



4.0

**How to Improve
Worker Participation**

**Best Practice Guidelines:
Effective Worker Participation in Hazard Assessments**
Alberta Workers' Health Centre, December 2015

About the Alberta Workers' Health Centre:

The Alberta Workers' Health Centre is a registered charitable, non-profit organization that supports all workers, unionized and non-unionized, who need assistance to help make their workplaces healthier and safer. Since 1983 it has done this through programs of education and training; research and information; assessment and support for workers across Alberta.

**600, 12323 Stony Plain Road
Edmonton, Alberta T5N 3Y5
780-486-9009
toll free: 1-888-729-4879
www.workershealthcentre.ca**



**Alberta Workers'
Health Centre**

CUPE-SCFP 

This module will focus on specific barriers to worker participation in hazard assessment processes and will provide some practices for eliminating or reducing those barriers.

Outside of workplaces people are expected to participate in many things. We join -- and run -- community-based organizations. They could be our unions, sports clubs, church-affiliated events, parent-teacher associations, or community centres. We are expected to participate in things related to governments, including elections. In all these places, participation means having a voice, making decisions and working together. We're told it's part of living in a democracy.

Most workplaces are different. They are not democratic organizations in which workers have a say and can speak up freely. Employers and their managers have power -- called management rights -- to make decisions about big and small things, all of which affect workers' health and safety, wages, hours of work, and working conditions in general. Employers also have a legal responsibility for the safety of their employees.

Labour laws have changed over the years. Health and safety laws started to advance in 1972 in Saskatchewan, where the Deputy Minister of Labour, Bob Sass, introduced the idea of three worker health and safety rights or the three R's. By the late 1980s, most Canadian health and safety laws included three rights: to know about hazards, to participate in health and safety, and to refuse dangerous work.

In all parts of Canada other than Alberta, the "right to participate" means having joint health and safety committees in workplaces with 20 or more workers; most have representatives if there are 10 to 19 workers. Where there is a union, it usually is involved in choosing the committee members and/or representatives.



Why is Full Participation Important

It has been shown that successful Health and Safety Management Systems have high levels of worker involvement. Worker participation in the development of the system is particularly important to create ownership and overall buy-in into the system. Additionally, worker participation in the development of Health and Safety will help ensure a better fit with the culture of the organization. In order to promote worker participation, actively involve them in the development of hazard assessment, inspections, preventative maintenance, training, emergency response, and incident reporting systems. Look for opportunities to get workers from all areas of the organization involved, and provide regular updates on the progress of system development to keep the feedback loop open.

Building an Effective Health and Safety Management System
Alberta Government

Alberta's Unique Provision for Worker Participation

Alberta does not require joint health and safety committees for most workplaces. However, it has a unique provision in its health and safety law that requires employers to have “worker participation” in all parts of hazard assessments. The Code says that employers must involve workers in these assessments. It is not a question of being “reasonably practicable” (as it stated until 2009) or being a good thing to do, or something that employers should do.

Participation exceeds consultation

Participation is different than consultation, in which you are just asked what you think about something. The Code uses the word “involve” which means including people, recognising their role and giving them a say.

“Worker participation” in hazard assessments should mean that workers:

- have a real say in, and choices about, the assessments -- planning the activities, when they're done, how, who's involved, what tools are used, the reports written, the decisions about fixes, and evaluation of the results and process; and
- are respected for their knowledge, skills and ability to learn and contribute to all aspects of identifying and fixing hazards.

In practice, this kind of worker participation means that workers (and their representatives, where they exist) negotiate informally with managers and employers about hazard assessments, from the planning stage to evaluation and follow-up. In a union context, it could be called bargaining.

Why is full participation important?

There are many reasons why it is important to have workers participate in hazard assessments.



Government and employer documents talk about what workers know about, and can contribute to, finding and fixing hazards. It makes good business sense. They talk about workers being more motivated, having better quality products and services, and improving labour-management relations.

We have a right to participate in all decisions about health and safety in our jobs and workplaces, say workers and their unions. It's our health, our bodies, and our knowledge. No one else should make decisions that affect our health. As human beings, we deserve respect -- for ourselves, our skills, and our knowledge.

