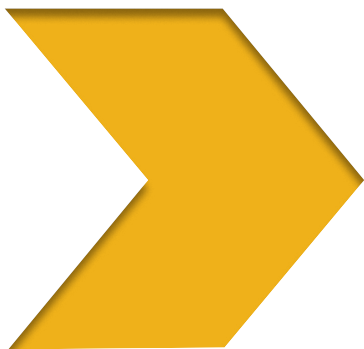


Supervisor

Health & Safety at Work



Prevention Starts Here

Supervisor Health and
Safety Awareness in
5 Steps

This workbook belongs to:

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Note: This document does not constitute legal advice. To determine your rights and obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations, please contact your legal counsel or refer to the legislation at: http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90o01_e.htm

Introduction

Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) defines a supervisor as anyone who "has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker." This training is designed to help you understand what the OHSA expects from you. These are things you need to know and understand so that you and the people you supervise can be healthy and safe at work today and every day.

Everyone in the workplace, from the employer to the newest worker, has different but important duties to keep the workplace safe. Because employers have the most authority in the workplace, they have the greatest responsibility for health and safety. Supervisors are next in line. Since your job involves taking direction from your employer and giving direction to the workers you supervise, it's important for you to understand the health and safety responsibilities of everyone in the workplace, including yours.

The focus of this training is on general awareness of rights and responsibilities under the OHSA and does not, in any way, replace the OHSA or its regulations or any other knowledge, information or training you will require as a supervisor. Prevention – preventing injuries and illnesses at work – starts here, with the things you learn in this workbook, but it doesn't end here. Above and beyond what is covered in this training, your employer has a duty under the OHSA to make sure that you are competent before appointing you and to inform you of any hazards in the work which you supervise. We hope you will use what you learn here every day in your work as a supervisor so that you are more confident asking your employer questions about workplace health and safety and your duties.

Step 1: Make a Difference

Why the supervisor is so important

When a person is hired or promoted to the position of a supervisor, it usually means a pay raise. But it also means more responsibilities, including legal responsibilities relating to the health and safety of the workers under your supervision. It's a natural thing for a new supervisor to wonder if he or she is up to the challenge. In fact, asking yourself that question will help you figure out what additional information or instruction you might need to do your job well.

People expect a lot from a supervisor, no matter how big or small the workplace is. A healthy and safe workplace matters to everyone, and the OHSa expects supervisors to be the front-line guardians of healthy and safe workers, whether the work is performed on a construction project, in a healthcare facility, an industrial establishment or in a mine. Every good employer also expects that from you, and so do the people you supervise.

A supervisor has to play a lot of different roles, often at the same time. Think about the roles that people play at a basketball game. From the list below, check off the roles that you think apply to a supervisor's work:

- Coach
- Trainer
- Referee
- Cheerleader
- Captain

If you didn't check off all of the above boxes, go ahead and do it now. Because chances are you will be called upon to play any and all of the above roles as you strive to keep your workplace healthy, safe and productive.

As a supervisor, you are a crucial part of your workplace's Internal Responsibility System. This is a very important concept for workplace health and safety and you will learn more about this throughout this training.

The number of people in Ontario who suffer a work-related illness or injury each year would fill the seats of a dozen big hockey arenas. New and young workers in Ontario are four times more likely to get hurt during the first month on the job than at any other time. They often aren't told about or understand the hazards of the job. They don't know what to expect from their employer and supervisor. Sometimes they aren't sure what questions to ask; sometimes they don't even know who to ask. That's where you come in. It's a big challenge, but it's also a big opportunity to make a difference.

Your duties as a supervisor

Under the OHSa, every supervisor is also considered to be a worker and has the same workplace duties and rights as a worker. But the OHSa also gives you specific duties related to your role as a supervisor, including

- Telling workers about hazards and dangers and responding to their concerns
- Showing workers how to work safely and making sure they follow the law, and the workplace health and safety policies and procedures
- Making sure workers wear and use the right protective equipment
- Doing everything reasonable in the circumstances to protect workers from being hurt or getting a work related illness

The OSHA requires every employer to prepare a written occupational health and safety policy for that workplace and to develop and maintain a program to implement that policy. One of your tasks as a supervisor is to put that program into action. Here is how you do it:

