

Tool Box Talk

Workplace Law

In 2024, there were 27 workplace fatalities in Saskatchewan. Improving safety measures and eliminating workplace injuries and illnesses is a responsibility we all share. Safety and prevention need to become a priority and fundamental aspect of the way we work each day.

Occupational Health and Safety in Saskatchewan is governed by *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* and *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulations, 2020*. The Act and Regulations apply to employers, supervisors, workers, self-employed persons, contractors, suppliers and owners. Legislation is 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:

1. The right to know,
2. The right to participate, and
3. The right to refuse unusually dangerous work.

Employers, supervisors and employees also have legal responsibilities and requirements outlined in legislation.

It is a legislated requirement in the province for each workplace to appoint an OHS representative or establish an Occupational Health Committee (OHC). A company that employs 9 or fewer 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 to protect the health and safety of workers within the workplace. An employer needs to ensure that a worker is trained in all matters that are necessary to protect their health and safety. Employers must ensure that every 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 Responsibilities

Employers have the most control over the conditions of work and how it's done. Therefore, they have the greatest degree of responsibility. They are required to:

- Provide a safe and healthy workplace.
- When required, establish an OHC or representative and consult and cooperate with them in resolving health and safety concerns.
- Ensure workers are not exposed to harassment.
- Comply with The Employment Act and OHS 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 Responsibilities

Supervisors are critical to safe workplaces. Being close to the work, they can address and resolve worker concerns. Responsibilities include:

- 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.

Worker Responsibilities

- Take reasonable care to protect their health and safety and the health and safety of other workers.
- Do not harass other workers.
- Comply with the Act and Regulations
- Use the orientation and training provided to them.
- Follow safe work practices.
- Use the protective equipment provided to them.
- Support and cooperate with the OHC or representative.