Studies -- and experiences -- back up statements that hazard assessments and preventing the hazards found go better when workers really are involved. Their real participation improves the results when it's happening in a positive, supportive environment. Done properly, workers can see their advice is acted upon, hazards are dealt with and conditions are improved.

In Europe, the recommendations and practices about active worker participation are clearest. There, many institutions support worker activities in OHS and many employers accept that unions and their members are players with important, if not equal, status.

How should participation happen in hazard assessments?

What do workers need to participate? First and foremost, they need:

- training from a workers' perspective (e.g., union, public health) about:
 - health and safety principles
 - types of hazards
 - finding hazards (surveillance)
 - fixing hazards -- the principles
 - resources (people, on-line, organisations)
 - negotiating and other process skills
- support from their union, co-workers, managers/supervisors and the organisation
- time to learn, prepare for assessments, do them, and follow up

Guidance from elsewhere is helpful. For example, in Australia worker participation in health and safety has led to laws requiring workers to choose health and safety representatives (HSRs). Their job includes hazard assessments. See the list of what employers must provide these participating/involved workers in the Worker Representation and Participation Guide from Safe Work Australia (included as a resource in these guidelines).

Worker participation helps ensure valid results as workers can identify noise sources, indicate periods when noise exposure may differ, and recognize whether noise levels are typical or atypical. Workers can explain how different operating modes affect equipment sound levels and can describe their tasks and working positions.

Section 219 Noise exposure assessment
OHS Code Explanation Guide Part 16 Noise

Participation exceeds consultation:

Full participation goes beyond consultation - workers and their representatives are also involved in making decisions. Worker participation in health and safety is a simple two-way process where employers and their workers/worker representatives:

- Talk to one another
- Trust and respect each other
- Consider what everyone has to say
- Listen to each other's concerns
- Discuss issues in good time
- Make decisions together

Look for and share views and information

*Worker participation in safety and health at work
European Agency for Safety and Health at Work*

What are barriers to worker participation?

Studies have looked at what makes it hard for workers to participate in hazard assessments and other job-related health and safety activities. The broad categories and some specifics that are barriers to worker participation include:

- *opportunities*
 - how the work is organised
 - pace of work and payment schemes
 - environmental limitations
 - myths about careless or “accident prone” workers
 - employer’s overall approach to health and safety, including their openness to including workers and their representatives
- *capacity*
 - definition of hazard and what’s accepted as one
 - precarious/temporary/part-time/agency work
 - immigration status
 - lack of training
- *willingness*
 - fear of reprisals or retaliation
 - employer created silence
 - gender, discrimination and harassment/bullying

Understanding and removing these barriers makes it easier for worker participation.

This module will look at some of the “opportunities” and “capacity” categories. The “willingness” category will be addressed in more detail in the next module.

Pace of work and compensation schemes

Evidence from research suggests that complex relationships arising from contracted work arrangements may increase risk for workers.



Subcontracting undermines the traditional organizational structures of a single employer, centralized management, common conditions and rules of work and familiarity with co-workers.

Sub-contracting sometimes involves a loss of in-house knowledge of occupational health and safety. It may also may involve the reduction of oversight and loss of clarity for responsibility by supervisors.

This can be particularly important in circumstances where work changes and where new tasks may be introduced along with new players (workers, supervisors).

Focus group data suggested that in these circumstances contractors may decide to forego hazard assessments altogether.

Pace of work and compensation schemes (examples)

Pay by the job or other variations of piece work are very common. Yet they pose some serious challenges to the best practices of worker participation. Time is money is the mantra of piece work. At an individual worker level or at an organizational level (contractor to sub-contracting company) there are several negative practices that have been linked to poor workplace health and safety outcomes:

- Piece-work encourages haste. Cost per hour, or to a worker “dollars per job,” means that the more you can accomplish in an hour or a day, the more you get paid.
- Small sub-contracting shares this ‘incentivization’ of speed.
- Work hastening may also trigger superficial hazard assessment processes such as a pre-printed checklist of pre-considered hazards, which replaces engaged, curious observations of hazards.