1. **You know the OSHA and the various Regulations attached to it that apply to your workplace.** A supervisor who knows and understands the OSHA and Regulations can make sure workers follow the law, and can identify ways to make the workplace safer. The various Regulations under the OSHA contain detailed requirements about how to make the workplace safe. For example, several Regulations, such as the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) Regulation, explain what workers need in order to work safely with chemical and other hazardous materials or designated substances – things like training, warning labels on products and information sheets. There are also Regulations that specify requirements for different types of workplaces, such as construction projects, health care facilities, industrial establishments and mines.
2. **You make sure workers wear and use the right protective equipment.** Your employer is responsible for telling you what types of protective equipment, device or clothing they require workers to use or wear, and both of you are responsible for making sure the workers are using or wearing it. That means you need to know and understand the requirements in the Act and its regulations about equipment, devices and clothing, as well as your employer's health and safety policy, program and work procedures.
3. **You tell workers about the hazards in their work.** Every workplace has hazards. Hazards include anything in the workplace that can hurt workers or make them sick. A supervisor must know and be able to explain the actual and potential dangers involved in the work he or she is supervising, and ensure that the workers do their work safely. A few Regulations even say that you have to give written instructions that tell the workers what steps and procedures must be followed to stay safe. You need to know about these Regulations if they apply to the work you are supervising. Your general duties as a supervisor also apply to the prevention of workplace violence.
4. **You plan the work so that it can be done safely.** The people you supervise are relying on your knowledge and experience of the work to make sure it's done safely. The OSHA requires employers to make sure you have the necessary competence to be a supervisor. Later we will look at this responsibility in more detail.
5. **You make sure workers know and follow through on their health and safety duties.** It's your job to monitor the work, to remind workers of their health and safety duties if necessary, to show them how to work safely, and to enforce the employer's workplace health and safety policies and procedures if they aren't being followed.

Doing the five things we have just reviewed will help you to carry out your duties under the OSHA.

To make sure you're doing your job right, here are a few important questions you should ask yourself:

- Do I understand the OSHA and the Regulations that apply to the work we do?
- Can I explain these sections of the OSHA and regulations to the workers?
- Am I informing the workers about hazards?
- Have I planned the work so that it can be done safely?
- Am I making sure the workers wear or use the protective gear, clothing and devices as required by the employer?

**Exercise 1: Can you think of any other questions you should ask yourself?
List them below, then read the answers on page 26.**

Duties of the employer and the worker

As you can see, a supervisor has a lot of serious responsibilities. To carry out those responsibilities you need the help of your employer and of the people you supervise. The Occupational Health and Safety Act gives duties to employers and workers that will help you do your job.

The OHSA says it's the employer's duty to appoint a "competent person" as a supervisor. To be a competent supervisor under the OHSA, you must:

1. Have knowledge, training and experience to organize work for your workers
2. Be familiar with the OHSA and the regulations that apply to the work you are supervising
3. Have knowledge of any potential or actual danger to health or safety in the workplace.

Your employer must ensure that you are competent **before** you start supervising. This includes ensuring that you know the OHSA and the Regulations that apply to the work, and that you know about any potential or actual dangers to health and safety in the work you are supervising. If your workplace is a small one and the supervisor and employer are the same person, then that one person must comply with both employer and supervisor duties.

Here are some other things the OHSA says the employer must do:

Where there are more than five workers regularly employed in the workplace:

- Create and review on an annual basis a health and safety policy
- Develop a program to implement that policy
- Post the policy in the workplace.

For all workplaces:

- Make sure workers and supervisors know about hazards in the work they do and provide them with information, instruction and supervision to protect their health and safety.
- Take steps to eliminate hazards in the workplace, and where elimination is not possible, to control them
- Make sure workers use and wear protective equipment, material and devices where required by the Regulations
- Do everything reasonable in the circumstances to protect workers from being hurt or getting a work-related illness.

If you work in construction, it's important to know that the constructor of the project also has duties to keep the workplace safe. This means that on a construction site, the constructor and your employer both have distinct responsibilities under the law. Sometimes the constructor is also your employer, in which case that one person must comply with both constructor and employer duties.

The OHSA also gives workers certain duties that support your role as supervisor:

- Workers have to follow the law and workplace health and safety policies and procedures
- Workers have to use and wear the protective equipment required by the employer
- Workers have to act in a way that won't hurt themselves or anyone else
- If workers see anything that's unsafe or that goes against the Act, they have to tell you or the employer about it, so that you can take the necessary steps with your employer to solve the problem.

They have to report to you or the employer the absence of or any defect in any equipment or protective device of which they become aware.

As a supervisor, you can make a difference in your workplace, but you can't do it alone. You need your employer and the workers you supervise to do their part to keep the workplace safe. Like you, they need to be aware of their health and safety duties under the OHSA and regulations. That's the first step in creating an effective Internal Responsibility System. Prevention starts here, but it doesn't end here.

