

# An Introduction to Occupational Health and Safety



Those with the most authority to take action, such as owners and employers, have the most responsibility for workplace health and safety.

## Shared Responsibility:

Occupational health and safety legislation sets minimum standards for health and safety in the workplace. Everyone in the workplace shares the responsibility to keep the work environment healthy and safe, to the authority and ability that they have to do so.

### 1. Employers' responsibilities.

Employers have responsibilities to ensure a healthy and safe workplace. For example, employers must:

- inform workers about any potential hazards in the workplace such as fires, chemicals, noise or violence;
- train workers on how to do the job safely and how to use safety equipment properly;
- provide close supervision to help workers learn how to do the job safely; and
- explain precautions to be taken around workplace hazards by outlining policies, plans and procedures that will help to keep workers safe and identifying location of first aid materials.

### 2. Workers' responsibilities.

Workers have responsibilities to work and act safely on the job and are expected to:

- participate in workplace health and safety training;
- follow safe work practices and procedures;
- use and take care of safety equipment properly;
- report health and safety concerns to their supervisor;
- ask questions if they are unsure about how to do their job safely; and
- cooperate with the employer.



Employers and employees are protected against harassment in the workplace. Everyone shares the responsibility to ensure a harassment-free workplace.

### 3. Workers have three basic rights.

- To know about the hazards at work and how to control them.
- To participate in identifying and controlling health and safety hazards by:
  - telling the supervisor right away when any unsafe conditions or faulty equipment is observed;
  - participating in an Occupational Health Committee (if there are 10 or more workers in the workplace); or
  - talking to the health and safety representative (in moderate to high-hazard workplaces with five to nine workers).
- To refuse work that they believe is unusually dangerous. There are steps to follow when unsafe work is refused. Employees cannot be fired for exercising these rights.

Note: This publication is not a legal document. The original Act and Regulations should be consulted for all purposes of interpretation and application of the law.



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