“Subcontracting can result in incomplete and rushed handoffs between contractors. In one instance a contractor arrived and started work before the field level hazard assessment process had been completed with the contractor.” (Researcher field notes)

“During field observations I found one organization that seemed to take a relatively thorough and systematic approach to their hazard assessments. When asked if they would share this process with other contractors working alongside of them, their lead commented that their process was “proprietary” and they would not be sharing it with others. This was something that they had been instructed by their supervisory office.”

(Researcher field notes)

“The more experienced person you are on the job, the more they hate to have you involved in the process. Because your experience shows that the supervisors don’t know what they are talking about.”

(Focus group)

“Sometimes due to lack of space, they gather only the foreman of each trade (for the hazard assessment). If the foreman wants to tell us what he remembers, he does. If not, then whatever.”

(Worker interview)



Employers have been known to list “standard operating procedure” or “SOP” as the ‘control’ or safe practice associated with known hazards. The SOP is then considered the process for controlling the hazard and is usually tied to some established practice.

This approach promotes a highly mechanistic approach to the workplace, discouraging an appropriate and thorough hazard assessment process and usually encouraging a low level “at the worker” control instead of a fresh look at the hazard and a critical eye to what might be the best practice, including eliminating the hazard, which is, in fact, the law in Alberta.

Sub-contracting and commitment to health and safety

Barriers to proper, engaged worker participation in the assessment process may also result in solutions that focus on worker behavior, personal protective equipment or other low-level ‘controls’ that are seen as easy to implement and don’t involve significant changes to the work process or tools themselves.

Best Practice

Design the workplace and process such that the hazards are eliminated. Equipment and processes that are adjustable to fit the individual characteristics of human bodies and our different abilities are the key to success.

“Adjusting the bidding process to include such a requirement might serve to broaden employer views (or at least nullify the effect of narrow views) of incident causation that appear to be a barrier to worker participation.

Such a requirement might also generate pressure on smaller firms (which pose particular OHS challenges) to train workers in hazard assessment and provide workers with opportunities to participate.”

Barnetson

It can be argued that controls ‘at the source’ might, eventually, result in a re-design of the workplace and work process to remove the risk from the workplace rather than finding ways to work-around the risk, thus making the workplace less susceptible to short-cuts and less necessary for effective

field or worksite level hazard assessments.

Adjust the bidding process to include a requirement for providing workers with adequate training in hazard identification and a standardized hazard assessment procedure.

Schedule modifications and staffing changes can be expected to improve health and safety outcomes

One key study in health care found the following:

“The relationship between worker safety and patient safety has been studied for nurses and physicians, and has demonstrated meaningful associations between certain exposures and outcomes [8, 9]. For example, schedule-related clinician fatigue produces adverse outcomes among clinicians themselves, who



sustain increased injuries from sharps, increased rates of depression, and increased rates of post-work motor vehicle accidents. In addition, patients cared for by over-tired clinicians experience higher rates of medical errors. Effective interventions to address clinician fatigue have been developed and implemented, and in quasi-experimental studies were found to significantly decrease errors [10]. However, these interventions require schedule modifications and staffing changes and have failed to gain widespread implementation.”

From “Front Line Health Care Workers”

This study also showed the reluctance for employers to make changes to the structure of work itself, despite the potential for improved safety outcomes.

Under Alberta’s Code, what does this leave us with in terms of options?

Downloading responsibility for completion of the job has been a long-standing way for contractors to side-step responsibility for health and safety. Building a ‘commitment’ to health and safety into a contract is not the same as creating a safe and healthy workplace.

Best Practices

Design the workplace and process such that the hazards are eliminated. Equipment and processes that are adjustable to fit the individual characteristics of human bodies and our different abilities is the key to success.

Translate piecework contracts into hourly contracts. Trade ‘cost certainty’ for improved health and safety.

Provide more active supervision.

Encourage more active ‘outside’ intervention. State “OHS Officer” or “internal”. Increase active supervision by contractors.