Step 1 Quiz

Before we move on to Step 2, here's a short true-or-false quiz on the material we have just covered. (The answers are in the back of the workbook, but please don't look at them ahead of time.)

1. The only duty of a supervisor that's included in the Occupational Health and Safety Act is the duty to "take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances" to protect workers.
True False
2. The OHS Act requires the employer to appoint a "competent person" as a supervisor. By "competent" the OHS Act means that a supervisor must, among other things, have the necessary knowledge, training and experience to carry out his or her health and safety duties.
True False
3. As a supervisor, you have the greatest responsibility for health and safety in your workplace.
True False
4. New and young workers need a supervisor's special attention and guidance, especially during their first few weeks on the job.
True False
5. If workers see something that's unsafe, the OHS Act says they need to solve the problem.
True False

Step 2: Lead the Way

Teamwork and the Internal Responsibility System (IRS)

People in successful workplaces understand that a safe and healthy workplace is a productive workplace. They also know that they have to work together to create and maintain a safe and healthy workplace. As you have seen, the Occupational Health and Safety Act is very clear about the different roles of the employer, supervisor and worker, and how those roles cooperate to make a safe and healthy workplace. This is the Internal Responsibility System, or IRS as it's commonly known.

Communication is a big part of the IRS in any workplace, and the ability to communicate effectively is an important skill for any supervisor. To communicate effectively, you need to be good at both listening and speaking. You need to be a leader as well as a supervisor. A leader adds to the supervisor's basic role of overseeing the work by listening to the workers, trying to understand their point of view, supporting them when they need help, and always setting a good example.

As the person in the highest leadership position, the employer has the most important role in creating an effective Internal Responsibility System in the workplace. You need the support of the employer to carry out your supervisor duties, and the workers need to know that their supervisor and employer will listen to their concerns and work with them to recognize, assess and control hazards. In fact, the OHSa says workers have the legal right to expect that support.

You should inform the employer of any health and safety concern, even if you have the ability and authority to handle it yourself. Your employer may need to know about the problem in order to fulfill his or her duties.

The three rights of workers

The OHSa gives workers three important rights:

- The right to know about workplace hazards and what to do about them
- The right to participate in solving workplace health and safety problems
- The right to refuse work that they believe is unsafe

As a supervisor, it's important that you know and understand those three worker rights. They are at the heart of the OHSa and the Internal Responsibility System and they connect directly to your duties as a supervisor and those of the employer. Here's how:

1. **The right to know.** It's your job to tell the workers about any health or safety hazards and to show them how to work safely. This supports workers' right to know about hazards to which they might be exposed. For example, the law says workers have to receive information and training on the chemicals or hazardous materials that are used, handled or stored at work. This information is available either on warning labels or information sheets. Sometimes you may also have to give the worker written instructions on how to do the work.

The employer supports the workers' right to know by making sure they get:

- Information about the hazards in the work they are doing
- Training to do the work in a healthy and safe way.
- Competent supervision to stay healthy and safe. That means the employer has made sure that you know how to do your job.

2. **The right to participate.** As a supervisor, you support the workers' right to participate in health and safety by encouraging them to get involved. There are various ways to be involved in workplace health and safety such as asking questions, raising concerns and giving positive feedback. One of the most effective ways workers can participate in health and safety is by becoming a health and safety representative or a joint health and safety committee member.

Number of Workers	Legislative Requirement
1 - 5	There is no legislative requirement for a JHSC or a Health and Safety representative. However, if your workplace uses designated substances, a JHSC is required.
6 - 19	One Health and Safety representative, selected by the employees they represent, is required.
20 - 49	A JHSC is required. The committee must have at least two (2) members
50+	A JHSC is required. The committee must have at least four (4) members.

Figure 1: Legal Requirements for Reps and Committees

In most workplaces with 6 to 19 regularly employed workers, the Occupational Health and Safety Act makes the employer responsible for ensuring that the workers choose a health and safety representative. In most workplaces where there are 20 or more regularly employed workers, the OHS Act says the employer is responsible for making sure a joint health and safety committee (JHSC) is set up. The committee has to have at least two people on it, and one of them has to be chosen by the workers. Workplaces with 50 or more regularly employed workers must have a JHSC with at least four people on it, with two of them chosen by workers. Generally, JHSCs must have a worker representative and an employer representative who are certified members. (The requirements for JHSCs do not apply to construction projects at which work is expected to last less than three months.)

