and prevent injury, disease, and disability. When work-related injuries or diseases occur, we provide compensation and support injured workers in their recovery, rehabilitation, and safe return to work. We also provide no-fault insurance and work diligently to sustain our workers' compensation system for today and future generations. We're honoured to serve the workers and employers in our province.

Prevention Information Line and contact information

We provide information and assistance with health and safety issues in the workplace.

Call the information line 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to report unsafe working conditions, a serious incident, or a major chemical release. Your call can be made anonymously. We can provide assistance in almost any language.

If you have questions about workplace health and safety or the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, call during our office hours (Monday to Friday, 8:05 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) to speak to a WorkSafeBC officer.

If you're in the Lower Mainland, call 604.276.3100, or toll-free at 1.888.621.7233 (621.SAFE) in Canada.

Health and safety resources

You can find our health and safety resources at worksafebc.com/resources-health-safety. Printed copies are available for some resources and can be ordered from worksafebcstore.com.

Creating and Managing a Healthy and Safe Workplace

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Introduction

This book is mainly for employers. It may also be of interest to joint health and safety committee members and anyone else who wants to know more about creating and managing a healthy and safe workplace.

As an employer, you have an opportunity to make a direct impact on the health and safety of your workers. There are a number of steps you can take to create and maintain a healthy and safe workplace.

Health and safety in the workplace doesn't have to be complicated. However, it does require some planning and preparation. Knowing the basics will make things easier.

This book explains your responsibilities for health and safety and describes the elements of an occupational health and safety (OHS) program. It also includes information on risk management, the role of a joint committee, personal protective equipment, and first aid.

B.C. employers have specific legal responsibilities for health and safety (see pages 5–6). These include developing an OHS program and, in most cases, registering for insurance coverage with WorkSafeBC. For information on whether you need to register and how to do so, go to [worksafebc.com/insurance](https://www.worksafebc.com/insurance).

Health and safety resources on [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com)

You can search for health and safety resources by industry and topic on [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com).

This book does not replace the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation

This book will help you comply with WorkSafeBC requirements but it does not replace the *Workers Compensation Act* or the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation.

You should also refer to the Act and the Regulation to be sure you're meeting your legal responsibilities for workplace health and safety. You can find searchable versions of the Act, the Regulation, and the OHS Guidelines at [worksafebc.com/searchable-regulation](https://www.worksafebc.com/searchable-regulation).

This book is based on an earlier WorkSafeBC publication called *How to Implement a Formal Occupational Health and Safety Program*.

It supplements information available on [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com) (see [Create & manage a healthy & safe workplace](#)).

Part 1:

Responsibilities for health and safety

Whether your business is large or small, the law requires that it be a healthy and safe place to work. This section includes information on the general responsibilities of owners, employers, supervisors, workers, and prime contractors. The purpose is to help everyone understand their own roles and the roles of others so they can work toward common health and safety goals.

Owners

The owner of a workplace can be anyone who owns, rents, or occupies land or a building. It also includes anyone who represents the owner.

As an owner, you have a general duty to ensure the health and safety of anyone working on your property. In addition to your responsibilities as an owner, you may also have responsibilities as an employer or prime contractor if other employers are using your property.

Your responsibilities

- Maintain the land and premises in a way that ensures the health and safety of people working on site.
- Give the employer or prime contractor at the workplace any information you know of that is necessary to identify and eliminate or control hazards.
- Comply with occupational health and safety requirements and orders.

Employers

If you're an employer, it's your responsibility to ensure a physically and psychologically healthy and safe workplace. In carrying out these duties, management representatives — from the chief executive officer through to the first-level supervisor — can demonstrate their commitment to health and safety in the workplace.

Your responsibilities

- Establish and maintain an effective occupational health and safety (OHS) program.
- Provide workers with the information, instruction, training, and supervision necessary to protect their health and safety.
- Provide supervisors with the necessary support and training to carry out their health and safety responsibilities.
- Regularly inspect your workplace to make sure everything is working properly, including tools and equipment, buildings, work areas, and work processes.
- Provide and maintain protective equipment, devices, and clothing. Ensure that they are used.
- Ensure that adequate first aid equipment, supplies, and trained attendants are on site to respond to injuries. Establish procedures for transporting injured workers to the nearest location for medical treatment.
- Notify WorkSafeBC immediately when there is a significant accident, including accidents that cause serious injury to a worker or a major building or equipment failure.

- Investigate incidents where workers are injured or equipment is damaged, or where there was a near miss or potential for serious injury.
- Submit all necessary reporting forms to WorkSafeBC.
- Consult and co-operate with individuals carrying out occupational health and safety duties (including joint health and safety committee members, worker health and safety representatives, and WorkSafeBC prevention officers).
- Make a copy of the Act and the Regulation readily available for review by workers.

Responsibilities for controlling risks

- Identify potential hazards through regular inspections. Eliminate or control the risks associated with them, without delay.
- Remedy any workplace conditions that are hazardous to worker health or safety. This includes investigating problems reported by workers and taking necessary corrective actions.
- Develop written safe work procedures.
- Encourage workers to speak up about unsafe conditions and suggest improvements on health and safety issues — for example, through safety talks, meetings, or consultation with worker representatives.

First aid

As an employer, you're responsible for providing workers with prompt, easily accessible, and appropriate first aid treatment. First aid requirements include the equipment, supplies, facilities, first aid attendants, and services to provide adequate and appropriate first aid to workers if they are injured at work, and to transport injured workers to medical treatment.

For more information, see "Provide first aid," pages 59–60.

Supervisors

A supervisor is a person who instructs, directs, and controls workers in the performance of their duties. A supervisor can be any worker — management or staff — who meets this definition, whether or not they have the supervisor title. If someone in the workplace has a supervisor's responsibilities, that person is responsible for worker health and safety.

Supervisors should give health and safety the same priority as productivity or quality control.

Your responsibilities

- Ensure the health and safety of all workers under your direct supervision.
- Know the WorkSafeBC requirements that apply to the work under your supervision and make sure those requirements are met.
- Make sure workers under your supervision are aware of all known or reasonably foreseeable hazards where they work.
- Consult and co-operate with joint health and safety committee members or worker health and safety representatives, and co-operate with others carrying out occupational health and safety duties (including WorkSafeBC prevention officers).
- Make sure workers under your supervision have the appropriate personal protective equipment and clothing. Make sure it is being used properly, regularly inspected, and maintained.
- Investigate unsafe conditions, and ensure that corrective action is taken without delay.

WorkSafeBC has developed a free online course, [Supervising for Safety](#), to help supervisors meet their workplace safety obligations.

Workers

As a worker, you play an important role in making sure you and your fellow workers stay healthy and safe on the job.

Your rights

- The right to know about hazards in the workplace
- The right to participate in health and safety activities in the workplace
- The right to refuse unsafe work without getting punished or fired

Refusing unsafe work

Workers have the right to refuse unsafe work, and employers must investigate the matter. The procedure for refusal of unsafe work is set out in sections 3.12 and 3.13 of the Regulation. For more information, visit [Refusing Unsafe Work](https://www.worksafebc.com) on [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com).

Your responsibilities

- Be alert to hazards. Report them immediately to your supervisor or employer.
- Follow safe work procedures and act safely in the workplace at all times.
- Use the protective clothing, devices, and equipment provided. Be sure to wear them properly.
- Co-operate with the joint health and safety committee, worker health and safety representatives, WorkSafeBC prevention officers, and anybody else with health and safety duties.
- Get treatment quickly if an injury happens on the job. Tell your employer, and tell your health care provider that the injury is work-related. Follow the treatment advice of health care providers.
- Return to work safely after an injury. If necessary, ask for a gradual return to work. This may involve modifying your duties and not immediately starting with your full, regular responsibilities.
- Don't work if you are under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or any other substance, or if you're overly tired.