In theory, most continuous quality improvement approaches (such as Lean Six Sigma, Plan-Do-Check-Act, and Clinical Microsystems) rely on front-line worker input as part of a multi-disciplinary team working together to identify hazards or opportunities for improvement; analysis to develop, implement, and evaluate interventions; and active follow-up assessment. In practice, though, front-line workers may be excluded from these efforts.

Don’t assume compliance or safety comes with agreeing to a contract that says it should. Due diligence is not the same as health and safety.

Precarious work and worker vulnerability

Precarious work can arise from a variety of different circumstances.

A sub-contracted relationship may leave workers particularly vulnerable to not being rehired if they are seen to be too ‘pushy’ or inappropriately vocal about their health and safety concerns.

This relationship plays into their willingness to remain silent in the face of potentially dangerous work organization or practice.



Best Practice

Design the workplace and process such that the hazards are eliminated. Equipment and processes that are adjustable to fit the individual characteristics of human bodies and our different abilities is the key to success.

Gender, discrimination and harassment

Our research indicates that women are more likely to have the hazards they face dismissed by employers, regulators and health care providers (and, thus, compensation boards). In this regard they are reflecting the long-term devaluing of women's work. Our research also shows that the gendered nature of workplaces (which sometimes shows itself as harassment and discrimination) may reduce the willingness of women to participate in hazard assessments. (Barnetson)

"Machinery and process may all contain assumptions about operator height, weight and strength. These assumptions are disproportionately based on a male norm and pose ergonomic and other hazards to workers who do not fit this norm."

Barnetson

A consequence of this may be the exclusion of certain types of hazards that are more likely to be seen as 'gendered' or which may go unrecognized by those for whom

the hazards may have less impact.

Examples of 'gendered work hazards' include:

- Hazards inherent in 'gendered work' such as high heels in food service industry, sexual harassment due to sexualized workplace dress codes.
- Increased hazards resulting from 'gender' based physical characteristics such as height of work surface, lifting requirements, etc.
- PPE designed for typical male physiology may make this equipment less effective and less comfortable (creating new hazards) for women.

Gender-based exclusion from participation

The willingness of employers and co-workers to suggest or accept solutions which respect gender may also be challenged by both the exclusion of women from the hazard assessment or the marginalization of their concerns and suggestions for elimination or controlling the hazard.

In many ways this is similar to the problems which we find in workplaces with other forms of marginalization, based on other personal characteristics of workers. Inter-related issues around language, literacy and ethnicity may limit workers' capacity to participate in hazard assessment processes and they may also limit workers' willingness to do so, as a way of reducing their potential exposure to harassment and discrimination.



Finally, similar exclusions may exist in cases where only a few workers are performing what are seen as different tasks and facing different hazards. During a hazard assessment process the loudest voice will likely belong to the majority of the workers affected and those who work in smaller numbers will face barriers in having their concerns heard and addressed.

“Controlling gendered hazards may require expensive changes to work processes. Consequently, employers have little incentive to engage in gender-based hazard assessment and may indeed participate in or condone the suppression of identifying such hazards.”

Barnetson

Workplace health and safety is not about creating a consensus. The hazards affecting one worker require the same attention as the hazards which affect many workers.

Best Practice

Design the workplace and process such that the hazards are eliminated. Provide adjustable equipment and processes. The work equipment and processes that should be adjustable to fit the individual characteristics of human bodies and our different abilities is the key to success.

Provide gender/oppression awareness training.

Reducing barriers to worker participation when work changes

Section 7.4 of Alberta’s OHS Code requires employers to make a further hazard assessment when new work processes are introduced, when work processes or operations change, or when the work site is altered or added to. Many of the barriers to workers’ opportunity, capacity and willingness to participate in hazard assessments set out above are also relevant to hazard assessments when work changes.

