



# We're Here For You

CCOHS helps make Canada's workplaces  
healthier and safer for you





## Learn more about CCOHS, and how it helps Canadians work safer and healthier

**W**e're not shy - in fact, we enjoy telling Canadians the many things we do to make the workplace safer.

Our real task, of course, is responding to the needs and concerns of people like yourself. If you want to learn more about CCOHS and its products and services, access our website at [www.ccohs.ca](http://www.ccohs.ca). Read our *LIAISON* Newsletter, check our health and safety *Features*, scan our *OSH Answers*, browse our products and services, and sign our Guest Book.

If you have a general question about any aspect of occupational health and safety, go to *OSH Answers* and use the SEARCH tool to locate your target area. Chances are, you'll have the solution with one click of your mouse.



For more specific topics, or to speak to a CCOHS Inquiries Officer:

**Telephone:** 1-800-263-8466  
(toll-free in Canada only)  
1-905-572-4400 (from 8:30 a.m.  
to 5 p.m. Eastern Time)

**Fax:** 1-905-572-4500

**E-mail:** [inquiries@ccohs.ca](mailto:inquiries@ccohs.ca)

**Mail:** Canadian Centre for  
Occupational  
Health & Safety (CCOHS)  
135 Hunter Street East  
Hamilton, ON  
L8N 1M5

Extra copies of this booklet are available free from the above. Please include recipient's name and full address.



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## Making Canadian workplaces safer day by day

**S***safety is everybody's business.* Most people know this only as a familiar slogan, a reminder of the need to be alert to risk and danger.

It is also, however, the guiding principle for all the pursuits and objectives of the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. By recognizing everyone's role in workplace safety - the basis for the Internal Responsibility System, or IRS - and assisting everyone in filling that role, CCOHS makes a difference thousands of times each day across Canada.

Thanks to its authoritative, unbiased content, CCOHS services are utilized and valued by all sectors - employees, employers, trade unions, health and safety professionals, health care providers, governments, educators, and others. From its inception, CCOHS has been dedicated to improving the health and safety of individual Canadian workers. No goal is more important; it remains the over-riding purpose of CCOHS and its staff.

On a typical day, Canadians everywhere draw upon the unique services of CCOHS, in a wide variety of ways:

***A new business owner in Halifax, searching for information on establishing a WHMIS program and Health and Safety Committee for her T-shirt printing shop, calls the Inquiries Service at CCOHS.***

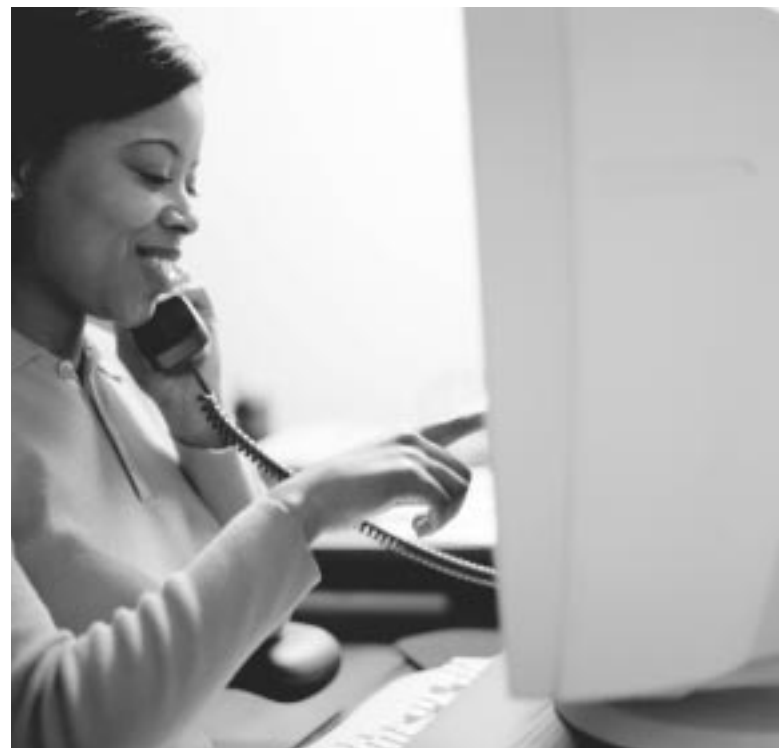
The CCOHS Inquiries staff promise to send the information by mail as requested. They explain that *OSH Answers* on the CCOHS website offers several documents relating to her questions, and provide local telephone numbers of government departments where she can obtain information about legal requirements, interpretative documents and other materials.

