

8. TRAINING & COMMUNICATION

**This information does not take precedence over The Saskatchewan Employment Act and related regulations, or any other governing legislation. All worker should be familiar with the legislation applying to them in their workplace.*

Definitions

competent: *"possessing knowledge, experience and training to perform a specific duty"* [Act 3-1(1)(e)].

instruct: *"to give information and direction to a worker with respect to particular subject-matter"* [Reg 2(1)(jj)]

train: *"to give information and explanation to a worker with respect to a particular subject-matter and **require a practical demonstration** that the worker has acquired knowledge or skill related to the subject-matter"* [Reg 2(1)(eee)].

occupational health committee [or] OHC: *"an occupational health committee established pursuant to section 3-22 or 3-23 or the regulations made pursuant to this Part"* [Act 3-1(1)(r)].

Introduction

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The company provides, and all workers are required to participate in, various types of training to provide workers with the information and knowledge required to perform their jobs safely. This training includes (but is not limited to) safety orientations for all new hires and job-specific training as required for new or changed work activities. In addition to the general training programs available to all workers, specialized safety training is also provided as needs are identified.

To ensure effective communication among all areas of the company's operations, safety meetings involving all workers will be held on a regular basis. All workers are encouraged to participate actively in these safety meetings, and are welcome to raise any safety-related topic. Workers must raise any serious or time-sensitive safety concerns with a member of management immediately - do not wait for a safety meeting.

New Worker Orientation Program

Each new worker is provided with a comprehensive safety orientation prior to being assigned work duties, and is provided with a copy of the company's Worker Safety Handbook to keep. Safety orientation includes (but is not limited to):

- a review of all components of the safety program manual, with emphasis on relevant safe work practices and job procedures;
- a review of the new worker's current level of training and identification of further training required;
- a review of the company's emergency preparedness plan including alarm signal, evacuation and muster procedure;
- Generic & Site-specific WHMIS training (where the worker has current WHMIS training, the company may, at its discretion, review only site-specific chemical or biological hazards).

The worker is also provided with a site-specific tour which includes (but is not limited to):

- first aid facilities (first aid, eye wash, etc.) and identification of trained personnel;
- fire extinguisher locations (including a demonstration if required);
- emergency contact numbers, communication equipment and procedures;
- location of WHMIS materials and other relevant reference material
- restricted areas (if any)

Toolbox Safety Meetings

Toolbox meetings are informal meetings among various work groups, and are intended to encourage effective two-way communication on safety topics related to the specific job, such as workplace hazards and safe work practices. These meetings also provide the opportunity to:

- promote safety awareness and refresh workers' knowledge
- introduce new practices and procedures, and motivate workers to follow them

- review incidents, corrective actions and lessons learned
- cover last-minute safety checks

Toolbox meetings are conducted at the job site on a weekly basis on each job site where more than one company worker is present. Minutes of all toolbox meetings are reviewed by management.

Occupational Health Committee

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Saskatchewan safety legislation requires that a place of employment with more than 10 workers maintain an Occupational Health Committee (OHC). The purpose of the OHC is to provide workers at all levels the opportunity to participate in decisions that affect their health and safety. Worker and employer representatives meet regularly and work together to identify and resolve safety and health concerns in the workplace. Meetings must be held at least once every three months (special meetings may also be called to deal with serious concerns, imminent dangers to health or safety, or for the investigation of accidents and dangerous occurrences), and copies of the minutes of each meeting must be posted in the workplace, and filed for future reference.

Setting up a Committee: One way an employer can set up a committee is to:

- ask workers and managers to explain the selection process to the workers
- give workers time to select members
- hold the first meeting within two weeks of the selection; appoint an employer co-chair at that meeting and ask workers to select their co-chair
 - meet at least once each month for the next three months to help the committee get going and gain credibility
 - meet at least once every three months after that
- conduct a workplace inspection soon after the first meeting; discuss health and safety concerns with workers and meet to discuss those concerns
- post minutes of meetings in the workplace

Structure of the OHC:

- Each committee must have at least two, but not more than 12 members. At least half the members must be workers not involved in management.

- In a non-union workplace, the workers must elect their OHC members. In a unionized workplace, the constitution of the union determines the appointment process. All workers have a responsibility to help OHC members carry out their duties.
- The employer must select management members. Management members must not outnumber worker members.
- The employer may provide clerical support to the committee. Support personnel who are not committee members should not vote or participate unduly in OHC deliberations.

Selection of Members: The employer should ensure the OHC fairly represents workers with significantly different concerns. For example, office workers as well as field workers, shift workers, etc., should be involved in OHC meetings and have their concerns fairly represented. Members of the OHC hold office until a successor is designated, and may be re-assigned for a second or subsequent term. Committee co-chairpersons are selected by the committee members (worker co-chair elected by worker members, management co-chair by appointed by management)

OHC Duties: An OHC's work includes:

- helping the employer to identify, assess and control hazards
- making recommendations to the employer for improving workplace health and safety
- talking with workers about health and safety concerns and helping to resolve them
- encouraging better communication between the employer and workers
- receiving and distributing information, including OH&S publications
- inspecting the workplace regularly
- investigating reportable accidents and dangerous occurrences (no-loss occurrences or "near misses")
- helping establish and promote health and safety programs, policies and training
- investigating refusals to work
- helping employers meet legal OH&S requirements

Quorum at Meetings: A quorum for OHC votes and decisions means at least:

- half of all members must be present
- half of the members present must be workers
- at least one employer member must be present

Training of Committee Members: Employers should send co-chairs to a course put on by OH&S or by a qualified instructor. Time spent at training courses put on by OH&S or by approved training agencies must be treated as paid work time. Committee members may take five days of educational leave each year for health and safety training.

OHCs on Construction Sites: OH&S legislation requires an OHC to be established at a construction site at which 10 or more workers or self-employed persons work or are likely to work for more than 90 days. Where an OHC is required, the committee consists of representatives of the employer or contractor, and a sufficient number of members representing workers to equitably represent groups of workers who have substantially different occupational health and safety concerns. A meeting is not considered to be valid unless representatives of both employers and workers are present, and at least one half of the members present represent workers. Minutes of OHC meetings must be maintained on file with the committee and posted in a readily accessible location on the worksite.

NexGen Mechanical Inc. fully supports OHC activities. Management will provide all necessary resources to ensure that the OHC/Rep is able to function effectively, and encourages active worker participation in OHC/Rep activities.

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