For example, as organizations make greater use of subcontracting arrangements, the greater number of actors and interfaces may reduce an organization’s ability to tell when work has changed and, thus, when a new hazard assessment is required.¹ The ability of employers to recognize change may vary depending upon the type of change. Episodic change is infrequent, discontinuous, and intentional and is likely to be easily recognizable (e.g., personnel or technology change imposed by the employer across the workforce).²

By contrast, continuous change reflects small continuous adjustments that, over time, create substantial change. Continuous change can be hard to recognize. It often emerges organically and is informally and unevenly implemented, occurs at a low level, often on the initiative of (and known to) relatively few actors, with unclear and/or seemingly benign implication.³



Some forms of episodic change also create hazards that may be difficult to perceive and/or appear immutable. For example, a shift-schedule change (e.g., moving from working five eight-hour shifts to four ten-hour-shifts) may introduce or intensify fatigue-related hazards. Yet such a change would be unlikely to trigger a further hazard assessment because (1) it is an incremental change, (2) that has little effect on work processes, and (3) may be driven by financial imperatives. In both episodic and continuous changes, there may be few organizational triggers that lead to a review of existing hazard assessment and control strategies and thus employers may fail to provide opportunities for workers to participate in hazard assessments.

The opportunity for and willingness of workers to participate in further hazard assessments following episodic change may also be affected by the industrial relations context of a change. Workers have a variety of reactions to workplace change (e.g., acceptance,⁴ resistance,⁵ cynicism⁶ and commitment⁷). The context of a change (e.g., expected or real resistance) may reduce the opportunities employers offer workers to participate in hazard assessment as well as how seriously employers take workers' comments. Similarly, worker willingness to participate may be affected. Further, conflict over workplace change may distract both employers and workers from the safety implications of a change.

The research we did in the creation of these guidelines suggests some ways in which to increase worker participation in hazard assessment such that employers can meet their obligations under Alberta's OHS Code.

Worker Training

Workers' capacity to participate in hazard assessment turns, in part, upon their knowledge of hazards and the hazard assessment process.

Providing such training to workers in a high-engagement format would enhance workers' capacity to participate in hazard assessment.

Training would also offer opportunities for workers to understand the full spectrum of hazards, their rights around hazard assessment and control, and consider ways in which they can support one another effectively in the face of employer resistance.

Periodic retraining or reinforcement of hazard assessment principles (particularly where hazard assessments are infrequent) may be necessary to maintain worker skill levels.

Where literacy, language- or culture-based barriers exist, these will require remediation or accommodation.

Supervisor Training

Supervisors also require adequate training in order to effectively manage the hazard assessment process (e.g., conducting a hazard assessment while in visu-



al contact with the worksite), interact with workers (to prevent silencing), and respond to worker contributions to hazard assessments.

Improving the Hazard Assessment Process

Allow Adequate Time

Employers need to allocate adequate time for hazard assessment activities. Employers must also create systems by which to identify instances when work has changed (particularly incremental changes) and a new hazard assessment is required.

Take Action On Hazards

When hazards are identified, employers must both take action and communicate the results of that action. These behaviors are required to prevent worker cynicism and withdrawal.

Take Responsibility

When incidents occur, a review of the hazard assessment may be in order. Injury and/or near-miss investigations should look beyond worker behavior to identify systemic contributions to the injury or near miss.

Hazard assessments should not be used for disciplinary purposes or to deflect liability: hazard assessments are the responsibility of the employer, not the worker.





Checklists for overcoming barriers to participation

Overcoming barriers to participation is not easy. But it's necessary. And it's easier if you try to do it with others and/or through your union or other allies.

The charts on the next few pages provide some suggestions about how to deal with some key worker participation barriers.