***Safety is everybody's business.*** The CCOHS staff member offers to search for additional

literature that will provide relevant and concise information relating to health hazards associated with the silk-screening process. While the staff searches for the literature to be forwarded by mail, the new business owner logs onto OSH Answers on the CCOHS website to find answers to health and safety questions. OSH Answers is a free web information service that currently covers 475 health and safety topics in a question and answer format. New topics are being added continuously. The questions are prepared by CCOHS subject specialists who draw upon more than 20 years experience answering hundreds of thousands of inquiries from Canadians.

***A Health and Safety Committee at a Moose Jaw fertilizer plant needs to confirm correct handling procedures for a new chemical.***

Unfamiliar products can carry unknown risks. The Committee needs to know if protective clothing is required, if the plant's ventilation system is sufficient, if existing storage facilities are adequate, precautions needed in handling and using the chemicals, and what action to take in the event of a spill or accidental contact.



**Safety is everybody's business.** The committee representative checks the CHEMINFO database on CCOHS' CHEMpendium service and obtains relevant information. CHEMINFO, created by CCOHS, details chemical hazards by utilizing international information which is then adapted to reflect Canadian rules. For further information the representative slips the IPCS INCHEM CD-ROM, obtained from CCOHS, into a company PC. This joint production of CCOHS and the International Programme on Chemical Safety was a direct response to a priority set by the Intergovernmental Forum on Chemical Safety. The Forum was created to address global concerns of chemical safety and consists of governments, non-governmental organizations (NGO's), industrial associations, and trade unions from some 130 countries.

INCHEM provides instant, internationally validated information on health concerns and methods of dealing with the unfamiliar fertilizer chemical.

Within a few minutes the Committee knows the steps to take. They share this information with supervisors and fellow employees, and take steps to implement the necessary safety procedures, dramatically reducing both the risk of illness among the workers and potential damage to the environment.

**A production manager in Sherbrooke turns to the CCOHS website for ergonomic evaluation of assembly line activities by production personnel.**

The company's manufacturing process has been modified to improve efficiency and reduce costs, and requires new procedures to be followed by assembly line personnel. A retraining program will teach the revised actions and procedures, but are they the most effective way of working... and do they represent any potential risk?

**Safety is everybody's business.** Logging onto the CCOHS website, the production manager opens OSHLINE a service created by CCOHS to provide ongoing, authoritative coverage of published occupational health and safety-related literature from around the world. The data is integrated with bibliographic information from

the US National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSHTIC®) database, covering worldwide literature from 1900 to 1998. Upon discontinuation of updating of the NIOSHTIC database in 1998, CCOHS initiated OSHLINE to keep users up-to-date and current with the world's best health and safety literature.

In searching OSHLINE the production manager locates a study on ergonomic aspects describing near-identical actions to the ones planned for her firm. Within the study are alternative methods of performing the same job tasks with dramatically reduced incidence of possible injury. What's more, they produce greater overall worker comfort and increased productivity. When the production manager implements the methods in her modified program, both the workers and the company benefit.

**A Safety Manager in Winnipeg is looking for training programs that are available to the firm's multi-branch locations across Canada.**

He obtains it from one authoritative source: the CanOSH Internet Portal via the CCOHS website. Canada's most extensive gateway to occupational health and safety services and information, CanOSH provides easy access to a defined collection of public governmental resources, including those from Canadian government agencies at the federal, provincial and territorial levels.

**Safety is everybody's business.** That's why Canadians everywhere can use the information available on CanOSH to keep up-to-date on available training programs, hazard alerts, research and statistics.