The committee has many powers, including the power to identify workplace health and safety problems and recommend to the employer ways to solve problems and improve health and safety in the workplace. For example, a member of the committee who represents workers must regularly inspect the workplace. Information from these inspections is brought back to the committee. The committee then makes recommendations to the employer to improve health and safety. The employer has to respond to these recommendations within 21 days. Because the employer and the workers are represented on the committee, everybody has a role in recognizing, assessing and controlling hazards. More details are provided in the Ministry of Labour's guide to JHSCs located on this website: www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/jhsc/index.php

In smaller workplaces, the health and safety representative has a similar role in helping improve health and safety conditions. Their duties and powers, like those of a joint health and safety committee, include inspecting the workplace regularly and making recommendations to the employer about how to fix hazards and solve other health and safety problems.

Exercise 2: Can you think of any other ways a supervisor can support the workers' right to participate in health and safety? List them below, then read the answers on page 26.

- _____

- _____

- _____

It's important to know that the OHSA strictly forbids the employer or a supervisor from firing, disciplining or even threatening a worker for doing what the OHSA expects them to do. This includes workers reporting hazards to you or asking you or the employer to do what the OHSA expects you or the employer to do.

3. **The right to refuse.** The third right of workers in the OHSA is the right to refuse to do work that they have reason to believe is unsafe for them or another worker. As a supervisor, you respect that right by taking "every precaution reasonable" in the circumstances to protect workers and by complying with the process for work refusals specified in the Act. When a worker comes to tell you that he or she is refusing to do particular work because it is likely to endanger him or herself, you must look into the worker's concerns and do everything you can to help the employer address them. Most of the time, the employer or you will be able to solve the problem with the worker's health and safety representative or JHSC member. But if you can't agree on how to solve it and the worker still feels the work is unsafe, a Ministry of Labour inspector will be called in to investigate.

There is a detailed description of the work refusal process, and the steps to take, in the Ministry of Labour's Guide to the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Supervisors are also workers. As a worker, you too may exercise the right to refuse unsafe work in the circumstances specified in the OHSA. As we saw earlier, the OHSA prohibits the employer fromreprising against a worker for such things as complying with the OHSA or seeking its enforcement.

Together, the OHS duties support a strong internal responsibility system in the workplace. Different people have different roles or positions, but they all have the same goal. As a supervisor, you can be a leader in making your workplace safer and healthier, but you can't do it alone.

Step 2 Quiz

Before we move on to Step 3, here's a true-or-false quiz. (The answers are in the back of the workbook, but please don't look at them ahead of time.)

1. The effectiveness of the Internal Responsibility System in any workplace depends on how effectively the employer, supervisor and workers cooperate to make a safe and healthy workplace.

True False

2. As a supervisor, you alone are responsible for making sure the workers you supervise are safe.

True False

3. The three basic rights of workers in the OHS Act are the right to know about hazards, the right to participate in health and safety activities, and the right to refuse work that they believe is dangerous to themselves or others.

True False

4. As a supervisor, you have the right to refuse to do work that you believe is dangerous to yourself or others.

True False

5. The main purpose of the various duties and rights in the OHS Act is to create a cooperative approach by everyone in the workplace to make it safer and healthier.

True False

Step 3: The Supervisor's Toolkit

Know the hazards in your workplace

One of your jobs as a supervisor is to help plan and organize the work. This is a big job. To do it well, you need to understand the work and the hazards associated with it. You also need to know how to eliminate or control those hazards and to make sure the health and safety program implemented in your workplace is effective in doing so.

At the root of every work-related death, injury or sickness is a hazard of some kind. Hazards can take many forms. Sometimes more than one hazard can combine to make an even bigger hazard. Here are some of the most common hazards in Ontario workplaces:

- Repeating the same movements over and over, especially if you are in an awkward position or you use a lot of force. Think of someone who bends down all day, or someone who lifts heavy things over and over again.
- Slipping, tripping or falling. Think of something as simple as spilled coffee on the floor, a cluttered work area or a raised platform with no guardrails.
- Motorized vehicles. Think of being hit by a dump truck that is backing up on a construction site, or someone getting hit by a forklift truck in a warehouse or on a loading dock.
- Using or working near machinery. Many workers have been killed or seriously injured by the equipment they were operating.
- Workplace violence. It can happen to workers in many situations, such as a retail employee working alone at night, or a health care worker in a hospital or in the community.

Exercise 3: Can you think of other common workplace hazards – especially ones in your own workplace? Below are a couple of possible examples. Try to list a few more, then read the answers on page 27.