Prime contractors

In a workplace where there are two or more employers working at the same time, the owner of the workplace can enter into a written agreement with someone to be the prime contractor at that workplace. If there is no written agreement, the owner is the prime contractor.

The prime contractor has overall responsibility for coordinating health and safety at the workplace. Other employers at the workplace are still responsible for the health and safety of their own workers. Each employer at a multi-employer workplace must designate a supervisor and inform the prime contractor of the supervisor's name.

Your responsibilities

- Coordinate the occupational health and safety activities of all employers, workers, and anyone else at the workplace.
- Establish and maintain a system or process that will ensure compliance with occupational health and safety requirements.

Responsibilities of others

In the Act

Sections 26 to 30 of the Act describe duties and obligations for suppliers and principals.

Suppliers of tools and equipment, and directors and officers of a corporation, also have responsibilities for health and safety under the Act.

If you supply equipment, material, or anything else used in a workplace, you're responsible for ensuring it is safe.

If you are the principal of a company, you're responsible for ensuring the company complies with the requirements of the Act.

Part 2:

Managing risks in the workplace

Understand the risks

Managing risk in your workplace involves thinking about what might cause harm to your workers and determining whether you are taking reasonable steps to prevent that harm from happening. The first step is to understand the risks. There are two parts to this: identifying the hazards and assessing the risks.

Identifying hazards

Start by accurately identifying potential hazards in your workplace. A hazard is anything that can cause harm, such as chemicals, electricity, or working on ladders. Look for all the things and situations that could possibly harm your workers or other workers who may be on site.

Identifying hazards starts with a workplace inspection. This includes walking around your site and:

- Observing how work tasks are being performed
- Assessing the equipment workers are using, and considering how that equipment is being used
- Analyzing the design and layout of the work areas

This is a proactive process. Ask yourself, what is it about the activities or the processes, equipment, or substances being used that could injure your workers or harm their health?

Where do hazards come from?

Hazards generally come from the following aspects of work:

- The physical work environment
- Equipment, materials, and substances used at the workplace
- Work tasks and how they are performed
- Work design and management

Tips for identifying hazards

When you work in a place every day, it's easy to overlook some hazards. Here are some tips to help you identify hazards in your workplace:

- For equipment, check manufacturer instructions. Think about long-term health hazards, such as high levels of noise.
- Consider non-routine operations, such as maintenance, cleaning operations, or changes in production cycles.
- For chemicals, check manufacturer instructions or safety data sheets (SDSs). Remember to think about long-term health hazards, such as exposure to harmful substances.
- Do an overall review of your incident and worker health records, as well as records of near misses or worker complaints. These can help identify less obvious hazards. People tend to deal with incidents as they occur, but viewing all that has occurred over time can alert you to a pattern and help you identify a hazard that may be systemic. If you're a large employer, our [Employer Health and Safety Planning Tool Kit](#) may help.
- Consult with your workers about any health and safety issues they've encountered in their work. It is important to keep lines of communication open with your workers, as they can likely identify risks to both workers and production. Survey them anonymously, asking open-ended questions. You may even choose to recognize workers who identify hazards in advance, since this helps business in the long run.
- Keep up with the information about hazards and risks relevant to your specific industry or type of work. Consult with industry associations, manufacturers, and suppliers — all of which can provide you with valuable information. Also check out our [Industry health and safety data](#), which shows detailed data for any industry.
- Review our resources and information on common risks in specific industries, including common hazards and exposures, injuries, and tools, equipment, and machinery.

Once you have a documented list of hazards, you're ready to begin assessing and controlling the risks.

Risk advisories

As an employer, you need to be aware of emerging risks, which can go unnoticed until a serious or fatal injury occurs. WorkSafeBC provides [risk advisories](#) on new and emerging risks for various industry sectors and on other general health and safety issues.

Assessing risks

After you determine what hazards exist in your workplace, assess the risk they pose to workers. The risk is the chance (high, moderate, or low) that somebody could be harmed by these hazards, as well as the potential severity of the harm.

When to do a risk assessment

Risk assessments are a proactive process designed to ensure workers are protected. Specific risk assessment requirements for B.C. workplaces are defined in different parts of the Regulation. A number of required health and safety processes are forms of risk assessment, such as workplace inspections and investigations. As a best practice, a full-site risk assessment will help you plan for better worker protection.

If your organization is small and you're confident you understand what's involved, you can likely do the risk assessment yourself — you don't need to be a health and safety expert. If your organization is larger, involve the worker health and safety representative or the joint health and safety committee. It's your responsibility as the employer to make sure the assessment is done properly.

If you have multiple work locations, be sure to do a risk assessment for each workplace and for different shifts. The hazards, and the risks they pose, may be different from place to place and at different times of day.

After you've completed your risk assessments, be sure to review them regularly to ensure they are accurate for your specific needs. Risk assessments should be reviewed whenever you introduce new equipment, materials, or work processes. At a minimum, make sure you update your risk assessments annually.

The focus of a risk assessment shouldn't be to create paperwork. Instead, try to understand how your workers may be harmed and identify reasonable measures to control those risks in your workplace. Your risk assessment will help determine whether you've covered everything.

Website

See [managing risk](#) on [worksafebc.com](#) for more information on assessing risks and applying the hierarchy of controls.

Decide who might be harmed and how

For each hazard, you need to be clear about the groups of people who might be harmed. This will help you identify the best way to control the risk. Be sure to ask your workers if there are any groups you may have missed.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Certain groups of workers may have specific requirements according to the Regulation. These groups may include new and young workers, temporary workers, contractors, and those working alone.
- Make sure you have included notifications and training for people who might not be in the workplace all the time, such as visitors, contractors, or maintenance workers.
- If members of the public could be hurt by your activities, take this into consideration as you do the risk assessment.
- If you share your workplace with another business, consider how your work affects the workers from that business (and vice versa).

Determine the level of risk

Part of the risk assessment is determining the level of risk that hazards pose to workers. Rate the risks as high, moderate, or low. This helps you decide which risks are most serious and should be dealt with first. For example, a busy loading dock where workers are frequently carrying heavy loads could be a high risk for pallet jack collisions and a moderate risk for back strains.

To help evaluate the risk level, try to answer the following questions:

- Who might be harmed? For example, are all workers exposed to the hazard, or is it a smaller number?
- What kind of injury or illness could be suffered, and how severe would it likely be?

- How long are workers typically exposed to the hazard? The longer the exposure, the higher the risk.
- How frequent is the exposure? If the task is repeated many times each shift, it usually carries more risk than a task done only occasionally.

Hazards with a higher chance of harm and potential severity have a higher risk level. One method to display risk level based on these factors is shown below.

		Potential severity			
		Minor	Moderate	Major	Extreme
Chance	Rare	Low	Low	Medium	Medium
	Unlikely	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium
	Moderate	Medium	Medium	Medium	High
	Likely	Medium	Medium	High	High
	Very likely	Medium	High	High	High

Implement measures to control risk

Once you've identified hazards and assessed the risks associated with them, the next step is to control the risks. Address the highest risk first. If you cannot eliminate a risk, you'll need to implement control measures to minimize it. The hierarchy of controls can help you systematically take action to minimize risk.

