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Your Occupational Safety and Health Program

THE FACTS

**Your
Occupational
Safety and
Health
Program**

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Dept. of External Affairs
Min. des Affaires extérieures

JUL 5 1995

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Contents

	Page
1. Working Together to Provide a Safe and Healthy Workplace	1
2. Roles and Responsibilities in Occupational Safety and Health	3
3. Your Rights Under the <i>Canada Labour Code</i>	7
4. Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)	8
5. OSH Committees, OSH Representatives, and You	14
6. What to Do If You Are Injured at Work ...	17
7. Your First-Aid Station	19
8. Your Fire Emergency Organization	20
9. Where to Find More Information About Occupational Safety and Health	21

1 Working Together to Provide a Safe and Healthy Workplace

Safety and health within the federal government is everyone's concern. Each job has its unique problems and risks, ranging from high noise levels, through exposure to pesticides, to mental stress. However, every problem has a solution, and risks can be minimized. The Occupational Safety and Health Program was developed to solve problems and to minimize risks in the workplace. Its aim is to promote the physical, mental, and social well-being of every employee in a federal workplace.

All federal organizations are responsible for ensuring that Occupational Safety and Health Programs are established to cover such important areas as Occupational Safety and Health Committees, accident prevention, first aid, and fire emergencies.

The prevention of accidents and the provision of a safe and healthy work environment are recognized as matters of major importance. Unsafe and unhealthy working conditions affect not only the well-being of employees, but also the efficiency of the workplace. They can result in employee injuries and illnesses, loss of work time and productivity, higher operating costs, and, most importantly, individual pain and family suffering.

Effective 31 March 1986 the Government of Canada passed legislation making the *Canada Labour Code* legally applicable to the Federal Public Service.

The Code requires active participation by both employees and management in promoting occupational safety and health. Active participation is achieved at the local level by requiring the formation of Occupational Safety and Health Committees and by expanding employee rights in the workplace.

Besides stressing voluntary compliance, self-regulation, and joint resolution of problems, the Code also contains enforcement provisions.

Under the Code, managers, supervisors, and employees all share the responsibility for occupational safety and health in the workplace. It is therefore essential that all employees know and understand their roles and responsibilities in maintaining a safe and healthy work environment. This Occupational Safety and Health Booklet has been designed to provide basic safety and health information to all employees.

2 Roles and Responsibilities in Occupational Safety and Health

Treasury Board

Treasury Board is responsible for developing occupational safety and health policies, standards, guides, and procedures for the Public Service. These policies, standards, guides, and procedures meet, at a minimum, the requirements of the *Canada Labour Code*.

Labour Canada

Labour Canada is responsible for administering the *Canada Labour Code*, which means not only monitoring the Code, but also enforcing it. To ensure compliance with the legislation, Labour Canada's safety officers have the authority to conduct inspections, to carry out accident investigations, and to issue directives for corrective measures when the Code is contravened.

Labour Canada has developed a compliance policy that stresses keeping all employees in the workplace informed and educated about the requirements of the Code. To achieve this goal, Labour Canada encourages employees and employers to take the approach of voluntary compliance, self-regulation, and joint resolution of problems.

Health and Welfare Canada

Health and Welfare Canada plays a large part in operating and administering the Public Service's Occupational Safety and Health Program. Its role includes providing medical services, facilities, and advice; investigating and monitoring public service workplaces; and performing health assessments. These activities are essentially preventive in nature and are intended to supplement existing departmental programs. Details of Health and Welfare's program can be found in the Treasury Board Manual.

Your Department

Your department is anxious to take the measures necessary to ensure the safety and health of employees while they are at work. Good results can best be achieved by management, supervisors, and employees working together.

To help achieve a safe and healthy workplace, your department must ensure that the following items are posted in an area that is accessible to every employee:

- a copy of Part II of the *Canada Labour Code*;
- a copy of the department's Occupational Safety and Health Policy;

- the names, work locations, and telephone numbers of all Occupational Safety and Health Committee members and representatives;
- a copy of the most recent Occupational Safety and Health Committee minutes;
- procedures for fire safety and emergency measures.

Other responsibilities of the department include:

- ensuring that hazardous substances are identified and are stored and handled safely;
- providing safety materials, equipment, devices, and protective clothing to each person granted access to the workplace by the employer;
- providing first-aid facilities and health services;
- providing the information, instruction, training, and supervision necessary to ensure the safety and health of employees in the workplace;
- controlling chemical, biological, and physical agents in the workplace in accordance with prescribed standards;
- keeping safety and health records;
- communicating to employees every known and foreseeable safety or health hazard in the workplace; and

- investigating, recording and reporting all accidents, occupational diseases, and other hazardous occurrences.