- Loud noise
- No lighting

- _____
- _____

You also need to think about less apparent hazards – things like chemicals, fumes, toxic dust or germs and viruses in workplaces such as schools, labs and healthcare facilities. Some of these hazards can make a worker very sick. Sometimes the worker gets sick right away; other times, the worker doesn't know he or she is sick until months or even years later. That's why it's important that you know about these hazards now.

One of the **employer's duties** is to make sure that the supervisor knows enough and has the experience and necessary training to keep workers safe. One of a **supervisor's duties** is to inform workers of health and safety hazards. If a worker sees a hazard or practice that goes against the OHSA or workplace health and safety policies or procedures, that worker has a duty to tell their supervisor or employer. This should be done as soon as possible so that the hazard can be fixed. That's how employers, supervisors and workers come together to make the workplace safer. This is an example of the **Internal Responsibility System** in action.

Dealing with Hazards

RACE is a commonly used process for dealing with hazards. RACE stands for Recognize, Assess, Control and Evaluate. These steps, when done in order, help the workplace identify and control hazards. Supervisors are encouraged to communicate with workers, the employer, and the joint health and safety committee/health and safety representative throughout this type of process.

RECOGNIZE where there are potential hazards in the workplace. Here's how you do that:

- Watch the work as it's being done.
- Talk to workers about the work and the areas where work happens.
- Participate in workplace inspections.
- Look at reports and records that your workplace has about the work.
- Listen to the concerns workers have about the work they're doing.

ASSESS the hazard. You need to understand how likely it is that a worker will get hurt or made sick by the hazard. To assess the hazard, you ask these questions:

- How does the hazard compare to legislation, standards and guidelines?
- How can the worker get hurt or sick?
- How likely is the hazard to affect worker health and safety?
- How badly could the worker get hurt or sick?

CONTROL the hazards by looking for ways to get rid of the hazard or to make the job safer:

- The safest thing to do is to remove the hazard.
- If removing the hazard is not possible, look for ways to prevent workers from coming in contact with the hazard, such as separating the hazard from the worker.

If neither of the above solutions protects the worker, workers can use protective equipment, devices and other materials to help keep them safe. It's your obligation as a supervisor to make sure workers use this equipment where required by the OHSA and Regulations or by the employer.

EVALUATE how well the hazard controls are working:

- Talk about the work to the workers who report to you.
- Watch them do their work.
- Listen to what they say and look for ways to **improve health and safety**.

The RACE process is one good way to get a close look at the work and the hazards associated with it. You are always keeping your eyes and ears open for hazards; you pay attention to the way people are doing their work; and you listen to their concerns.

If you find a hazard, you know that you need to do something about it. You use your experience and the information and training you got from your employer to help you make decisions on what to do. If you don't know how to deal with the hazard, talk to your employer. You can also involve the health and safety representative or JHSC if there is one. And you can refer to external sources such as legislation, standards, codes or expert consultants to help you solve the problem. If necessary, you can stop the work until you know it's safe.

Handling problems as they arise

The RACE process is a way to help you deal with hazards, but it isn't everything. You also need to monitor the work. This means that you need to take steps to make sure the workers understood the information you gave them and are following the workplace safety procedures AND are using or wearing their protective equipment. If you see a worker exposed to a hazard, it's your job to talk to them about it. You have to make sure the OSHA, any applicable regulations and the workplace safety procedures are being followed, and you have to enforce those procedures.

If someone comes to you with a health and safety concern or to report a close call, you need to listen to them, because these are warning signs of potentially serious problems ahead. You also need to inform your employer of these concerns. If you can solve a problem on your own or with the worker, you should do that. If you need help, you should ask your employer. Your health and safety representative or JHSC are also there to provide information. Reports from workplace inspections by health and safety representatives or JHSCs, along with incident investigations done internally or by the Ministry of Labour, are important tools in your supervisor's toolkit. When they are used effectively, they help to control hazards and prevent injuries.

Exercise 4: Sometimes things go wrong. When that happens, you need to be clear on what steps you have to take. Let's say someone you supervise has been injured. What are the steps you think you should take? List the steps below, then read the answers on page 27.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

As you can see, there is definitely a lot to know when you're a supervisor. It's an important role, and if you don't carry out the duties that are assigned to you by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, you can face consequences. For example, a Ministry of Labour inspector could issue an order against you. Also, you could be charged with an offence.

This is serious work and it may seem overwhelming at first. But you don't have to do it alone.

Step 3 Quiz

Before we move on to Step 4, here's a short true-or-false quiz on the material we have just covered. (The answers are in the back of the workbook, but please don't look at them ahead of time.)