The Safety Manager locates the data he needs, and alerts each branch about the training programs given in their jurisdiction.



***A student in Trois-Rivières preparing for a summer position with a local garden nursery looks for information that will help prepare her for this work.***

She is aware that she may be handling pesticides and herbicides, and that proper handling, storage and use of these chemicals is critical. She obtains the names and manufacturers of chemicals used in the workplace. This represents an important step in preparing youth to deal with workplace hazards.

***Safety is everybody's business.*** That's why CCOHS maintains more than 50,000 current French, and 120,000 English Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS). An MSDS provides the student with information about personal protective equipment she will need, and other vital chemical hazard information. Like much of the resource material at CCOHS, the MSDS library is accessible, via the Centre's Academic Support Program, to nearly 2,000,000 students in Canada and around the world. They share the information among themselves and with their parents, broadening everyone's knowledge of health and safety issues.

***A new employee at a company in Welland uses the wrong glassware for a substance, which explodes and causes breathing problems for the worker.***

A co-worker alerts the company Safety Officer, who has a copy of the CCOHS CHEMpendium CD-ROM. Under the Hazardous Substances Data Bank (HSDB), the officer locates information about acute toxic effects resulting from exposure of skin to the substance. These include breathing difficulties and rapid heart rate, leading to potentially fatal consequences. The worker is rushed to the hospital and placed in an ICU, where she eventually recovers.

***Safety is everybody's business.*** Accessing potential toxicity concerns of a substance, using the CHEMpendium CD-ROM takes literally a moment or two. It's a convenient and reliable method of verifying potential hazards and determining correct handling procedures -



one that Canadians can utilize at any time.

***An operations manager in Vancouver uses the CCOHS Canadian enviroOSH Legislation web service to assist the firm in submitting their ISO 14000 certification application.***

The process of finding and retrieving relevant federal, provincial and territorial legislation is often complex and intimidating. Yet...

***Safety is everybody's business.*** That's why CCOHS makes the enviroOSH Legislation web service available, enabling Canadians to remain informed and in compliance with government regulations from all Canadian jurisdictions regarding workplace and environmental health and safety. This service also provides the relevant guidelines, codes of practice and referenced standards for the convenience of users.

***In thousands of locations across Canada, 24 hours each day, 7 days a week,*** employees, supervisors, and other decision-makers including government officials, trainers, practitioners, and health and safety professionals obtain the data they need to work within a safer, more productive environment thanks to CD-ROMs, booklets, pamphlets, web postings and training materials provided by CCOHS.



## A fundamental right to a healthy and safe working environment

The world may always be, by one measure or another, a dangerous place. But beginning in 1978, thanks to the effective implementation of an act of Parliament, Canada's workplaces have been made safer.

*The act to create the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety - CCOHS - was based on the notion that all Canadians had "...a fundamental right to a healthy and safe working environment."* A national centre would be an essential requirement to enable people to exercise this right everywhere in the country, a concept launched and supported by stakeholders across Canada. The resulting Act had unanimous support from every federal party.

The primary goal of CCOHS was to provide Canadians with access to information on workplace hazards and conditions - a goal firmly entrenched in the CCOHS mandate.

From the Centre's first official day of operation in January 1980 as Canada's National Occupational Health and Safety Centre, CCOHS has been providing information on workplace health and safety conditions to assist all Canadians in reducing injuries and illnesses.

Services of CCOHS are directed by a Governing Council consisting of representatives of businesses, trade unions, and governments (federal, provincial and territorial) across Canada. The tripartite council structure ensures an unbiased approach, and its dedication to consensus building provides efficient decision-making. Proof of the structure's success can be measured by the high degree of credibility and acceptance of CCOHS information and advice among its many groups of stakeholders.

## Transforming information into action

The primary function of CCOHS is to serve as a comprehensive service providing information on workplace hazards and the various methods of preventing illnesses and injuries at work.