Employees

Employees are responsible for:

- protecting themselves, their fellow workers, and members of the public who may be affected by their actions;
- understanding and following safe work practices;
- using specified protective clothing, devices, and safety equipment required for their jobs;
- promptly informing their Immediate supervisors of all unsafe working conditions;
- seeking appropriate first aid or medical attention in the case of a work-related injury or illness and reporting any such incidents without delay to their immediate supervisors; and
- participating in Occupational Safety and Health training, and, where required, attending safety meetings, or being a member of the area Occupational Safety and Health Committee or, at some locations, being an employee Occupational Safety and Health Representative.

3 Your Rights Under the *Canada Labour Code*

Under the *Canada Labour Code*, employees have three basic rights that are intended to protect their safety and health. These rights are:

- 1. The right to know.** Employees have the right to know about hazards in the workplace that could affect their safety or health.
- 2. The right to participate.** Employees have a say about things that affect their safety and health at work. Most workplaces have either an Occupational Safety and Health Committee or an Occupational Safety and Health Representative to voice and deal with the concerns of employees.
- 3. The right to refuse dangerous work.** An employee has the right to refuse to do a job, if he or she believes that:
 - there is a condition at work that presents a danger to him/her; or
 - the use of a machine or another piece of equipment at work presents a danger to him/her or to a co-worker.

To exercise this right, the employee must follow specific procedures detailed in the Code.

4 Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)

On 31 October 1988 the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) came into effect in Canada. This national information delivery system was developed in consultation with industry, labour, and government. Its purpose is to provide employees with the information they need to protect themselves from exposure to hazardous materials while at work.

WHMIS contains three key elements to achieve the goal of a well-informed and knowledgeable workforce: labels, material safety data sheets, and employee education programs. These three elements provide the means of making essential information for the prevention of workplace injuries and illnesses available to employees.

As an employer, your department is responsible for ensuring that the WHMIS requirements are met at every workplace where hazardous materials are used, handled, stored, or disposed. This responsibility includes ensuring that all hazardous materials are labelled and that the appropriate material safety data sheets are provided.

It is most important, however, that the department consult with the appropriate Occupational Safety and Health Committee and establish a formal program of

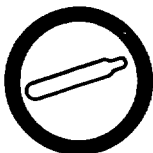
employee education and training. At a minimum, this program will inform employees of:

- a) the information required on the labels of hazardous materials and the purpose and significance of this information;
- b) the information required on a material safety data sheet, the purpose and significance of the information on the data sheet, and the locations where the data sheets may be found;
- c) the procedures for safely handling, using, storing, and disposing of a hazardous material, including information related to hazardous materials contained or transported in piping systems and vessels; and
- d) the procedures to be followed in the case of an emergency involving a hazardous material.

For further information about WHMIS, contact either your supervisor or your departmental safety officer.

Hazard Symbols

WHMIS has established a number of symbols that are to be used to identify hazardous materials. These hazard symbols, described below, indicate the nature of the hazard that the substance presents.



Compressed Gas

The tank in the Compressed Gas hazard symbol indicates that the substance is a gas, such as nitrogen or oxygen, stored under pressure.



Flammable and Combustible Material

The flame in the Flammable and Combustible Material hazard symbol indicates that the substance is a gas, liquid, or solid that could explode or catch fire if not handled properly.



Oxidizing Material

The flaming large "O" (for Oxidizing) in the Oxidizing Material hazard symbol indicates that the substance could explode or catch fire and that it could cause other materials to catch fire as well.



Corrosive Material

The two test tubes dripping acid in the Corrosive Material hazard symbol indicates that the substance is either a liquid or a vapour and that it could cause severe burns.



a)



b)



c)

Poisonous and Infectious Material

There are three hazard symbols that identify poisonous or infectious substances.

- a) The skull and crossbones in this Poisonous and Infectious Material hazard symbol indicates that the substance is very toxic and that it could either be deadly or have immediate and serious adverse effects on your health.
- b) The combination of a large "T" and an exclamation mark on this Poisonous and Infectious Material hazard symbol indicates that the substance is toxic and that it could cause eye or skin irritation or chronic health problems.
- c) The biohazard symbol in this Poisonous and Infectious Material hazard symbol indicates that the substance is infectious.



Dangerously Reactive Material

The combination of a large "R" (for Reactive) and an exploding test tube in the Dangerous Reactive Material hazard symbol indicates that the substance could react dangerously when exposed to air, water, or other materials, or when subjected to a sudden impact or increase in temperature and/or pressure. These substances can heat up, cause a fire, explode, or release a poisonous gas.

5 OSH Committees, OSH Representatives, and You

OSH Committee

The *Canada Labour Code* requires that an Occupational Safety and Health Committee be established at each federal workplace where there are 20 or more employees. Where the workplace has less than 20 employees, the Code requires that an Occupational Safety and Health Representative be appointed.

Organization

An Occupational Safety and Health Committee normally consists of an equal number of employee and employer members.