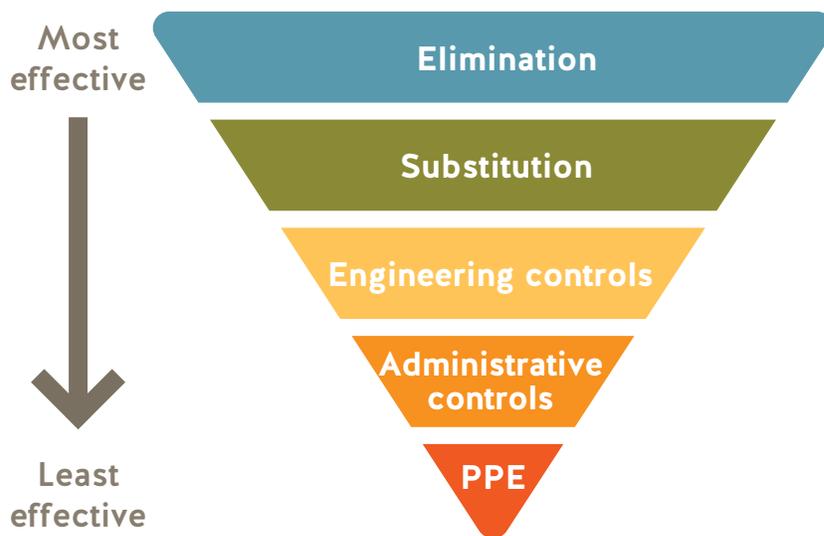
The hierarchy of controls

When considering how to reduce the risk, there's a certain order of actions you should follow. This is called the hierarchy of controls. It's important to follow the hierarchy, as shown in the figure below, rather than start with the easiest control measures.

Note that while the controls are listed in order of effectiveness, all five types of controls should be considered. They often work best in combination. For example, first responders can't eliminate risks by choosing not to enter a burning building, but they can use engineering controls, administrative controls, and personal protective equipment and clothing to minimize the risks when they enter that building.

Health and safety is worth it

Improving health and safety doesn't have to be costly, but the potential return on investment is huge. For example, placing a mirror on a dangerous blind corner of your worksite can help prevent vehicle incidents. Considering how serious a resulting injury might be, this is a cost-effective precaution.



A. Elimination or substitution

Eliminating the hazard completely is always the first choice. Substitution involves replacing the material or process with a less hazardous one.

When considering these options, ask yourself:

- Can I find safer ways to perform the task? For example, if falling is a hazard, eliminate the risk by storing stock at lower heights so workers don't have to climb ladders to reach the goods.
- Can I use something less harmful? For example, if chemical-heavy industrial cleaners are a hazard, consider substituting cleaners made of vinegar and water mixed with salt, borax, or baking soda. Just make sure the substitutions don't create new hazards.

B. Engineering controls

If you can't eliminate the hazards or substitute safer alternatives, engineering controls are the next best option. These involve using equipment or other means to prevent workers from being exposed to a hazard. Engineering controls are physical changes to the workplace and may include equipment guarding, guardrails, traffic control lanes, barriers between vehicles and pedestrians, and many other options.

For example, working at heights cannot be avoided in construction, but guardrails can be installed to prevent falls from happening. This is an example of an engineering control.

C. Administrative controls

Administrative controls involve identifying and implementing safe work procedures so your workers can perform their job duties safely. The findings of your risk assessment will form the basis of these safe work procedures.

Examples of administrative controls include implementing person-check procedures and prohibiting the use of mobile phones while workers are driving.

D. Personal protective equipment and clothing

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is a worker's last defence against injury and death when eliminating workplace hazards is not possible. Before considering PPE, first try to eliminate or minimize the risks using other means.

For example, if working with toxic chemicals is necessary in a workplace, such as a laboratory, the use of PPE in the form of protective eyewear and gloves will help reduce the exposure risk. Similarly, first responders who enter hazardous sites as a regular part of their job use various types of PPE to protect themselves.

For more information, see “Provide personal protective equipment (PPE),” pages 56–58.

The Canadian Standards Association (CSA Group) has published a standard to help guide workplaces in managing risk. See CAN/CSA-Z1002-12 (R2017) *Occupational Health and Safety — Hazard Identification and Elimination and Risk Assessment and Control*, available for purchase from the [CSA Group](#).

Communicate with workers

Your risk management program won't be effective if no one knows about it. Provide managers, supervisors, and workers with orientation and training on how to identify hazards and what to do to control the risks.

It is a good practice to document what you find from your inspections and risk assessments. This includes noting the hazards, how people might be harmed by them, and what's already in place to control the risks. This documentation doesn't need to be complicated, but it can help you communicate and manage risks in your workplace.

Monitor and update risk controls

Protecting employees from harm requires ongoing effort. You'll need to monitor the effectiveness of the risk controls in place and improve those that don't measure up. The following are good steps to take:

- Conduct regular safety inspections so you can identify new or changing hazards and risks.
- Organize a joint committee and hold monthly meetings to discuss health and safety issues.
- Review your risk assessments at least once a year and whenever you introduce new equipment, materials, or work processes.
- Deal with safety issues as soon as possible.

Resources

For more information and resources, visit [Managing risk](https://www.worksafebc.com) on [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com).

Part 3:

Occupational health and safety programs

How to determine the type of OHS program you need

All employers must establish some form of occupational health and safety program in the workplace. An OHS program will help you protect workers, minimize risks, and maintain a healthy and safe workplace. The type of program you need depends on the number of workers you have and the risks associated with their work.

You must have a formal OHS program if any of the following apply:

- You have a workforce of 20 or more workers, and at least one workplace at which there is a moderate or high risk of injury.
- You have a workforce of 50 or more workers.
- A WorkSafeBC officer decides that an OHS program is necessary.

Less formal programs

If you're a small business or employer, you must still have an OHS program. However, if you have fewer than 20 workers, you may only need a less formal program, based on regular monthly meetings to talk about workplace health and safety. Even if you only need a less formal program, it's still a good idea to include as many elements of an OHS program as you can.

For more information on less formal programs, see [OHS Guideline G3.2](#).

Follow these three steps to determine the type of OHS program you need.

1. Determine how many workers are regularly employed in your workplace

Include all workers, supervisors, and managers who have been employed for more than one month.

2. Determine your hazard rating

Workplaces are classified as low, moderate, or high risk based on the nature and extent of the risks and hazards in the industry. You can find your hazard rating assignment on the classification unit description that is sent to you every year, or you can [find your classification unit](#) on worksafebc.com.

3. Identify the type of program required for your workplace

Use the table below to identify the type of program required for your workplace. Keep in mind that in certain situations a WorkSafeBC prevention officer may require a smaller workplace to develop a more comprehensive OHS program. This may happen if your workplace has:

- High-risk work (such as logging or piledriving)
- A high number of injury claims
- Multiple serious injuries or fatalities
- Repeated non-compliance with the Act or the Regulation

Number of workers	Program required for workplace based on hazard rating		
	Low	Moderate	High
Fewer than 20	Less formal	Less formal	Less formal
20 or more but fewer than 50	Less formal	Formal	Formal
50 or more	Formal	Formal	Formal

What to include in an OHS program

The most effective OHS programs are developed jointly by workers and employers.

The purpose of an OHS program is to prevent injuries and occupational diseases and to deal effectively with any incidents that occur — including accidents and near misses.

An effective program will do the following:

- Identify hazards in the workplace and control the risks associated with them.
- Help prevent injuries and disease.
- Limit financial losses resulting from injuries and disease.
- Promote a positive health and safety culture.
- Outline the importance of, and provide guidance on, health and safety processes such as workplace inspections, investigations, safe work procedures, management meetings for health and safety, joint health and safety committee requirements, and the tracking and trending of OHS records and statistics.
- Include sub-programs focused on health and safety issues pertinent to your site. For example, your site may have a specific lockout program, a fall protection program, or a confined space entry program.