CCOHS has led the way in a number of technological areas relating to information access and maintaining high levels of service quality. The Centre was the first organization of its kind in Canada, for example, to utilize CD-ROMs for information delivery of occupational health and safety concerns. Today, this leadership in successfully applying new technology to deliver information has helped establish CCOHS service as among the most useful - and most utilized - of any in its field.

Access to critical knowledge remains the prime criterion in selecting and applying new methods of gathering, storing and dispensing information from global sources and among CCOHS clients. The Centre's innovative use of OSH information and resources, and its development of new tools and methods for improving the work environment, continues to be the cornerstone of success at CCOHS.

Working and connecting with others all across Canada remains a vital role for CCOHS in fostering workplace safety. The role of CCOHS as facilitator, in bringing together groups and individuals with a shared concern for OSH issues, is often quiet and low-profile, but invaluable nevertheless. CCOHS partners with all stakeholders, through consultation and advice, to help them work better.

### Safety in numbers:

CCOHS is the one organization mandated and created by the Government of Canada to deal with workplace safety issues on a national basis.





## A holistic approach in the quest for a safer workplace

The earliest days of CCOHS activities were marked by requests for health and safety information associated with materials, machinery, procedures, and environment in the workplace.

This need continues. Even today, materials arrive at workplaces with limited data on the hazards associated with handling, storage and application. Workers may lack details on preventing injuries and illnesses, or on prescribed measures to be taken in the event of accidental release or exposure. And, although modern production machinery is expected to incorporate safeguards against

### Safety in numbers:

Growing over time, the CCOHS website now receives 50,000 unique visitors each month.

injury, correct operation must often be reviewed, and procedures re-established, from time to time.

While traditional health and safety concerns represent major topics for CCOHS services, we recognize that the overall health and well-being of a workplace and its workers is enhanced by incorporating health promotion and education activities. These include, for

example, programs on active living, stress management, heart health, and nutrition. Because workers spend about one third of their waking hours at work, the workplace is a key opportunity to address a broad range of health

issues and give Canadians the knowledge and skills to make healthier choices, respond to health concerns and develop healthy communities.

CCOHS creates resources that help people deal with all types of work life issues such as stress, shift work, workplace violence, substance abuse and absenteeism.

CCOHS also partners with hundreds of Canadian organizations through the web based resources of the Canadian Health Network to give people the information and tools they need to make informed choices about their health.

This adds up to workplaces which are safer and healthier for Canadian workers.







## Fulfilling the need with quality service

People helping people. It remains a valid concept, and represents the heart of CCOHS success over two decades.

CCOHS service begins with highly expert and dedicated staff who understand the concerns of Canadians when it comes to occupational health and safety. They are committed to meeting the needs of clients who contact CCOHS in person or by telephone, e-mail, postal service, or fax in search of vital data. They apply their expertise to create information in forms oriented to, and useful to, the wide range of users.

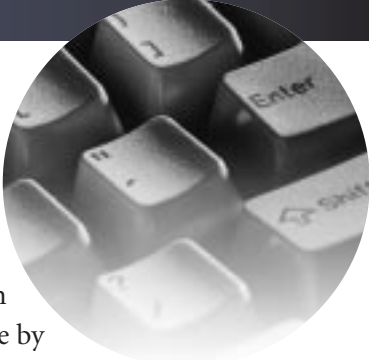
Matching this dedication is the credible and authoritative health and safety information gathered and distributed by CCOHS from sources literally around the world. Such a large volume of data, of course, requires state-of-the-art technology in order to find relevant information quickly and easily. CCOHS not only employs appropriate technology, but has literally led the world in much of its development and introduction where health and safety matters are concerned.

Finally, the unique tripartite council structure provides CCOHS with the stability and direction required to ensure practical and comprehensive response to the ever-changing character of occupational health and safety concerns.

In this manner, CCOHS provides current knowledge on vital health and safety issues to Canadians and subscribers everywhere, drawn from the most respected and reliable sources worldwide.