What makes it hard to participate?	Examples of what makes it hard to participate	What can you do on your own?	What can you do with others?	What does the employer need to do?
Employer's overall approach to health and safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • (Lack of) openness to including workers and their representatives • Supervisors pick their "favourites" to do hazard assessments and include no one else • No, or ineffective, health and safety programme or management system • No, or little, management involvement in or commitment to OHS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • refer to Part 2 of the Code, contact Alberta OHS (can be anonymous) • research effective safety program systems like SOBANE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • if unionized, check your collective bargaining agreement • if unionized, contact union 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • as a minimum, comply with the law, including participation set out in Part 2 of the Code

What makes it hard to participate?	Examples of what makes it hard to participate	What can you do on your own?	What can you do with others?	What does the employer need to do?
Precarious work (temporary, agency, migrant, part-time, self-employed)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited benefits and rights • Fear of losing job/contract that leads to not speaking up • More injuries and illnesses (studies show) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know your rights; get information about them • Find others to talk with 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Share information about rights • Try to report hazards and injuries/illnesses in groups • Work together 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply workers' rights to all employees, regardless of status



What makes it hard to participate?	Examples of what makes it hard to participate	What can you do on your own?	What can you do with others?	What does the employer need to do?
<p>No training in hazard assessments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No training or information, including about all types of hazards • No training about how to look for hazards • No training about how to develop solutions for hazards and principles of fixing hazards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the hazard categories hand-out • Ask how the law defines hazard • Ask for training • Talk with others about how to look for hazards • Review hazard categories and SOBANE style inspection hand-outs • Fill out own body map and consider what causes the effects • Use the prevention triangle • Ask “How does it get rid of the hazard?” when people talk about solutions • Talk to co-workers about what would be the best fix 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the hazard categories hand-out • Use the legal definition of hazard • Negotiate training, preferably by union • Ask about hazards they know about • Use body map as starting point to talk about what causes the effects • Use hazard categories and SOBANE style inspection hand-outs • Negotiate training about how to look for hazards • Discuss what would be the best fix, using prevention triangle • Use the law about eliminating hazards first • Ask questions about use of PPE, its limitations, maintenance and cleaning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the hazard categories hand-out • Include information about all hazard types in training and materials used in assessments • Train workers • Evaluate training • Train workers about how to look for hazards • Use hand-outs about hazard categories and inspections for each category • Evaluate training • Incorporate prevention principles in health and safety programme or management system • Train workers about the principles of prevention • Encourage creative short- and long-term solutions that will get rid of the hazard at least in the long-run • Evaluate training



What makes it hard to participate?	Examples of what makes it hard to participate	What can you do on your own?	What can you do with others?	What does the employer need to do?
<p>Myths about careless or “accident prone” workers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour-based programmes that focus on how people behave, not the hazards • Similar programmes that focus on attitudes (called “safety culture” or “safety climate”) • Workers are disciplined for reporting hazards, injuries and/or illnesses (“zero tolerance” policy) • Workers are blamed for injuries, being “careless” without looking for root causes • Injury reports are designed to blame workers, avoid root cause analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document the hazards and report them • File a grievance • Complain to Occupational Health and Safety • Talk to the union about having a collective response • Push back about any written blame • Talk with other workers about how to respond • Refuse to accept blame. Point to hazards and underlying causes • Talk with union and co-workers about your experience and how to get better reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Document hazards and report them • Organise a meeting to develop a group response and support those who are disciplined • Document hazards and their effects (what is happening in the workplace and what could happen down the road) • Talk together about what to do • Get union involved, hold meeting about prevention approaches • Start using an incident report like the one in the tool kit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a find and fix it programme with workers and their representatives, one that emphasises hazard assessments and solutions that truly prevent hazards • Develop a programme that sets up reporting systems and disciplines managers who misuse them • Provide rewards for reporting hazards, injuries and illnesses, and perhaps innovative fixes • Start using an incident report form like the one in the tool kit



What makes it hard to participate?	Examples of what makes it hard to participate	What can you do on your own?	What can you do with others?	What does the employer need to do?
Employer definition of hazard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Using “serious” but for whom? Excluding types of hazards, especially work organisation or things that cause stress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak up when something affects you, call it serious Use SOBANE-type forms Ask questions about different types of hazards Ensure your identification of hazards are recorded Point to the definition of “hazard” in the law 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk about why a hazard is important to you Use the legal definition of “hazard” Use SOBANE-type forms Encourage others to name all types of hazards, including ones that cause stress Request training about identifying all hazard types 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take workers’ reports of hazards seriously Have a good hazard reporting system State that all hazards must be assessed because it is a serious issue Use forms like the SOBANE type ones Include hazard definition in health and safety programme Train supervisors and employees about hazard categories and how to identify them