Elements of an OHS program

Every workplace is different, so your OHS program should be designed to address the specific needs of your operation. However, when an OHS program is required, it must include the following elements:

- An OHS policy statement of the aims of the program and the responsibilities for health and safety (see page 28)
- Regular inspection of premises, machinery, tools, equipment, and work practices (see pages 29–30)
- Appropriate written instructions for workers (see pages 31–32)
- Instruction and supervision of workers — including education, training, and orientation (see pages 33–36)

- Regular meetings to discuss health and safety (see pages 37–38)
- Reporting and investigation of accidents and other incidents in order to take action to prevent similar incidents (see pages 39–46)
- Records and statistics (see pages 47–48)

Other topics for consideration

For your health and safety program, you must also consider requirements for these other key health and safety topics:

- Risk management (identifying hazards and controlling risks) (see pages 12–21)
- Joint health and safety committees (see pages 50–55)
- Personal protective equipment (see pages 56–58)
- First aid (see pages 59–60)

Bullying and harassment

Employers must implement procedures for responding to reports or incidents of bullying and harassment. The procedures must ensure a reasonable response to the report or incident, aim to fully address the incident, and ensure that bullying and harassment are prevented or minimized in the future.

Other types of programs that may be required

Depending on the type of work you do and the industry you're in, you may need to include other types of programs in your overall OHS program, such as the following:

- Workplace violence prevention program — see [sections 4.28 to 4.30](#) of the Regulation.
- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) program — see [section 5.5](#) of the Regulation.

Keep your OHS program current

At least once every year you should review your health and safety program and discuss with your workers ways to improve it. Look for any changes in the workplace that might affect health and safety, including any new hazards. As part of your review, make sure you continue to be compliant with the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation.

Create a health and safety policy

In the Regulation

Section 3.3(a) requires that formal OHS programs include “a statement of the employer’s aims and the responsibilities of the employer, supervisors and workers.”

Your health and safety policy should document your commitment (as an employer) to the OHS program and to your workers.

Policy goals

In addition to this commitment, put in writing what you’d like your health and safety program to achieve. Some possibilities include:

- Preventing injuries
- Minimizing risks
- Keeping employees healthy
- Complying with law and policy
- Continually improving health and safety

Also write down your rights and responsibilities as an employer, and those of your workers and supervisors.

How much detail to include

You can write the policy in just a few paragraphs. Make sure it is easy to understand. It should be signed by the CEO or senior manager on site. It should also be dated and reviewed annually.

Distribute your policy

Be sure to share the policy with workers. Let them know how important it is to the organization. As an employer, you must tell your new and young workers about your OHS program. It’s a good idea to provide a copy of the program to all new employees and to post it in the workplace where it can easily be seen.

Conduct regular inspections

No workplace is risk-free, so you need to manage hazards in your workplace. Regular inspections by the employer or a supervisor (along with joint committee members or the worker health and safety representative) will help with the following:

- Identify conditions and unsafe acts with the potential to cause injury or disease.
- Determine necessary corrective measures.
- Prevent unsafe work conditions from developing.

In the Regulation

Section 3.3(b) requires that formal OHS programs include “provision for the regular inspection of premises, equipment, work methods and work practices, at appropriate intervals, to ensure that prompt action is undertaken to correct any hazardous conditions found.”

For more information on workplace inspections, see [sections 3.5 to 3.8](#) and [section 4.3](#).

What to include in an inspection

Include workers and management representatives in your inspections. Where feasible and applicable, you must include members of your joint committee or your worker health and safety representative.

During an inspection, you need to do the following:

- Look for physical hazards related to tools, equipment, machinery, and materials. Other physical hazards may include buildings, structures, grounds, or excavations.
- Observe and examine how work procedures are being done and assess the risks.
- Remedy unsafe or harmful conditions without delay. You must deal with serious hazards or unsafe work practices immediately. For example, if a ladder has a loose or damaged rung, repair it immediately or replace the ladder with one that is undamaged. Deal with other hazards as soon as reasonably possible.

After an inspection, make a record of all significant findings and tell your workers the details of the findings.

Types of inspections

There are three different types of inspections.

General workplace inspections

General workplace inspections look at buildings, structures, grounds, excavations, tools, equipment, machinery, and work practices for hazards that might cause injury or disease. You might start by conducting general inspections once a month. Depending on what you find in your inspections, you may decide it is necessary to hold them more often — twice a month, weekly, or even more often, based on your circumstances. Different departments may need different frequencies of inspections due to the nature of the work activities.

Inspections of tools, machinery, and equipment

Workers must be trained to regularly inspect their tools, machinery, and equipment according to manufacturers' recommendations.

Special inspections

After a malfunction or incident, a special inspection must take place. Work must not continue until it is safe.

Workplace inspections

Inspection checklist and report

You can find an inspection checklist and report template in *Templates and Resources for Joint Health and Safety Committees*, available on worksafebc.com. This template is a guideline only. It outlines the most common areas of focus for a workplace safety inspection. You can customize it to meet the needs of your workplace.

As mentioned, an inspection team must include both worker and management representatives. The team should be familiar with the work process and, where feasible, include joint health and safety committee members or the worker health and safety representative.

A workplace inspection checklist can help ensure that inspections are thorough, results are recorded, and the inspection process is standardized. A checklist is particularly useful in guiding those unfamiliar with the inspection process. The checklist should be specific to your workplace.

Any unsafe or harmful conditions found during a regular inspection must be reported immediately to the supervisor or employer and remedied without delay.

Record and communicate all significant findings. Describe each hazard identified and the measures to be taken to eliminate or control each hazard. Provide a copy for the joint committee, and make a copy available to workers (for example, post a copy on the OHS bulletin board).

Develop written safe work procedures

Health and safety, productivity, and quality control all benefit from written procedures. At a minimum, you must have written procedures describing how to safely carry out high-risk or complex tasks, such as lockout or confined space entry. Post the procedures at all relevant workstations and use them to train workers.

Examples of activities that require written safe work procedures

The following are some examples of activities for which the Regulation requires written work procedures:

- De-energization and lockout
- Confined space entry
- Fall protection
- Certain types of personal protective equipment (e.g., for protection from chemical exposure or oxygen-deficient atmosphere)
- Violence in the workplace
- Emergency evacuation
- Chemical spills cleanup
- Asbestos removal
- Working alone or in isolation

Even if you're not required to provide a written procedure for a particular work activity, it's still a good idea to do so if you've identified potential hazards for that activity during a workplace inspection or a risk assessment.

In the Regulation

Section 3.3(c) requires that an OHS program include "appropriate written instructions, available for reference by all workers, to supplement this Occupational Health and Safety Regulation."

How to write a safe work procedure

The process of developing a written safe work procedure for a hazardous task generally involves the following four steps:

1. Determine the overall task that requires a safe work procedure.
2. Break down the task into its basic steps.
3. Identify the hazards associated with each step, and identify ways to eliminate or minimize the risks to workers from these hazards.
4. Write the safe work procedure — the list of actions that workers must do when performing the task.

Not all tasks require detailed written procedures. Safety issues for some tasks can be addressed verbally in crew talks or during training. If you're not sure whether you need to write detailed procedures for a particular task or activity, ask yourself the following:

- Are written procedures required by the Regulation?
- Are written procedures recommended as a result of an inspection or investigation?
- How high is the level of hazard involved in the task?
- How many workers perform the task?
- What is the experience of the workers doing that task?
- How frequently is the task performed?
- What is the severity of potential injuries if the task is not performed safely?

When developing safe work procedures, consult your joint health and safety committee (if you have one) or your worker health and safety representative, as well as workers who actually do the job. You're required to consult with these people if you're developing procedures for working alone or in confined spaces.

In your procedures, be sure to list any necessary personal protective equipment (PPE), when it must be used, and where that equipment can be found.

Be sure to review these procedures whenever a job changes, new equipment is introduced, or workers return after being away for a long period of time.