### Easy access to ALL Canadians

*Safety is everybody's business.* That's why CCOHS provides a variety of products and services to all Canadians through several channels such as:



CCOHS Inquiries Service, offering direct answers, on request, to questions on workplace health and safety concerns. Accessible by telephone, fax, mail or e-mail, in English and French, this service is made available free of charge. Whether originating with workers, workers' families, employers or OSH professionals, in either the public or private sector, the service is professional, thorough, reliable, and totally confidential.

OSH Answers, accessed via the CCOHS website, addresses Frequently-Asked Questions (FAQs) on various health and safety topics. From Biological Hazards to Work Schedules, OSH Answers represents a "quick 'n easy" method of obtaining clarification and data on almost 500 individual topics, all with the click of a mouse.

Canadians look to CCOHS for answers to workplace safety issues. By working closely with groups, associations, private and public-sector representatives and others, CCOHS develops and markets a wide range of products in direct response to these needs. Among them are:

- **Books and manuals** - additions to a client library for reference and circulation at leisure
- **Databanks** - sources of current information to guide workers and decision-makers in planning, implementing and assessing programs and other activities. These are gathered from the Centre's extensive network of global partners or produced by CCOHS staff, filling critical gaps in the existing knowledge bank.
- **Presentations and workshops** - On-site events for training and education
- **Collaborative Projects** - These partnerships allow CCOHS to provide Canadians with information from national, provincial, territorial and international sources, and allow us to share our own knowledge and expertise in return.



## CCOHS has the resources to meet every health and safety issue

Issues of workplace health and safety continue to grow in number and complexity. CCOHS responds to this widening universe of topics with reliable, authoritative data and materials.

The range of topics is impressive... and still growing. It includes Biological Hazards; Chemicals and Materials; MSDSs, Diseases, Disorders and Injuries; Ergonomics - Human Factors; Health and Safety Programs; Information Resources/Referrals; Legislation; Occupations & Workplaces; Physical Agents; Prevention/Control of Hazards; Health Promotion/Wellness/Psychosocial; Safety and Work Schedules; and many more.

The depth and range of information provided by CCOHS on these issues enable Canadian audiences to take steps that will ensure health and safety standards in the workplace. For example, chemicals and materials are a major concern for Canadians.

In response, CCOHS offers a wide range of services including:

- Data covering health effects, fire and reactivity hazards, and safe work practices, all presented in a summarized easy-to-absorb format
- Profiles serving to prepare and verify MSDS documents
- Information that can be utilized to develop respiratory protection and other PPE programs, as well as to conduct workplace risk assessments
- Regulations for transporting hazardous materials
- Descriptions of chemical toxicity
- Details on the hazards and safe use of industrial chemicals and environmental contaminants

### Safety in numbers:

Over 2,500 answers are provided on 475 OSH topics, incorporated in *OSH Answers*, on the CCOHS website. These numbers are constantly increasing.

- Information on the toxicity of more than 150,000 substances identified by over 400,000 chemical names and synonyms.
- References on toxicology information from the US National Library of Medicine, incorporating hundreds of thousands of international journal articles, conference proceedings and government reports
- Data on toxic agents and the management of toxic exposures
- Guidance on information management for poison centres, including entry to a global electronic network of centres dealing with toxic exposures, and a forum for collaboration among professionals dealing with toxic material concerns.
- Access to more than 165,000 English and French Material Safety Data Sheets to avoid injury from mishandling dangerous products.

## Behind the symbol

Across Canada and around the world, the CCOHS logo is recognized as a source of key information for workplace health and safety. We're proud of it, and thought you might like to explore its symbolism.



The "X" forming the body of the human figure is a commonly recognized symbol for health and safety. The solid circle, representing the figure's head, is positioned in the middle of the design, representing the emphasis placed by CCOHS on the individual.

Above the figure hover two curved sections, creating umbrella-like protection for both mind and body... and signifying the two C's, which appear in both French and English versions of the Centre's title.



## A world of work and safety

One of the most important factors behind the success of CCOHS is its unusual and productive system of partnerships, both in Canada and around the world. The vast reservoir of data and knowledge, made accessible through these partnerships, permits CCOHS to assemble valuable information and distribute it with high levels of efficiency and comprehension. Thus, Canadians everywhere benefit from the actions of CCOHS in gathering and distributing this material.