What makes it hard to participate?	Examples of what makes it hard to participate	What can you do on your own?	What can you do with others?	What does the employer need to do?
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports of hazards and their effects are dismissed or not taken seriously when they come from women <p>Women’s responsibilities outside work are not recognised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak up for women 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with others Union can file grievance or human rights complaint Union negotiates flexible work schedules, life-work balance arrangements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train supervisors and managers about sexism and how to deal respectfully with women Life-work balance agreements Flexible arrangements





What makes it hard to participate?	Examples of what makes it hard to participate	What can you do on your own?	What can you do with others?	What does the employer need to do?
<p>Fear of speaking up</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers are scared to say anything or report hazards and/or injuries/illnesses, fearing they will lose their jobs or be disciplined Workers are not given time to do hazard assessments and their regular work, and fear the consequences of saying so, and therefore they will not participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Learn your rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work together to report hazards and/or injuries/illnesses Have union rep speak on your behalf Negotiate time to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reward those who report hazards Train workers about reporting and doing hazard assessments Ensure hazard assessment time is built into work time Policies that make this clear Support supervisors giving workers time to participate Encourage reporting

What makes it hard to participate?	Examples of what makes it hard to participate	What can you do on your own?	What can you do with others?	What does the employer need to do?
<p>Discrimination and harassment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reports of hazards and their effects are dismissed when they come from people of colour, immigrants, and/or those whose first language is not English Aboriginal workers' reluctance to speak up (because of the long-term effects of residential schools and other racism) is not recognised 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Back up and/or speak up for others who are not taken seriously or are harassed or discriminated against Ask for help from others in the workplace or outside it Speak up for Aboriginal workers Ask union to help 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refuse to accept discrimination and harassment Union can file grievances and/or human rights complaints Work with union to develop ways that make it easier for Aboriginal workers to participate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Train supervisors and managers about what is discriminatory and harassment Provide inter-cultural and/or English as an additional language (EAL) training Work with union to develop ways that make it easier for Aboriginal workers to participate



What makes it hard to participate?	Examples of what makes it hard to participate	What can you do on your own?	What can you do with others?	What does the employer need to do?
<p>Employer created silence</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Workers believe speaking up will make no difference, they will not be heard or taken seriously Supervisors/managers bully or yell at workers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Speak up once, based on something that is really important to you Talk with others about how they feel and what they want to say Ask for help/support to report a hazard Talk to others about what it feels like when you are bullied or yelled at, asking about their experiences Talk to your union 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk with others about how to do this, agreeing on more collective/group approach Have union rep speak on your behalf Get stories that make clear the patterns Get union involved to file grievances and push for changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pay attention to workers' reports Train supervisors about how to encourage worker reports Reward those who speak up Encourage workers to speak up and show they are heard Train supervisors and managers about managing (the skills) Make clear to all employees that bullying and yelling is not acceptable Comprehensive violence prevention programme with training, procedures for reporting, support Respond to grievances quickly and respectfully Discipline supervisors or managers who bully or yell at workers Train supervisors and managers on managing, as well as workers' rights



What makes it hard to participate?	Examples of what makes it hard to participate	What can you do on your own?	What can you do with others?	What does the employer need to do?
<p>Employer created silence (cont'd.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supervisors/managers ignore workers' reports or make clear they are not interested in what workers think 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Figure out how to use the law about workers being "involved" in hazard assessments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set up reporting systems Support supervisors who bring forward reports of hazards