Educate, train, orient, and supervise your employees

As an employer, you're responsible for ensuring your workers receive adequate instruction to do their work safely. This is usually done through education and training. Orientation is another form of training that's particularly important for new and young workers. Employers are also responsible for providing ongoing supervision of workers.

Education and training

Education generally refers to formal classroom instruction that may include lectures, discussions, and videos. Training refers to hands-on, job-specific instruction for individuals or small groups. Training often includes demonstrations and active participation by workers so you or a supervisor can confirm that workers understand safe work procedures.

It's a good idea to maintain an education and training record for each worker. List dates of education and training sessions and the topics covered. Review the records from time to time to help ensure training requirements have been met.

Education and training sessions may include the following topics:

- How to avoid known hazards and what to do about new potential hazards
- Where to find PPE and how to use and care for it
- Specific safe work practices to follow — e.g., for tasks such as lockout or cash deposits

For more examples of education and training topics, see the table on the next page.

In the Regulation

Section 3.3(g) requires formal OHS programs to include “provision by the employer for the instruction and supervision of workers in the safe performance of their work.” Section 3.23 identifies the topics that must be included in orientation and training for new and young workers.

Examples of education and training topics

Topic	Type of workers or industries	Key content
New worker orientation	All workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of first aid equipment and services • Reporting accidents, injuries, and unsafe conditions • Safe work procedures • Right to refuse unsafe work • Location of fire exits, routes, and safe gathering areas • Emergency procedures
Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)	All workers who are or may be exposed to hazardous materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and understanding labels • Understanding information on safety data sheets (SDSs) • Location of SDSs • Hazards of products being used • Control measures and appropriate PPE
Personal protective equipment (PPE)	Various industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When, why, where, and how to use specific PPE • Limitations of protection • Regular inspection and maintenance
Preventing violence	Service industries, such as retail or health care, and workers who work alone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of violence and types of incidents • Identifying risk factors • Preventing and defusing incidents • Control measures
Lockout	Machinists, workers on production lines; various manufacturing industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of lockout • Types of lockout • When to lock out • Review specific procedures for specific equipment
Confined space	Various industries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the hazards of each confined space • Procedures for working safely in a specific space as set out in the confined space entry program
Fall protection	Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding fall protection system being used • Fall protection procedures • Proper use of fall protection equipment

Orientation

Orientations provide an opportunity for the employer to establish health and safety requirements before a worker starts at a new job or location. You should provide or review orientation for workers whenever they are in the following situations:

- Starting a new job
- Going to a new worksite or department
- Facing new hazards, such as working with new equipment
- Performing new tasks

What to include in an orientation

During an orientation, explain to workers their rights and responsibilities. Emphasize the importance of not performing tasks they're not trained to do safely. Encourage workers to ask questions if they're uncertain about how to do a task safely.

Include the following in your orientations:

- Show new workers where they will be working and demonstrate their tasks.
- Provide written safe work procedures for potentially hazardous tasks.
- Identify all hazards to workers, even if they seem obvious. Explain what systems or measures you've put in place to minimize each hazard.
- Show them where they can find first aid assistance and equipment, and emergency exits.
- Make sure they understand what they've been taught.
- Document the orientation. Give workers a copy of the worker orientation checklist and any other relevant materials.

Use a checklist

Using a checklist can help make the orientation easier and more thorough. Plus, you can keep the checklist on file as a record of employee training, fulfilling another one of your requirements.

Resources

For more information and resources, visit [Training & orienting workers](#) on [worksafebc.com](#).

Supervision

Supervisors must ensure the health and safety of every worker under their direct supervision. As a supervisor, you should do the following:

- Provide adequate instruction on safe procedures.
- Observe workers after training to ensure they continue to follow safe work procedures.
- Observe workers daily to ensure they're following safe work procedures, including proper use of protective equipment, devices, and clothing provided.
- Enforce the health and safety rules.
- Lead informal discussions (crew talks) with workers to discuss specific safety issues as they arise.

Hold regular health and safety meetings

Regular health and safety meetings are essential for identifying and addressing health and safety issues. They provide an opportunity to:

- Review workplace health and safety activities and trends
- Consider the overall effectiveness of policies and programs
- Address issues brought forward by the joint health and safety committee or by workers

These regular health and safety meetings are separate from joint committee meetings.

Management meetings

In a formal health and safety program, management meetings are required to review health and safety activities and incident trends. You can use management meetings to:

- Review existing policies and procedures
- Review feedback from workers
- Consider reports and other information provided by the joint committee
- Consider and act on recommendations from the joint committee (either by developing an action plan for implementing the recommendation, or by suggesting an acceptable alternative)
- Address questions or concerns brought directly to management
- Discuss general information about workplace injury and disease prevention, and how to improve the existing health and safety program

Communicate management decisions and activities related to health and safety to supervisors and workers.

In the Regulation

Section 3.3(d) requires formal OHS programs to include “provision for holding periodic management meetings for the purpose of reviewing health and safety activities and incident trends, and for the determination of necessary courses of action.”

Less formal programs

Holding a separate management health and safety meeting might not be possible for small businesses or employers with fewer than 20 workers. Consider reviewing health and safety activities and incident trends with your workers as part of your regular monthly health and safety meeting.

Report incidents to WorkSafeBC

As an employer, you must notify WorkSafeBC immediately when certain incidents occur, such as when a worker is seriously injured or killed on the job, a building collapses, or there is a major release of a hazardous substance.

To report an incident, call the [Prevention Information Line](#) at 604.276.3100 in the Lower Mainland or 1.888.621.SAFE (7233) toll-free in Canada.

An employer's requirement to notify WorkSafeBC of serious injuries or incidents is different from reporting injuries related to claims. If there is an injury on the job, the injured worker's employer still must complete and submit an [Employer's Report of Injury or Occupational Disease \(Form 7\)](#), but this does not satisfy an employer's need to immediately report certain incidents. For more information about this reporting requirement, see [section 68](#) of the Act.

Incidents requiring immediate notification

Employers must immediately notify WorkSafeBC of the following incidents:

- A worker seriously injured or killed on the job
- A major structural failure or collapse of a building, bridge, tower, crane, hoist, temporary construction support system, or excavation
- A major release of a hazardous substance
- A dangerous incident involving a fire or explosion that had potential for causing serious injury to a worker
- A blasting incident that results in personal injury, or a dangerous incident involving explosives

In the Regulation

Section 21.3 of the Regulation describes dangerous incident reports for blasting and explosives.

Serious injuries are those that are life-threatening or could cause permanent injury. They include traumatic injuries such as major fractures, amputations, and serious burns. Serious injuries also include incidents such as heat and cold stress or exposure to chemicals, as these could result in life-threatening conditions or cause permanent impairment.

When any of these incidents happen in the workplace, employers are also required to conduct an investigation into the incident.

For more information on what is considered a serious injury, see [Guideline G-P2-68-1](#).

When there is an incident

Before notifying WorkSafeBC about a serious workplace incident, employers must first do the following:

- Address any workplace conditions that could be hazardous to other workers.
- Ensure any injured workers receive prompt first aid and medical treatment.

As soon as the workplace has been secured and any injured workers have been attended to, contact WorkSafeBC immediately.

Unless you have been instructed otherwise by a police officer or a WorkSafeBC officer, the scene of a reportable accident must not be disturbed except to carry out the following tasks:

- Attend to someone who has been injured or killed.
- Prevent further injuries.
- Protect property that is in danger because of the accident.

Investigate incidents

You must investigate any incident that requires you to immediately notify WorkSafeBC (see pages 39–40). You are also required to investigate incidents where a worker required medical treatment or that had the potential to cause serious injury to a worker. This includes any diving incidents.

