



# SAFE WORK

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SPOT THE HAZARD  
ASSESS THE RISK  
FIND A SAFER WAY  
EVERYDAY

## WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY

*The Workplace Safety and Health Act* supports every worker's right to a safe and healthy workplace. It assigns responsibility to each person in the workplace for creating and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace, to the extent that they have the authority and ability to do so. Everyone has a personal and shared responsibility to work together co-operatively to prevent workplace injuries and illness.

### General Duties under the Act

**Employers:** Because they have the greatest degree of authority and control over the operations of the workplace, employers have the greatest degree of responsibility for workplace safety and health. *Employers' legal safety and health responsibilities include:*

- ◆ Taking necessary precautions to ensure the safety, health and welfare of workers;
- ◆ Providing and maintaining a safe workplace, equipment, tools and systems;
- ◆ Ensuring all workers and supervisors are aware of hazards in the workplace as well as the precautions necessary for their protection;
- ◆ Providing workers with competent supervision;
- ◆ Providing the necessary training to protect workers' safety and health before they begin a new job;
- ◆ Taking necessary precautions to ensure that other persons are not exposed to safety or health risks due to the activities of the workplace;
- ◆ Consulting and cooperating with the workplace safety and health committee or representative;
- ◆ Cooperating with other people on workplace safety and health matters.

**Supervisors** have the responsibility and authority to oversee a group of workers within a workplace. *The legal safety and health duties of supervisors' include:*

- ◆ Taking necessary precautions to protect the safety and health of workers under their supervision;
- ◆ Ensuring that workers comply with safety and health procedures and use safety equipment, clothing, and devices;
- ◆ Advising workers of safety and health hazards in the work area;
- ◆ Cooperating with the workplace safety and health committee or representative;
- ◆ Cooperating with other people on workplace safety and health matters.

**Workers** are responsible for their own actions or inaction. *Workers' legal safety and health responsibilities include:*

- ◆ Taking reasonable care to protect themselves and others who may be affected by their actions or omissions;
- ◆ Proper use of safety equipment, clothing, and devices;
- ◆ Cooperating with the workplace safety and health committee or representative;
- ◆ Cooperating with other people on workplace safety and health matters.

**Contractors** are described under the Act as persons who hire an employer or self-employed person on contract and direct their activities. *Contractors' legal safety and health duties include:*

- ◆ Taking necessary precautions to ensure that activities and hazards within their control do not create a safety and health risk;
- ◆ Cooperating with other people on workplace safety and health matters.

**Prime Contractors** are required on construction projects where more than one employer or self-employed person are involved. *The legal safety and health responsibilities of prime contractors include:*

- ◆ Coordinating, organizing and overseeing the work on the project to ensure the safety and health of workers and others who may be affected by activities on the project (this includes coordinating the safety and health programs of employers working on the project);
- ◆ Setting up an effective system to ensure everyone working on the project fulfills their legal safety and health responsibilities;
- ◆ Cooperating with other people on workplace safety and health matters.

**Self-Employed Persons** are responsible for their own actions or inaction. *Their legal safety and health duties include:*

- ◆ Taking necessary precautions to ensure that their activities do not create a safety and health risk to themselves or others who may be affected by their activities;
- ◆ Cooperating with other people on workplace safety and health matters.

**Owners** of buildings or land used as a workplace have *legal safety and health responsibilities which include:*

- ◆ Taking necessary precautions to ensure that property under their control does not create a risk to safety and health;
- ◆ Cooperating with other people on workplace safety and health matters.

**Suppliers' legal safety and health duties include:**

- ◆ Taking necessary precautions to ensure that tools, equipment and other materials supplied to a workplace are safe when used according to instructions provided;
- ◆ Cooperating with other people on workplace safety and health matters.

**Workplace Safety & Health Committees and Representatives** play an important role by providing input and advice to employers on safety and health matters, however they are not responsible for managing safety and health in the workplace.

- ◆ Employers are required to establish a safety and health committee in workplaces with 20 or more workers;
- ◆ In workplaces with 10 to 19 workers (or on a construction project), employers are required to designate a worker as the safety and health representative;
- ◆ Prime contractors are required to establish a project safety and health committee on construction projects expected to last more than 90 days where 20 or more workers are expected to work.

*The legal responsibilities of committees and representatives include:*

- ◆ Making safety and health recommendations to the employer;
- ◆ Dealing with safety and health concerns of workers;
- ◆ Participating in developing and promoting of safety and health precautions, as well as safety and health education and training programs;
- ◆ Conducting regular workplace inspections;
- ◆ Participating in safety and health investigations;
- ◆ Cooperating with other people on workplace safety and health matters.

For specific requirements, please refer to the Workplace Safety and Health Act (W210).