

Workers have the Right to Know about the dangers of their jobs

AND HOW THEY ARE PROTECTED

Updated April 2022

Employers must tell you about your health and safety rights. They must identify hazards at work, eliminate or control all hazards, and ensure you have the equipment and training you need to work safely.

Here are some important elements of a worker's Right to Know:

1 Hazard Assessment

A Hazard Assessment is identifying the dangers you could be exposed to while doing your job, and how you are protected from them.

Workers should be involved in a Hazard Assessment when you first start a job, or when the work changes. Some workers whose job tasks or locations change frequently may need more regular Hazard Assessments.

2 Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

A common way of protecting workers from workplace hazards is by requiring workers to wear protective equipment. Examples of PPE include hearing protection, gloves, goggles, hard hats, steel toed boots, masks, reflective vests and fall protection harnesses. PPE need to be the right kind of protection for the job, and they need to fit properly.

PPE can offer important protection for a worker, but should not be the only method used. Hazards should be eliminated wherever possible, or controlled in such a way that they never come in contact with the worker.

3 Training

You should receive safety training when you first start any job or when new work processes are introduced. This should include safe work procedures, proper (and safe) use of PPE, and the reporting process for injuries, illnesses and serious incidents. Some jobs may require specific training for things like First Aid, confined spaces, and work with certain hazardous substances. Health and Safety Committee (HSC) members and Health and Safety Representatives (HS Reps) also have requirements for training.

4 Emergency protocols

Employers are required to have an emergency evacuation plan in place, as well as First Aid kits and designated personnel trained in First Aid. Requirements may be different depending on your workplace's size, location and other factors.

Every workplace is potentially dangerous, and every job may expose workers to different types of hazards.

Workplace Hazards

- A hazard is something that can hurt you
- Some hazards can injure or make you sick right away, with others it might take years

Note: *It is important that workers follow the health and safety rules of your workplace, such as wearing proper PPE, even if you think there may be a more effective way of controlling a hazard. Your Health and Safety Committee (HSC) or Health and Safety Representative (HS Rep) can help make recommendations for better worker protection, and your union (if you have one) can negotiate for better protection in your Collective Bargaining Agreement.*

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ALBERTA WORKERS'
HEALTH CENTRE

Information, Education and Empowerment for Workers

Phone: 780-486-9009
Toll-Free: 1-888-729-4879

www.workershealthcentre.ca



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5 Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)

Some hazards are required by law to be clearly labeled. These include controlled substances like solvents, cleaning agents, compressed gases, explosive or flammable materials, biohazards, and others.

WHMIS includes labels with pictograms that can warn us of hazardous materials. WHMIS also requires Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) for controlled substances, which list detailed hazard information, including safe handling and emergency measures.

Note: Some products available to consumers (such as household cleaners purchased from a grocery store and used in a workplace) do not require the same kind of labeling, but they could still be hazardous.

6 Right to ask for information

Sometimes your supervisor or employer might forget to provide you with Health and Safety information. You can ask them things like these 13 questions:

- 1 What are the dangers of my job?
- 2 Who will be training me in job safety?
- 3 Is there any safety equipment (PPE) I need to wear? Do I have to buy it?
- 4 Who do I ask if I have health and safety questions?
- 5 What are my health and safety responsibilities?
- 6 What do I do if a co-worker or I get hurt?
- 7 Do we have a first aid kit? Is there a First Aid Officer?
- 8 What are the emergency procedures and where is the emergency equipment?
- 9 How do I report a health and safety issue?
- 10 Do we have health and safety meetings?
- 11 What is our harassment and violence policy?
- 12 Am I covered by the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB)?
- 13 Do I have a union, and if yes, who is my Union Steward?

For more information about your Workplace Health and Safety rights and responsibilities under Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) laws, and to report dangerous work:

Contact the Alberta Government's **Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Contact Centre.**

Tel. 780-415-8690 (Edmonton) or Toll Free 1-866-415-8690

You may phone the OHS Contact Centre at any time. Your call can be confidential.



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Hazardous Materials Pictograms

WHMIS 2015



Flame over Circle

Oxidizer



Flame

Flammable, Self-Reacting, Pyrophoric, Self-heating, In Contact With Water, Emits Flammable Gases, Organic Peroxide



Exploding Bomb

Explosive*, Self-Reacting (severe), Organic Peroxide (severe)



Gas Cylinder

Gas Under Pressure



Skull and Crossbones

Acute Toxicity (fatal or toxic)



Corrosion

Serious Eye Damage, Skin Corrosion, Corrosive to Metals



Exclamation Mark

Irritation (skin or eyes), Skin Sensitization, Acute Toxicity (harmful), Specific Target Organ Toxicity (drowsiness or dizziness, or respiratory irritation), Hazardous to the Ozone Layer*



Health Hazard

Carcinogenicity, Respiratory Sensitization, Reproductive Toxicity, Target Organ Toxicity, Germ Cell Mutagenicity, Aspiration Hazard



Environment

Aquatic Toxicity*



Biohazardous

Biohazardous Infectious Materials

* NOT REQUIRED BY WHMIS 2015, BUT MAY BE USED

SOURCE: Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety

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