1. To help you plan and organize work, you need to understand the hazards associated with it. You also need to know how to eliminate or control those hazards.
True False
2. Some workplace hazards, such as chemicals, dust and germs, can cause sickness in a worker months or even years after being exposed to the hazard.
True False
3. If you recognize and assess the hazards in your workplace, you have done everything you need to do as a supervisor to keep the workers safe.
True False
4. If you find a hazard or a worker reports one to you, you are the one person in the workplace who is responsible for fixing it.
True False
5. If someone you supervise has been injured, the first thing you need to do is to inform the employer so that the necessary authorities can be notified.
True False

Step 4: You Are Not Alone

Getting the help you need

Many supervisors are promoted to that position because they were good at their previous job. They learned as much as they could about that job, the hazards involved and how to work safely. They knew how to do their work in a safe and healthy way. But they may not be too sure about what's involved in supervising work. Now they are a supervisor and their duties have changed. But do they know everything they need to know about this new role?

That's the question you should ask yourself. You may know a bit about the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the various Regulations that are attached to it, but do you know enough about the specific requirements in the OHS Act and about which of its Regulations apply to your workplace? You may have the necessary experience in the work you are being called upon to supervise, but do you know enough about what's actually involved in supervising workers?

Exercise 5: Think back to what you learned in Step 1: You were told that the OHS Act requires the employer to make sure that the supervisor is a "competent person." It's the employer's job to see to it that you have what you need to do your job competently. The OHS Act emphasizes three things in particular that you need in order to be competent at your job. List those three things below, then check the answer on page 6.

- _____

- _____

- _____

We have reviewed various duties the OHS Act assigns to you as a supervisor. If you feel that you don't have the necessary knowledge, training and experience to carry out those duties, it's important that you talk to the employer. Tell him or her you are happy to be a supervisor, but that you need more information and training in certain areas to do your job. Perhaps you need to attend a training course on the OHS Act and Regulations. Maybe you need to learn more about how to recognize, assess and control hazards and to evaluate the hazard controls. Maybe you want to know more about leadership skills and communication, about how to develop your listening skills and about what the workers expect from their supervisor. Remember that your employer needs to give you the tools to become a competent supervisor.

Even when you have the necessary knowledge, training and experience to be a competent supervisor, fixing a health and safety problem will sometimes be out of your control. Maybe it's a hazard that affects the whole staff. Or it might cost a lot of money to fix it and you may not be able to approve that expense. If that happens, you need to let your employer know that you need help with solving the problem. Bring the ideas you got from the workers and from the health and safety rep or committee. Together you can figure out the best way to eliminate or control the hazard. The workers need to know that you will do what's right for them, and you need to know that the employer will do what's right for everyone.

The OHSA supports a coordinated approach to workplace health and safety by giving everybody duties according to their position at the workplace. The higher your position is, the more duties you have. When you put all of these duties together, you get a strong IRS in the workplace.

Where else to go for help

Getting Help Inside Your Workplace

Sometimes a worker will come to you with a question and you just don't know the answer. Often the answer is right there in your workplace. You can find answers in the workplace health and safety policies and procedures, the safety data sheets that come with hazardous materials, the operating manuals for equipment or the recommendations of the JHSC or health and safety representative.

Exercise 6: Can you think of other good sources right in your workplace for specific health and safety information? List them below, then read the answers on page 27.

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

- _____

Sometimes you might not understand what the OHSA and Regulations are telling you to do, and even your employer might not fully understand. That's when you need outside help. For example, the Ministry of Labour website offers many helpful resources, including a downloadable Guide to the Occupational Health and Safety Act that provides a plain-language explanation of the various parts of the Act.

Ontario has a health and safety "system" that's made up of many organizations. The information below explains more about who they are.

Ontario's Health and Safety System Partners

Ministry of Labour

Develops, communicates and enforces occupational health and safety requirements and employment standards. Develops, coordinates and implements strategies to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses and can set standards for health and safety training.

1-877-202-0008

www.labour.gov.on.ca

Workers Health & Safety Centre

An occupational health and safety training centre for workers, representatives and employers.

1-888-869-7950

www.whsc.on.ca

Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers

Six medical clinics located across Ontario that provide health services and information.

1-877-817-0336

www.ohcow.on.ca

Health & Safety Ontario

Four Health and Safety Associations that provide sector specific consulting, training, products and services.

www.healthandsafetyontario.ca

- **Infrastructure Health and Safety Association** – serves electrical, construction and transportation sectors.
1-800-263-5024
- **Public Services Health and Safety Association** – serves health, education and municipal sectors.
1-877-250-7444
- **Workplace Safety North** – serves mining, pulp and paper and forestry sectors.
1-888-730-7821
- **Workplace Safety and Prevention Services** – serves industrial, farming and service sectors.
1-877-494-9777

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board

Administers Ontario's no-fault workplace insurance for employers and their workers.