What makes it hard to participate?	Examples of what makes it hard to participate	What can you do on your own?	What can you do with others?	What does the employer need to do?
<p>Organisation size</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small organisations may lack resources to deal with proper hazard assessments Small organizations focus just on the hazards related to their speciality services Workers fear losing jobs if they speak up or report hazards/injuries/ illnesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask to be trained and involved in hazard assessments Use resources that explain hazard categories Talk to others, encouraging them to report and speak up 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talk with others about finding and fixing hazards Use resources that explain hazard categories Get help from union and/or others you know who do hazard assessments Work with others to speak up together and report hazards and injuries/illnesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use workers' skills and knowledge Use sectoral and/or union resources to train employees and get information about hazards and solutions Find other outside resources Policy and programme clearly says there will be no retaliation for reporting hazards or injuries/ illnesses Reward those who report injuries/illnesses and hazards Fix hazards that are found or reported



What makes it hard to participate?	Examples of what makes it hard to participate	What can you do on your own?	What can you do with others?	What does the employer need to do?
Pace of work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speed-ups • Line speed • Forced overtime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take your breaks • Try to avoid working overtime • File a grievance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise people to take all their breaks • Refuse as a group • File a grievance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid speed-ups • Add staff as needed • Determine how line speed affects workers (e.g., ergonomic hazards) • No forced overtime • Adequate staffing and schedules to deal with regular activities and disruptions • Agree to have health and safety record as a condition for getting contracts
Payment schemes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonus schemes, piece-rate, relying on tips • Penalties for late completion of projects and incentives for early finishes 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with co-workers rather than against them • Union should negotiate regular pay instead of bonus or piece rate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get rid of any payment scheme that prioritizes productivity over health and safety • Negotiate realistic deadlines, pointing out consequences of false promises
Environmental limitations (conditions of work)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location away from regular workplace • Climate • Time to travel to work/site 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise car pooling 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get union support for car pooling 	



What makes it hard to participate?	Examples of what makes it hard to participate	What can you do on your own?	What can you do with others?	What does the employer need to do?
<p>How the work is organised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sub-contracting and out-sourcing so there are temporary/agency workers on site • Multiple worksites • Loss of in-house health and safety knowledge with contracting out/temp agencies • Not clear who's responsible for what (especially with multiple employers at a site) • Large numbers of workers may mean less opportunity for all to participate • Hours of work, shiftwork • "Lean production" which takes out breaks, tries to get rid of "waste" and uses just-in-time delivery systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with contract/agency workers about health and safety, trying to figure out how to have their back • Ask who's responsible for health and safety, to whom you report hazards and injuries • Ask to be included • Get to know those on your shift • Take your breaks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with union co-workers about how to spread info around • Union fights contracting out or negotiate how health and safety rules are taught and applied • Talk with others about reporting, sort out through union • Sort out processes to include as many workers as possible, via the union • Fight via the union 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce contracting out • Comprehensive health and safety training • Have clear lines of responsibility for health and safety that are explained to everyone at the workplace/site • Ensure supervisors are trained about health and safety and are supported in carrying them out • Make it a condition of contracts that health and safety responsibilities are spelled out and clearly explained to all employees • Evaluate real effectiveness of "lean" methods, especially effects on health and safety hazards



Endnotes

- 1 G. Papadopoulos, P. Georgiadou, C. Papazoglou and K. Michaliou. "Occupational and public health and safety in a changing work environment: An integrated approach for risk assessment and prevention." *Safety Science* 48, no 10 (2010): 943-949.
- 2 K. Weick and R. Quinn. "Organizational change and development." *Annual Review of Psychology* 50 (1999): 361-386.
- 3 D. Dunphy and D. Stace. "The strategic management of corporate change." *Human Relations* 46 (1993): 905-920.
- 4 M. Leiter and P. Harvie. "Conditions for staff acceptance of organizational change: Burnout as a mediating construct." *Anxiety, Stress, and Coping* 11 (1998): 1-25.
- 5 L. Coch and J. French. "Overcoming resistance to change." *Human Relations* 1 (1948): 512-532.
- 6 J. Wanous, A. Reichers and J. Austin. "Cynicism about organizational change: Measurement, antecedents, and correlates." *Group and Organization Management* 25 (2000): 132-153.
- 7 L. Herscovitch and J. Meyer. "Commitment to organizational change: Extension of a three-component model." *Journal of Applied Psychology* 87 (2002): 474-487.