Employers are responsible for conducting investigations related to incidents that happen in their workplaces and submitting employer incident investigation reports (EIIRs) to WorkSafeBC (see pages 44–46). Incident investigations help employers and WorkSafeBC determine why an incident happened and what can be done to prevent similar situations in the future.

Employers are responsible for completing reports that represent the four stages of an investigation: preliminary investigation, interim corrective actions, full investigation, and full corrective actions (see page 43).

Depending on the incident and how serious it is, you may also need to immediately report the incident to WorkSafeBC (see page 39)

In the Regulation

Section 24.34 of the Regulation describes the requirements for an incident investigation report when there is a diving incident.

In the Regulation and the Act

Section 3.3(e) of the Regulation requires that formal OHS programs include “provision for the prompt investigation of incidents to determine the action necessary to prevent their recurrence.”

Other relevant sections include [section 3.28](#) of the Regulation as well as [sections 68 to 73](#) of the Act.

What is an incident?

An *incident* is an accident or other occurrence that resulted in or had the potential to cause a death, injury, occupational disease, or damage to equipment or property. Incidents include:

- Accidents in which a worker is injured or killed
- Accidents in which no one is hurt but equipment or property is damaged
- Near misses

What is a near miss?

A *near miss* (or *close call*) is an incident in which there is no injury or damage but that could have resulted in an injury or death, or damage to equipment or property. Near misses may indicate hazardous conditions or acts that need to be corrected.

Forms

The **Employer Incident Investigation Report (Form 52E40)** is available on [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com).

In the Act

Section 69 of the Act provides more details about what incidents employers must investigate.

Incidents requiring an investigation

Employers are responsible for immediately conducting an investigation into any incident that involves:

- Serious injury to a worker or a worker's death
- Injury requiring medical treatment
- Minor injury, or no injury, but that had the potential to cause serious injury
- Major structural failure or collapse
- Major release of hazardous substances
- Diving incident, as defined by the Regulation
- Dangerous incident involving explosive materials
- Blasting incident causing personal injury

The four stages of an investigation

Conducting an investigation into an incident that occurred in your workplace includes four stages. Those conducting the investigation must be knowledgeable about the type of work taking place at the time of the incident. An employer and a worker representative must participate if they are reasonably available.

1. Preliminary investigation

A preliminary investigation is an opportunity for employers to identify any unsafe conditions, acts, or procedures that must be addressed so work can resume safely until a full investigation has been completed. Employers must complete a preliminary investigation and accompanying report within 48 hours of an incident.

2. Interim corrective actions

During the period between the incident and the conclusion of the full investigation, an employer is responsible for taking all actions reasonably necessary to prevent a similar incident from happening. If you can identify only some of the unsafe conditions, acts, or procedures that significantly contributed to the incident, interim corrective actions may include a full or partial shutdown of the worksite, removal of equipment, or reassignment of workers to other duties.

3. Full investigation

The goal of a full investigation is to determine an incident's cause or causes. This involves carefully analyzing the facts and circumstances to identify the underlying factors that led to the incident. There are two key questions to ask:

- What factors made the unsafe conditions, act, or procedures possible?
- Are there any health and safety deficiencies in my management system or processes?

A full investigation and report must be completed within 30 days of the incident.

4. Final corrective actions

Once a full investigation has been completed, as an employer you must prepare a corrective action report that describes the unsafe conditions that led to the incident, what corrective action is necessary, and the steps you and your organization will take to implement those actions.

Reports and the reporting process

Depending on the incident, employers are responsible for completing up to four separate reports — each representing the investigation's status at a specific point in the process. Employers can choose to document the incident investigation in a format that suits their needs; however, the reports must contain the information required by OHS Policies [P2-71-1](#) and [P2-72-1](#). This will ensure reports comply with [sections 71\(2\)\(a\) and 72\(2\)\(a\)](#) of the Act.

WorkSafeBC has a template of the [Employer Incident Investigation Report form](#) that employers can use to record their investigations. It's important to note that these report templates contain the minimum content required to satisfy the requirements of the Act. If you choose to customize any of the report forms, you may add fields but be sure not to delete any. For more on completing a report, see the [Reference Guide for Employer Incident Investigations](#).

As you complete these reports during your investigation, be mindful of the personal privacy of individuals involved in the incident. Only record personal information that is relevant to the investigation. If personal information is included, consider removing some or all of it before posting the report in a public place.

The following sections describe each of the required reports.

1. Preliminary investigation report

The preliminary investigation and its accompanying report must be completed within 48 hours of the incident — unless WorkSafeBC grants an extension. This report outlines the facts of the incident, including the names of injured workers and witnesses. It also asks you to describe the sequence of events leading up to the incident and what happened when the incident occurred. In addition, you are required to identify the unsafe conditions or acts that significantly contributed to the incident and list the recommended corrective actions.

Once you've completed the preliminary investigation report, make sure you keep a copy for your records. If requested, you will need to submit a copy to WorkSafeBC. You must also provide a copy to your joint health and safety committee or the worker health and safety representative. If there isn't a joint committee or worker representative at your organization, you must post a copy at your workplace.

2. Interim corrective actions report

The interim corrective actions report should address the findings of your preliminary investigation and describe the recommended steps taken to prevent similar incidents.

Once you've completed the interim corrective actions report, make sure you keep a copy for your records. You must also provide a copy to your joint committee or the worker representative. If there isn't a joint committee or worker representative at your organization, you must post a copy at your workplace.

3. Full investigation report

The full investigation and its accompanying report must be completed and submitted to WorkSafeBC within 30 days of the incident. The full investigation report expands on the preliminary investigation report by describing what your investigation has determined to be the cause or causes of the incident. You may need to update the section of the preliminary investigation report that identified the unsafe conditions, acts, or procedures that led to the incident (in other words, the underlying factors), as well as your recommended corrective actions.

Once you've completed the full investigation report, make sure you keep a copy for your records. You will need to submit a copy to WorkSafeBC within 30 days. You must also provide a copy to your joint committee or worker representative. If there isn't a joint committee or worker representative at your organization, you must post a copy at your workplace.

4. Full corrective actions report

Once the full investigation and report have been completed, you are responsible for preparing a corrective action report identifying:

- The unsafe conditions, acts, or procedures that made the corrective action necessary
- The corrective actions taken to prevent similar incidents from occurring in the future
- The names and job titles of those responsible for implementing the corrective actions
- The date of completion for the corrective actions

After the full corrective actions have been put in place, it's recommended you take some time to review them to determine if they have been effective.

Once you've completed the full corrective actions report, make sure you keep a copy for your records. You must provide a copy to your joint committee or worker representative. If there isn't a joint committee or worker representative at your organization, you must post a copy at your workplace.

Submitting a report to WorkSafeBC

Generally, you are only required to submit a full employer incident investigation report (EIIR) to WorkSafeBC. You can submit full investigation reports in the following ways:

- Online at the [EIIR upload portal](#)
- By fax to 604.276.3247 in the Lower Mainland or toll-free 1.866.240.1434
- By mail to WorkSafeBC, PO Box 5350 Stn Terminal, Vancouver, BC V6B 5L5

Maintain records and statistics

Your OHS program isn't set in stone. As mentioned earlier, it's important for you to keep your program current by reviewing it regularly and revising it as necessary. This will be easier if you keep up-to-date health and safety records. Maintaining records and statistics will help you identify and resolve repeat problems. It will also provide you with material for education and training.

In the Regulation

Section 3.3(f) requires an OHS program to include “the maintenance of records and statistics, including reports of inspections and incident investigations, with provision for making this information available to the joint committee or worker health and safety representative, as applicable and, upon request, to an officer, the union representing the workers at the workplace or, if there is no union, the workers at the workplace.”