Two chairpersons are appointed: an employee member and an employer member. The committee chair alternates between the chairpersons.

A recording secretary is appointed to keep records of meetings and to prepare minutes and reports.

Employee members are selected by your union from employees located at the workplace.

The minutes of the meeting and a list of the names, work location, and work telephone numbers of each committee member must be posted in an area accessible to all employees.

Purpose

The purpose of an Occupational Safety and Health Committee is to encourage the employer and employees to work together to identify and solve safety and health problems in the workplace.

Role

Your committee is actively involved in matters such as:

- investigating and recording how your complaints and suggestions are handled;
- participating in the investigation of a refusal-to-work situation;
- cooperating with workplace health services, such as First Aid and Fire Emergency programs;
- setting up and promoting programs to improve the training and education of employees;
- monitoring the programs and work procedures designed to protect employees;
- conducting safety inspections of the workplace and making recommendations to management for accident prevention;
- ensuring that complete records of work injuries and work hazards are maintained, monitoring hazard reports, and recommending corrective/remedial action; and

- participating in all inquiries and investigations by cooperating and consulting with Labour Canada safety officers and National Health and Welfare officials and technical experts.

As you can see, your committee accepts an important role in protecting your safety and health while you are at work.

OSH Representative

Your Occupational Safety and Health Representative is selected from among the employees at your workplace. An OSH Representative has similar responsibilities to those of an OSH Committee.

Your Role

You can enhance safety in your working environment by making suggestions for improvements, by working safely, and by being an active participant in your Occupational Safety and Health Program.

6 What to Do If You Are Injured at Work

If you have an accident at work, immediately seek first aid or medical attention. If you need transportation, your employer will arrange for it.

It is your duty to report the accident or injury to your supervisor as soon as possible, so that the accident or injury can be properly investigated and the appropriate forms completed.

If your injury required medical attention and/or time off from work beyond the day of the injury, it becomes a Workers' Compensation case. Your supervisor is to complete an *Employer's Report of Accident* and a *Hazardous Occurrence Investigation Report*.

If you experienced a minor injury (i.e., an injury that did not require medical attention or loss of work time) a *Hazardous Occurrence Investigation Report* must be completed.

Even minor injuries must be reported because, if they later develop into a serious condition, there could be difficulty in establishing a claim if the original injury was not reported.

Once the necessary forms are completed, the original forms are forwarded to the applicable Labour Canada regional office. Copies are sent to your Occupational Safety and Health office (where

applicable). Forms are not sent directly to the Workers' Compensation Board.

While you are away from work and before your claim is approved by the Workers' Compensation Board, you will use sick leave. Once your claim is approved, injury-on-duty leave replaces your sick leave, starting from the day you were absent. Used sick leave time is then credited back to you.

Where to Get More Information About Workers' Compensation

You can get more information about Workers' Compensation from your supervisor, personnel office, or your departmental safety officer.

7 Your First-Aid Station

First-aid services are available during all working hours at first-aid stations. A first-aid station should be located at or near your workplace. Information about the location of your first-aid stations and the names of your first-aid attendants must be posted in an area where it may be seen by all employees in the workplace. The list of Contacts at the end of this booklet identifies various safety and health contacts in your workplace.

First-aid kits, supplies, and equipment must meet the specifications outlined in the *First-Aid Standard*.

For future reference, first-aid attendants must keep a record of all first aid rendered to employees.

8 Your Fire Emergency Organization

The Government of Canada has, as does any other employer and property owner, a responsibility for protecting life and property from the effects of fire and other emergencies.

All employees should know and understand the emergency evacuation procedures pertaining to their building. During an emergency situation, employees must follow the instructions given by the Building Fire Emergency Organization members, recognized by their white, or yellow, or green, or red hard hats. The Building Fire Emergency Organization is always looking for **volunteers**. If you are interested in volunteering, contact your Fire Emergency Officer.

9 Where to Find More Information About Occupational Safety and Health

For more information about Occupational Safety and Health, consult the following sources:

- *Departmental Safety and Health Policy*
- Treasury Board manuals (which contain the Public Service Occupational Safety and Health Standards, Procedures, Guides, Advisory Notices and Fire Protection Services)
- *Treasury Board Occupational Safety and Health Handbook*
- *Canada Labour Code, Part II*
- Labour Canada Booklets—*If you have an accident and Employers' Guide to the Government Employees Compensation Act*

List of Contacts

Accommodations:



Department Safety Officer:



Fire Department:



Fire Warden:



First-Aid Station:



First-Aid Attendant:



HWC Nursing Unit:



Personnel Division:




Police:




Public Works Contact:



Security:


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Occupational Safety and
Health Representative:


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Occupational Safety and
Health Committee

Employer
Chairperson:

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Employee
Chairperson:

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Member:

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Member:

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Member:

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Member:

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