

In 2012, the Saskatchewan Workers Compensation Board recorded 60 workplace fatalities, 14 of which were within the construction industry. Improving safety measures and eliminating workplace injuries and illnesses is a responsibility we all share. Safety and prevention needs to become a priority and fundamental aspect of the way we work each and every day. Regardless of what career you have chosen, we all have to comply with legislation.

Occupational Health and Safety in Saskatchewan is governed by The Saskatchewan Employment Act and Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulations, 2020. These Acts and Regulations apply to employers, supervisors, workers, self-employed persons, contractors, suppliers and owners. Sask Acts and OHS legislation are written to ensure that employers and employees are aware of their rights and responsibilities regarding the law.

OHS legislation gives three important rights to all Canadian workers to ensure they have the knowledge they need to be safe on the job and the freedom to participate in health and safety activities in their workplace: The right to know, the right to participate, and the right to refuse dangerous work. Employers, supervisors and employees also have legal responsibilities & requirements as outlined to the right.

It is a very important, legislated requirement in the province for each workplace to appoint an Occupational Health and Safety Representative or establish an Occupational Health Committee. A company that employs nine or less employees in any high-hazard workplace is required to have an OHS Representative, whereas a company with ten or more employees is required to have an Occupational Health Committee in place. Committees must have between 2 and 12 members depending on the size of the workplace, and employer members must not outnumber worker members.

Training is crucial to workplace law and to protect the health and safety of the worker within the workplace. An employer shall ensure that a worker is trained in all matters that are necessary to protect the health and safety of a worker. Employers must ensure that no worker is permitted to perform work unless the worker has been trained, and has sufficient experience to perform the work safely and in compliance with the Act and Regulations, or is under close and competent supervision.

### Employer's Responsibilities

Employers have the most control over the conditions of work and how it's done. Therefore, employers have the greatest degree of responsibility. They must:

- Provide a safe and healthy workplace
- When required, establish Occupational Health Committees or Representative and consult and cooperate with them in resolving health and safety concerns
- Ensure workers are not exposed to harassment
- Comply with The Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations
- Provide required safe work procedures
- Ensure equipment is provided and maintained
- Ensure workers are trained
- Ensure supervisors are competent
- Ensure workers are sufficiently supervised
- Have a copy of the Act and the applicable sections of the Regulations readily available.

### Supervisor's Responsibilities

Supervisors are critical to safe workplaces, being close to the work they can address and resolve worker concerns. They must:

- Know and comply with the Act and Regulations
- Know their company's safety program
- Know emergency procedures required under the legislation
- Ensure workers they supervise understand and comply with the Act and Regulations
- Support and cooperate with the Occupational Health Committee or Representative

### Workers Responsibilities

- Take reasonable care to protect their health and safety and the health and safety of other workers
- Not harass other workers
- Comply with the Act and Regulations
- Use the orientation and training provided to them
- Follow safe work practices
- Use protective equipment provided to them
- Support and cooperate with the Occupational Health Committee or Representative

# Tool Box Talk

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When accidents and incidents happen on the jobsite, we are always quick to point the finger at lack of training, not following practices or procedures, or even improper supervision. The idea that the hazards and dangers associated with the job were not properly communicated to all of the workers is often missed.

Tool Box Talks can go by many names, and although formats may vary, these meetings all serve one purpose: to inform employees and contract workers. Tool Box Talks are short, informal, meetings between management and the workers on a jobsite. The goal of these meetings is to reinforce current safe job procedures, inform workers of new and/or relevant procedures, review recent safety violations/incidents, and ensure workers are up-to-date on the information required to complete their work safely.

Always use a Tool Box Talk form to record the meeting topic, date, who was in attendance, and any follow-up actions to be taken. Not only do these forms help with consistency of record keeping, but they also ensure that nothing is missed. At the end of the meeting have management sign off on the form.

One of the most important aspects of a Tool Box Talk is giving workers an opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions. All employees have a right to participate in health and safety as it relates to their work and it is the supervisor or manager's responsibility to create an environment for them to do so. Once the meeting is over, and the form is filled out, it should be filed with other documented Tool Box Talks.

Remember that Tool Box Talks are short and informal, they are not meant to be intimidating. Use the opportunity to have fun and stay on top of what is necessary to keep safety culture a strong part of the business.

For a full listing of Tool Box Talk topics, visit: [www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks](http://www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks)

For a copy of the Tool Box Talk form, visit: [www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool\\_Box\\_Meeting.pdf](http://www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool_Box_Meeting.pdf)

## About the Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association

The Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA) is an industry-funded, membership-based, nonprofit organization that provides cost-effective, accessible safety training and advice to employers and employees in the construction industry throughout the province to reduce the human and financial losses associated with injuries. Registered March 20, 1995, the SCSA is, and has been since inception, committed to injury prevention. Serving almost 10,000 member companies with business offices in both Regina and Saskatoon, the major business units of the association are Advisory Services, Business Development, Corporate Services, Program Services and Training. The mission of the SCSA is constructing safety leadership in Saskatchewan and the vision is to create the safest construction environment in Canada.