1-800-387-0750

www.wsib.on.ca

All of the above organizations are part of Ontario's health and safety system.

Another place you can go for information is the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. They have information fact sheets on their website. If you are having trouble finding information, you can ask questions by telephone at 1-800-668-4284, or through their website at www.ccohs.ca.

The help you can get from these external sources is not just for you – it’s for sharing with others in your workplace. That’s what the OHSa expects you to do. To be a good supervisor you have to do more than just know things, you have to put what you know into action. Prevention starts here, but it doesn’t end here.

Exercise 7: To help you understand how Ontario’s health and safety system works together to help create safer workplaces, try to match the following list of organizations to their purpose. Then look at the answers on page 28.

ORGANIZATION

- A. Ministry of Labour
- B. Health and Safety Ontario
- C. Workplace Safety and Insurance Board
- D. Workers Health and Safety Centre
- E. Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers

PURPOSE

- Health and safety training
- Enforces the OHSa
- Medical clinics for injured or sick workers
- Insurance benefits for injured or sick workers
- Occupational health and safety consulting, training, products and services

Step 4 Quiz

Before we move on to Step 5, here's a short true-or-false quiz on the material we have just covered. (The answers are in the back of the workbook, but please don't look at them ahead of time.)

1. To be a competent supervisor, it's good enough to know that the Occupational Health and Safety Act exists and that various Regulations are attached to the OHSA.
True False
2. If fixing a health and safety problem is out of your control for any reason, you need to bring the problem to the employer.
True False
3. The company health and safety program and procedures, material safety data sheets, inspection and incident reports are all good sources for answers to health and safety questions from workers and supervisors.
True False
4. The Ministry of Labour's only purpose is to inspect workplaces and enforce the OHSA and Regulations.
True False

As we saw earlier, the OHSA supports a coordinated approach to workplace health and safety. To be a part of this, you have to understand your legal obligations and put what you know into action. So does everyone else in the workplace. That's how the Internal Responsibility System works.

- If the employer knows about a hazard and doesn't take steps to eliminate or control it, as well as make sure the workers are told about it and how to deal with it, that employer is not doing what the law requires.
- If the supervisor knows about a hazard and doesn't explain to the workers how to deal with it, that supervisor is not doing what the law requires.
- If the worker knows about a hazard and doesn't report it to the supervisor or the employer, that worker is not doing what the law requires.
- The Internal Responsibility System is all about people cooperating to recognize, assess and control hazards in the workplace and to evaluate hazard controls. Every supervisor has a key role to play in that system.

Remember when you were starting out on a job and you felt a bit overwhelmed by all the things you didn't know? Remember that one person – a supervisor or a co-worker – who took the time to show you things?

We all have someone we can think of who helped us settle into a job. They gave us useful tips. They kept us out of harm's way until we learned what we needed to know for ourselves. Well, now it's your turn to give back. You are the supervisor. You are the person with the know-how and experience. If you don't feel that you know enough to carry out your health and safety duties as a supervisor, it's important that you talk to your employer and make sure you get the information you need.

Keep an eye on the new worker and everyone else you supervise. Even those who don't ask you questions are counting on you to show them the right way to do things. By always showing your commitment to health and safety, the people you supervise will follow your example. Prevention starts here, but it doesn't end here.

Step 5 Quiz

Here is the final true-or-false quiz. (The answers are in the back of the workbook, but please don't look at them ahead of time.)

1. How you think and talk about the work you are supervising can affect the safety of the people you supervise.
True False
2. Good supervisors are good role models. Good role models practice what they preach by following the workplace health and safety policies and procedures.
True False
3. Workers who ask a lot of questions can take up a lot of your time, so you should keep talking to them to a minimum.
True False

We hope this training has been useful, and that you will use the material that's been provided with it. Remember that when it comes to health and safety on the job, YOU can make a difference.

Quiz and Exercise Answers

Step 1: Make a Difference

Exercise 1 (page 6):

Other good questions to ask yourself are:

- Am I responding to and documenting problems that the workers are bringing to my attention?
- Am I making sure equipment is operating properly?
- Am I keeping an eye on the work and showing how to do it properly?
- Am I always looking for new hazards that may come up?

Quiz 1

1. False. Section 27 of the OSHA specifies the five key supervisor duties.
2. True
3. False. Because employers have the most authority in the workplace, they have the greatest responsibility for health and safety. Supervisors are next in line, then the workers.
4. True
5. False. The OSHA says the workers need to report the problem to you so that you can take the necessary steps with the employer to solve the problem.