From Newfoundland to BC, and in countries throughout the world, CCOHS works in partnership with organizations dedicated to workplace health and safety. These collaborations strengthen the Centre's ability to serve its clients, and enhance Canada's reputation for effective response to health and safety concerns.

***In Canada, CCOHS works closely with federal agencies to support their programs with our expertise, information resources and technology. These are some examples:***

- Connecting Canadians with timely and credible health information resources and organizations via an affiliated partnership in *Health Canada's* Canadian Health Network (CHN).
- Conducting a pilot field study of Statistics Canada Pricing Interviewers in response to a joint union-management request by the *Public Service Alliance of Canada and the Ontario Region of Statistics Canada*.
- Completing two research projects for the National Pollutant Release Inventory (NPRI) program of *Environment Canada*, involving cross-referencing substances on NPRI and CCOHS databases.
- Providing professional and technical assistance to the Criteria Working Group of *Consumer and Corporate Affairs Canada* in the review of Consumer Chemicals and Containers

Regulations.

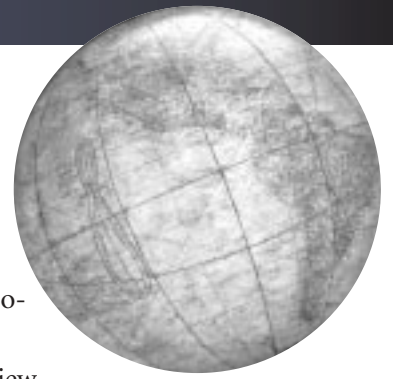
- Preparing toxicology profile summaries on hazardous chemicals, in collaboration with the Hazardous Materials Information Review Commission (HMIRC) in support of WHMIS activities.

***The national scope of CCOHS activities encompasses federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions. These are some examples:***

- Developing, providing and maintaining the CanOSH web site, assisting Canadians in accessing federal, provincial and territorial government health and safety information in collaboration with all jurisdictions and agencies.
- Collaborating with our provincial, territorial and federal government partners, as well as the *Canadian Standards Association (CSA International)* and *Canadian General Standards Board (CGSB)* to provide the CCOHS Canadian enviroOSH Legislation service.
- Assisting in educating university students by supporting the development of OSH case studies and workshops as part of their curriculum.
- Undertaking a study on influencing attitudes toward safety on behalf of the Association of Workers' Compensation Boards of Canada, courtesy of the *New Brunswick Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission*.

***In addition, CCOHS collaborates with provincial agencies, supporting their health and safety initiatives and bringing together parties from various jurisdictions. Here are some examples:***

- Initiating the concept of *OSH For Everyone* a CD-ROM and internet-based product. With the Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) of Ontario and in collaboration with their safe workplace associations and health and safety partners, *OSH for Everyone* for Ontario contains



a wealth of information sources specific to today's workplace concerns. This service provides workers and employers with immediate access to critical prevention information, furthering the efforts to prevent occupational illness and injury. CCOHS is currently engaged in developing similar programs for the governments of Saskatchewan and the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

- Producing a CD-ROM containing *British Columbia OSH* regulations, legislation, and referenced standards to assist in the effective development and distribution of this information to BC workplaces.
- Collaborating with the *Ontario Ministry of Labour* on writing educational resource material to teach OSH within the Province's curriculum for Grades 9 and 10.
- Developing a Repetitive Motion Injuries Prevention Program for the *Government of Newfoundland and Labrador* to help reduce workplace injuries in high risk industries.

***Around the world, CCOHS works with United Nations (UN) agencies. These activities include:***

- Developing a global program for the *World Health Organization (WHO)* encompassing some 130 countries to produce IPCS INTOX, an integrated operational system used at Poison Centres around the world to manage and share vital information on poisons and poisonings. The WHO depends solely on CCOHS for information technology and for the information content distribution of this service.
- Updating and issuing semi-annually the IPCS INCHEM database, a global endeavour addressing the priorities of the sound management of chemicals. IPCS INCHEM consolidates environmental and human health information from various UN agency sources.
- Operating as a Collaborating Centre for the World Health Organization (WHO).