You need to keep the following types of records:

- Health and safety program reviews
- Worker orientation and training records
- Inspection reports
- Health and safety meeting records
- Incident investigation reports
- First aid records, medical certificates, and hearing tests

In an OHS program, other required records may include the following:

- Worker and supervisor training showing the date, names of attendees, and topics covered (for example, lockout and WHMIS training)
- Supervisors' notes and logs of safety contacts
- Records showing use of progressive discipline to enforce safety rules and written safe work procedures
- Joint committee meeting reports showing steps taken to address health and safety issues
- Subcontractor pre-qualification documents

- Equipment logbooks and maintenance records
- Forms and checklists (for example, confined space entry permits) showing requirements for safe work procedures
- Sampling and monitoring records for work around harmful substances
- Emergency response plan, record of drills, and reports on any resulting improvements

Statistics

Accident and injury statistics are useful for identifying trends and for measuring the effectiveness of health and safety activities and programs. The table below outlines some ways you might use data from incidents for statistical analysis.

Type of incident	Type of data	Statistical analysis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Near misses • First aid only • Health care only • Time-loss injury 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of incidents • Frequency of incidents • Number of injuries • Types of injuries • Severity of injuries • Number of days lost 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compare monthly and annual results • Compare type of work or activity • Compare shifts • Compare worker experience and training

Leading indicators

Traditional workplace safety statistics tend to focus on lagging indicators, such as incident frequency, injury severity, and time-loss statistics. These statistics are important, and in many cases required by the Regulation, but they do not give the full picture of the health and safety environment.

To help support a workplace culture that is proactive about safety, it's helpful to track leading indicators, such as the following:

- Safety meetings held
- Safety education and training delivered
- Hazards identified and risks assessed and controlled
- Inspections and corrective actions taken
- Recommendations made to the employer
- Worker perception surveys

Part 4:

Other health and safety considerations

Establish and maintain a joint health and safety committee

The joint health and safety committee plays an important role in an employer's internal responsibility system. A joint committee brings together representatives of the employer and the workers to identify and help resolve health and safety issues in the workplace. Smaller workplaces may only need a worker health and safety representative rather than a joint committee.

Resources

- [Handbook for Joint Health and Safety Committees](#) (book)
- [Templates and Resources for Joint Health and Safety Committees](#) (guide)
- [Joint Health and Safety Committee Evaluation Tool](#) (checklist/form)
- [Joint Health and Safety Committees: Frequently asked questions](#) (infosheet)

When you need a joint health and safety committee

If your workplace has 20 or more workers, you must have a joint committee. This includes any workplace where there are 20 or more workers employed for longer than a month. WorkSafeBC may also order that a joint committee be established in any other workplace.

When you need a worker health and safety representative

If your workplace has more than 9 but fewer than 20 workers, you must have a worker health and safety representative. This includes any workplace where there are more than 9 workers employed for longer than a month.

Use the following table to determine whether your workplace requires either a joint committee or a worker representative. If you're an employer with more than one workplace, use the number of workers at each individual workplace to see the type of representation required for each workplace.

Number of workers	Representation for workplace (regardless of hazard rating)
9 or fewer	None*
More than 9, fewer than 20	Worker health and safety representative
20 or more	Joint committee

* In certain circumstances, WorkSafeBC may order an employer to have a worker health and safety representative.

Joint committee membership

A joint committee must consist of the following:

- At least four members
- Both worker and employer representatives — at least half the members must be worker representatives
- Two co-chairs, one selected by the worker representatives and the other by the employer representatives

Employer representatives

Employer representatives must be selected by the employer and, to the extent possible, must include people who exercise managerial functions at the workplace covered by the joint committee. The owner of the business can act as an employer representative.

It's important that employer representatives have the authority to make commitments and to speak on behalf of the employer at committee meetings. Since the committee itself does not have the power to act on its own recommendations, it depends on the authority of the employer representatives to finalize matters agreed on at a meeting.

Worker representatives

Worker representatives must be selected as follows:

- According to procedures established by the union if the workers are unionized.
- By secret ballot if the workers are not unionized.
- If some workers are unionized and some are not, worker representatives must be selected using the above methods in equal proportion to the number of unionized and non-

unionized workers, and according to the relative risks to health and safety.

- If workers do not make their own selection, the employer must seek out and assign worker representatives.

Alternates

Alternates should be selected to attend meetings or conduct committee business when regular members are not available. Alternates should be selected at the same time as regular members.

Resources

Many industries in B.C. operate seasonally, which may raise questions about how to maintain an effective committee. There is usually a permanent core of workers who could act as a nucleus of the committee. Also, there are often seasonal workers who have worked for the organization on previous occasions and will have the experience to serve as members.

Meetings during the off-season are not always practical, but administrative planning and maintenance should include considerations for health and safety. These factors can be planned for by the committee in regular meetings during the active season

Duties and functions

The joint committee plays an important role in your occupational health and safety program, giving workers and employers a way to work together to identify and find solutions to workplace health and safety issues. The joint committee has the following specific duties and functions:

- Identify situations that may be unhealthy or unsafe for workers, and advise on effective systems for responding to those situations.
- Consider and promptly deal with complaints relating to the health and safety of workers.
- Consult with workers and the employer on issues related to occupational health and safety and the occupational environment.
- Make recommendations to the employer and the workers for the improvement of the occupational health and safety program and the occupational environment of workers.

- Make recommendations to the employer on educational programs promoting the health and safety of workers and compliance with Part 2 of the Act and the regulations, and monitor the effectiveness of these programs.
- Advise the employer on programs and policies required under the regulations for the workplace, and monitor their effectiveness.
- Advise the employer on proposed changes to work processes or to the workplace, including significant proposed changes to equipment and machinery, that may affect the health or safety of workers.
- Make sure accident investigations and regular inspections are carried out as required.
- Participate in inspections, investigations, and inquiries as provided in Part 2 of the Act and Part 3 of the Regulation.

In workplaces where a worker health and safety representative is required, the representative has the same duties and functions as a joint committee, to the extent practicable.

In the Regulation and the Act

Sections 3.26 and 3.27 of the Regulation and **sections 31 to 46** of the Act apply specifically to joint committees.

The Act sets out requirements for the selection of employer and worker representatives, the duties and functions of the joint committee, the employer's obligation to respond to recommendations and to support the committee, and the preparation and circulation of committee reports.

Education and training for committee members

Mandatory training

The requirements for mandatory training are different for joint committee members and worker health and safety representatives.

All joint committee members selected on or after April 3, 2017, must receive at least eight hours of training and instruction on the following topics:

- The duties and functions of a joint committee
- The rules of procedure of the joint committee
- The requirements for conducting incident investigations
- The requirements for conducting regular workplace inspections, and how to make regular inspections
- The requirements for responding to a refusal of unsafe work
- The requirements for annually evaluating the joint committee

All worker health and safety representatives selected on or after April 3, 2017, must receive at least four hours of training on the following topics:

- The duties and functions of a joint committee
- The requirements for conducting incident investigations
- The requirements for conducting regular workplace inspections, and how to make regular inspections
- The requirements for responding to a refusal of unsafe work

Annual education leave

Each joint committee member and worker health and safety representative is entitled to eight hours of leave per year to attend occupational health and safety training courses.

For information on available courses, contact local [OHS training providers](#). Courses are considered acceptable if the employer follows a reasonable process of assessing the training needs of committee members and selects appropriate training programs.

Evaluation of joint committees

Section 3.26 of the Regulation requires the employer to make sure a written evaluation is conducted annually to determine the effectiveness of the joint committee. The intent of the evaluation is to determine whether the employer is in compliance with the legal requirements to establish and maintain a joint committee, and to assess whether the joint committee has been effective in fulfilling its role. Evaluations should also identify improvements to be considered and implemented.