Step 2: Lead the Way

Exercise 2 (page 11):

As a supervisor, you also support the workers' right to participate in health and safety by:

- Encouraging them to speak up and listening to their concerns
- Doing what's necessary – often with the employer's help – to control the hazards that they identify
- Acknowledging their efforts to make the workplace safer and healthier

Quiz 2

1. True
2. False. You have the right to expect the support of the employer in your efforts to make the workplace safer and healthier. In fact, the employer has many of the same health and safety duties as you.
3. True
4. True. Supervisors are also workers, which means you have the right to refuse work that you believe is dangerous to yourself or others.
5. True

Step 3: The Supervisor's Toolkit

Exercise 3 (page 13):

Other common workplace hazards include things such as:

- electricity and other energy sources
- an object that could fall from a height
- confined spaces
- a high-temperature material or process
- sharp objects or equipment

Exercise 4 (page 15):

1. Make sure the injured worker gets the necessary first aid and/or professional medical attention.
2. Inform the employer of the incident so that the Ministry of Labour and other relevant parties can be notified.
3. Secure the incident scene to prevent any further injuries and to help with the investigation of the incident.
4. Participate with the joint health and safety committee or health and safety representative in the investigation of the incident.

Quiz 3

1. True
2. True. That's why it's important to know about those hazards now.
3. False. The RACE process involves recognizing, assessing and controlling hazards, then evaluating the hazard controls to make sure they are effective.
4. False. Your employer has the same responsibility as you to protect workers, and so you need to inform them when concerns are brought to you. If you can solve a problem on your own or with the worker, you should do that. But if you need advice or help, you should talk to your employer. You can also involve the health and safety representative or joint health and safety committee if you have one.
5. False. Your first priority is to make sure the injured worker gets the necessary first aid and/or professional medical attention. Then you inform the employer.

Step 4: You are Not Alone

Exercise 5 (page 18):

The 3 requirements for a "competent person" are listed on page 6.

Exercise 6 (page 19):

You can find more health and safety information in your workplace at the following sources:

- The employer's health and safety program and procedures. The program is focused on the particular hazards in your workplace. The procedures to deal with those hazards may contain the answer you're looking for. You can ask your health and safety coordinator or employer for this information.

- If the problem is about hazardous materials such as chemicals, consult the workplace’s material safety data sheet or MSDS for information on how to deal safely with those materials. The employer is required to make that information available in the workplace.
- The operator’s manual for the equipment that’s operated by the workers contains useful health and safety information. If no manual is available for the workers, the supervisor can contact the manufacturer for information.
- The joint health and safety committee or health and safety representative. It’s a good practice to take the time to read the committee minutes and recommendations and to talk to the health and safety rep or committee.
- Inspection and incident reports. The problem may have cropped up in the past, or there may be something in one of the reports that leads to an effective solution.
- Other supervisors, if there are any. They might have encountered the same problem and have some good ideas on how to deal with it.
- The OHS and Regulations provide lots of valuable information on health and safety. The employer is required to post a copy of the OHS and Regulations in the workplace

Exercise 7 (page 23):

ORGANIZATION

- A. Ministry of Labour
- B. Health and Safety Ontario
- C. Workplace Safety and Insurance Board
- D. Workers Health and Safety Centre
- E. Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers

PURPOSE

- D Health and safety training
- A Enforces the OHS
- E Medical clinics for injured or sick workers
- C Insurance benefits for injured or sick workers
- B Occupational health and safety consulting, training, products and services

Quiz 4

1. False. You need to know and understand the specific laws in the OHS relating to the various duties and roles of people in the workplace, and you need to know and understand the specific Regulations that apply to your workplace.
2. True. Bring along any ideas for solutions that you got from the workers and the joint health and safety committee or health and safety representative.
3. True
4. False. The Ministry of Labour also provides lots of information and guidance on health and safety on its website, and it develops plans and strategies to help make workplaces safer.

Step 5: Be a Role Model

Exercise 8 (page 48):

The message you send if you ignore health and safety infractions is that safety doesn't really matter. That's not the message you want to send and it's not the message the OHSA expects you to send.

Quiz 5

1. True
2. True
3. False. You should be considered easy to talk to by the people you supervise.

Call the Ministry of Labour at 1-877-202-0008

Report critical injuries, fatalities, work refusals anytime.

Workplace health and safety information,
weekdays 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Emergency? Always call 911 immediately.

Find out more:

www.ontario.ca/healthandsafetyatwork

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