***In conjunction with the International Labour Office (ILO) CCOHS is active:***

- Developing and distributing the Fourth

Edition of the ILO Encyclopaedia of Occupational Health and Safety, via the Internet.

- Representing Canada for the International Labour Organization's International Occupational Safety and Health Information Centre (CIS) National Centre Program.

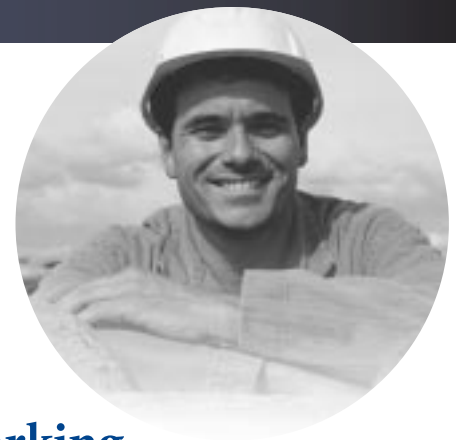
***CCOHS collaborates with many countries around the world including***

- In the US, CCOHS works with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) and the National Library of Medicine (NLM) to:
  - Produce a CD-ROM version of the Industrial Ventilation Manual, a publication of ACGIH.
  - Modified the structure and features of the world-renowned products from NIOSH, to reflect Canadian concerns and to broaden their appeal on a worldwide scale. These include the NIOSHTIC® database; the Registry of Toxic Effects of Chemical Substances (RTECS®) database; the NIOSH Manual of Analytical Methods (NMAM); and the NIOSH Pocket Guide. This association with NIOSH also represents an important vehicle for broadening the awareness of CCOHS, and enhancing its wide range of products and services to the health and safety field.
  - Assembling the TOXLINE® database from the National Library of Medicine (NLM), consisting of over one million references to worldwide literature on chemicals and toxicology. TOXLINE is used by environment, health and safety specialists, and researchers. CCOHS also works with NLM in designing and delivering the Hazardous Substances Data Bank (HSDB) of peer-reviewed profiles on over 5,000 potentially toxic chemicals.

***In other areas around the world, CCOHS participates in the improvement of Workplace Health and Safety by:***

- Administering the Pan-Asia Research and Development Grants Programme, a product of Canada's International Development Research Centre. The program is designed to address economic, social, and environmental problems in Asia and the Pacific regions by using network technology.
- Assisting in the distribution of vital information from Asian countries on health, the environment, natural resources, and other concerns via the AHEAD (Asian Health, Environmental & Allied Databases) Project of the International Development Research Centre.
- Working with the European Agency for Health and Safety at Work to create and maintain a joint website (<http://www.eu-ccohs.org>) delivering occupational health and safety information from member countries of the European Union (EU) and Canada to the world.
- Expanding the International and French-language offerings of CCOHS information services via associations with the *Institut National de Recherché et de Sécurité* (INRS). These help users to identify projects on the prevention of occupational risks, assists organizations conducting such research and provides, international references on occupational hazards. INRS promotes and publicizes CCOHS' products in France and worldwide, providing access to a wider constituency.
- Making the UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE) HSELINE database available, thereby enabling users to access nearly 200,000 authoritative references on a wide range of subject areas with diverse focuses to meet their information needs.

## We keep our eye on the target: A safer, healthier working environment for all



Over more than two decades of service, CCOHS has maintained its focus on providing governments, business and worker groups with information they need to keep Canada's workers both safe and productive on the job. By working with others, we provide Canadians with authoritative, current and unbiased information to help protect them from occupational hazards.

So the next time you read of new safety regulations in handling materials or operating machinery... or hear of a worker whose life was saved by prompt response to posted regulations... or see a chart tracing a steady decline in worker accidents, sickness and lost employment... think of CCOHS as a contributing partner in Canada's OSH system, just as we have been doing since 1978.