To help with the evaluation process, committees can use the [Joint Health and Safety Committee Evaluation Tool](#). You are not required to use this template. You can use your own committee evaluation tool as long as it includes all the information required by section 3.26 of the Regulation.

Provide personal protective equipment (PPE)

Personal protective equipment (PPE) is equipment or clothing designed to protect workers from workplace hazards. It includes items such as hard hats, safety footwear, respirators, and high-visibility vests.

When it comes to risk control methods, PPE is considered a last line of defence. It should be used only if other control methods (e.g., engineering controls) are not practicable, or in addition to other controls. Employers are responsible for providing and enforcing the use of PPE in the workplace, where it is required by the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation.

Workers need to wear all PPE required for the job. They must also make sure that their PPE doesn't cause any health and safety issues — for example, by interfering with breathing, mobility, or vision.

In the Regulation and the Act

For more information on specific types of PPE, go to worksafebc.com and search for “personal protective equipment.”

Types of PPE that employers provide

As an employer, you are responsible for providing workers with the following types of PPE whenever required by the nature of work performed:

- Eye and face protection
- High-visibility clothing
- Respirators
- Hearing protection
- Fall-arrest harnesses
- Lifejackets

Types of PPE that workers provide

Workers are responsible for supplying their own hard hats, general-purpose work gloves, appropriate footwear, and clothing to protect against the elements.

Selecting PPE

If PPE is required in the workplace, employers are responsible for making sure it's available to all the workers who need it. Employers are also responsible for making sure that the right type of PPE is selected for the job and that it fits workers and is comfortable under working conditions. When selecting PPE, consult with your workers and the joint health and safety committee (or the worker health and safety representative, if applicable). Check the permanent markings or labels on PPE to make sure it meets a standard that's acceptable to WorkSafeBC.

Training for PPE

Employers must ensure that workers are trained in how to use PPE and that they use it according to their training. Training should happen before workers start a job (i.e., during orientation). It should include how to use PPE, how to maintain and store it, and how to inspect it to make sure it's still safe and effective to use. If necessary, develop written safe work procedures for workers. Supervisors will find safe work procedures useful for training workers.

Caring for PPE

Workers should inspect PPE before each use and as scheduled (e.g., monthly or annually). Some equipment may need to be inspected periodically by someone other than the user. Employers should keep records of scheduled inspections.

Clean and maintain PPE regularly. Follow any manufacturers' instructions or specifications that came with the equipment. You may need to decontaminate some equipment after each use.

Replace or repair equipment and parts, as necessary. When doing repairs, only use original equipment manufacturer or approved aftermarket parts. Don't modify equipment unless you're following a procedure approved by the manufacturer. Discard PPE if it is defective or it no longer meets the manufacturer's specifications.

Store PPE according to the manufacturer's instructions. It's a good idea to have a designated cabinet, locker, or other storage area that's well-organized and easily accessible. You may also need to provide safe disposal receptacles for single-use PPE that workers will only use for one task or shift.

Monitoring and supervision

Employers should make sure their supervisors and managers are regularly monitoring that workers are using any required PPE according to their training, and that the PPE is being maintained and is functioning properly.

Provide first aid

First aid in the workplace is about providing workers with prompt, easily accessible, and appropriate first aid treatment. Depending on your workplace, some or all of the following might be needed:

- Occupational first aid attendants with training appropriate for the type of workplace, number of workers, and travel time to a hospital
- Proper facilities, such as first aid rooms or dressing stations
- First aid kits with appropriate types and quantities of supplies
- A record-keeping system so incidents can be logged
- Appropriate means of transporting injured workers to medical aid
- Effective means of communication between first aid attendants and workers served, and for the first aid attendant to call for assistance

Conducting a first aid assessment

To determine an adequate and appropriate level of first aid coverage, the first step is a first aid assessment. This doesn't need to be complicated, but it does call for a full review of your workplace. The assessment will help you determine the minimum level of first aid needed in your workplace. First aid levels are outlined in Part 3 of the Regulation, under [Schedule 3-A: Minimum Levels of First Aid](#).

1. Identify the number of workplaces

First aid coverage should be based on the total workforce present at each workplace. If you have multiple workplaces, you must complete an assessment for each location.

2. Identify your workplace hazard rating

First aid coverage is also determined by your workplace hazard rating. This rating reflects the nature and extent of the risks and hazards in your workplace. WorkSafeBC uses three levels of hazard ratings: low, moderate, and high. You can find your rating on the classification unit description sent out every year or [look up your classification unit online](#).

For more information, visit [First aid requirements on worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com).

3. Consider the surface travel time to a hospital

The level of first aid service required changes if it would normally take more than 20 minutes to safely transport an injured worker to hospital by road or water.

4. Determine the number of workers on a shift

Different shifts may have different requirements. Be sure to account for all workers who may require first aid during a shift.

5. Determine the required first aid services for your workplace

By referring to the Regulation and supporting guidelines, and consulting appropriate WorkSafeBC resources, you can best determine what first aid kits, facilities, emergency vehicles, and equipment you need.

6. Review your assessment

Review steps 1 through 5 within one year of completing your assessment and then annually afterwards, or when there is a significant change in operations.

Developing first aid procedures

As an employer, you're responsible for keeping up-to-date written first aid procedures at your workplace. You must also ensure all workers know where the first aid service is located and how to call for it. To help you develop your workplace first aid procedures and keep them current, conduct regular drills and maintain your system.

Drills

Conduct a drill at least once a year. This drill should test your workers' awareness of how to call for first aid, the adequacy and efficiency of the communication system, and the ability of first aid attendants to respond. It will also help you determine if your first aid services are adequate to deal with injuries and illnesses most likely to happen in your workplace.

System maintenance

Consider assigning a worker to manage the first aid services at your workplace. This worker's duties should include ensuring that required first aid attendants, supplies, facilities, and equipment are always available.

For more information

For more information and resources on creating and managing a healthy and safety workplace, visit worksafebc.com/create-manage.

Beyond the basics

Once you have established the basics of a health and safety program, visit worksafebc.com for information about enhancing your health and safety culture. Topics include:

- [Active health & safety management](#)
- [Engaging workers in health & safety](#)
- [Due diligence](#)
- [Supervising for health & safety](#)
- [Occupational health & safety management systems](#)

Health and safety resources

WorkSafeBC has hundreds of print, video, and multimedia resources on a wide range of health and safety topics. Visit worksafebc.com/resources-health-safety to find resources for your business. You can refine your search by topic, industry, resource type, and language.

Specifically, you may find the following resources helpful for creating and managing your OHS program:

- [Supervising for Safety](#) (online course)
- [Handbook for Joint Health and Safety Committees](#)
- [Health and Safety for Small Businesses: A Guide to WorkSafeBC](#) (also available as a [web book](#))
- [Reference Guide for Employer Incident Investigations](#)
- [Toward a Respectful Workplace: A Handbook on Preventing and Addressing Workplace Bullying and Harassment](#)

Employers' Advisers Office

The Employers' Advisers Office is a branch of the B.C. Ministry of Labour and is independent of WorkSafeBC. Employers' advisers are funded by the WorkSafeBC premiums collected from employers, and they have a right to access WorkSafeBC information on your behalf.

At no additional cost, employers' advisers provide impartial advice and assistance regarding workers' compensation claims, assessments, and prevention issues. They also provide representation services for reconsideration requests, reviews, and appeals of WorkSafeBC decisions. In addition, employers' advisers conduct educational seminars for employers on topics such as occupational health and safety requirements, claims management, disability management, and assessments.

You can visit the Employers' Advisers Office website at www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/employers/employers-advisers-office or contact a regional office for help. You can reach all the regional offices by phone or email:

- Phone: 604.713.0303 in the Lower Mainland
- Toll-free: 1.800.925.2233 in Canada
- Email: eao@eao-bc.org

