

# Occupational Health & Safety 2022



## Understanding Occupational Health and Safety in Saskatchewan

Most workplaces in Saskatchewan are provincially regulated. The legislation that deals with occupational health and safety in these workplaces is as follows:

- The Saskatchewan Employment Act (the Act); and
- The Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 1996; The Mines Regulations, 2003; and The Radiation Health and Safety Regulations, 2005.

The Act outlines the general, legislated safety standards and requirements for occupational health and safety in Saskatchewan, whereas the regulations give detailed provisions about how to meet the requirements of the Act.

OHS legislation is designed to protect workers from being injured on the job or suffering illness from unhealthy work environments.

Workers have three basic health and safety rights. They are:

- the right to know the hazards at work and how to control them;
- the right to participate in identifying, assessing, eliminating and controlling workplace hazards; and
- the right to refuse work they believe is unusually dangerous to themselves or others.

An unusual danger could be:

- a danger that is not normal for the job;
- a danger that would normally stop work; and
- a situation that a worker isn't trained, equipped or experienced to deal with



properly and safely.

Workers have the right to know about the hazards of their job and how to control and handle them safely. A hazard is any activity, situation or substance that could harm a worker. Workers should ask about the hazards at their workplace.

In the workplace, health and safety is a shared responsibility. All workplace parties are responsible for ensuring healthy and safe working conditions to the extent of their authority, knowledge and ability.

In OHS legislation, there are:

- duties of employers;
- duties of workers;
- duties of supervisors;
- duties of self-employed persons;
- duties of contractors;
- duties of prime contractors at certain multi-employer worksites;
- duties of owners; and

• duties of suppliers.

Employers have the most care and control in the workplace, and therefore have the most responsibility for health and safety.

An employer is a person/business who operates a place of employment and employs the service of one or more workers.

An employer's health and safety duties include:

- understanding and following health and safety requirements in the OHS legislation;
- ensuring the health, safety and welfare of workers;
- making sure that managers and supervisors are trained, supported and held accountable for fulfilling their workplace health and safety responsibilities;
- ensuring workers have the information, training, certification, supervision and experience to do their jobs safely;

• providing medical/first aid facilities as needed; and

• ensuring workers are not exposed to harassment in the workplace.

While at work, workers have a responsibility to work and act safely.

A worker is an individual, or supervisor, who is engaged in the service of an employer.

A worker's health and safety duties include:

- understanding and following health and safety requirements outlined in the OHS legislation;
- using safety equipment, machine guards, safety devices and personal protective equipment;
- co-operating with anyone exercising a duty imposed by occupational health and safety legislation; and
- not causing or participating in the harassment of others in the workplace.



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To all those putting a focus on Occupational Health and Safety this week, I commend you! The importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace means that the people we care about come home safely each day!



**Dr. Robert Kitchen MP**  
Souris-Moose Mountain



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## How did Occupational Safety and Health Week start?

NAOSH Week was first launched in June 1997, marked by an agreement between Canada, the United States and Mexico. CSSE's Canadian Occupational Health and Safety Week (COHS) had been observed from 1986-1996.

During the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) talks between the governments of Mexico, United States, and Canada, workplace safety within the boundaries of all three nations was discussed by government labour department representatives. Canada's representative suggested to his Mexican and American counterparts that their countries may wish to become involved in a similar endeavor to COHS Week.

Subsequently, CSSE was approached for permission and support to expand the COHS Week format and experience to Mexico and the United States. After many meetings between Labour Canada and the CSSE COHS Committee in 1995, the proposal to expand the COHS format into the North American arena was formalized with the CSSE Board of Directors at their spring 1996 meeting.

It was agreed that CSSE would adopt the North American concept and implement it in place of the Canadian Week. Labour Canada agreed to ensure that CSSE was the officially recognized safety organization responsible for NAOSH Week.

In September 1996, the agreement was taken to the NAFTA meeting and all parties agreed to the proposal. NAOSH Week was established.

The goal during Safety and Health Week is to focus employers, employees, partners and the public on

the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace, at home, and in the community.



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# Occupational Health & Safety 2022



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## Occupational Health and Safety rights and responsibilities

**What are my rights as a worker?**  
Under occupational health and safety legislation you have three rights:

- The right to know the hazards at work and how to control them
- The right to find and control workplace hazards
- The right to refuse work, which you believe is unusually dangerous

**Right to know**  
You have the right to get information about hazards in the workplace. Hazards are anything that has the potential to cause an injury or illness. If your employer doesn't tell you, ask. Find out where the potential hazards are at your workplace.

If you work in a restaurant, for example, your employer must explain the safe way to do your job, including how to:

- Handle the compressed gas cylinders used with soft drink dispensers
- Use and clean deep fryers
- Prevent repetitive strain and back injuries

**Right to participate**  
You can become involved in health and safety at work. Every Saskatchewan workplace with 10 or more workers must have a worker/management occupational health committee. High hazard workplaces with five to nine workers must have an occupational health and safety representative.

Occupational Health and Safety gives training courses to help committee members. A committee is to:

- Conduct regular inspections of the

workplace  
Assist workers to ensure their health and safety concerns are appropriately handled

Advise and assist employers with OHS-related policies, procedures and issues

Investigate when someone refuses to perform a job or task that they believe is unusually dangerous

If your supervisor is unable to help with your safety concerns, discuss them with your occupational health committee or your occupational health and safety representative, if one is present. If there is no safety committee or representative, call Occupational Health and Safety at 1-800-567-7233 toll free.

**What are my responsibilities?**

As a worker you have rights, but you also have responsibilities to work and act safely on the job. Under the legislation you are expected to:

- Cooperate with your employer, supervisor, occupational health committee, or occupational health and safety representative
- Know and follow company health and safety policies, practices and procedures
- Use safety equipment properly and as required by the employer
- Report accidents, occupational illnesses, and near misses
- Report health and safety hazards and concerns
- Refrain from causing, encouraging or participating in harassment
- Conduct yourself in a safe and responsible manner

Many jobs will require you to use personal protective equipment like hard hats. If you are working at heights exceeding three metres, the employer must provide a fall protection system. If head, respiratory, eye, hearing and/or face protection is required, your employer is required to provide it. In some workplaces, your employer is also required to provide safety footwear. Whatever the situation, make sure you use all safety equipment required for the work.

**What are my employer's responsibilities?**

An employer has many responsibilities under the legislation. Your employer must:

- Ensure a copy of the Saskatchewan Employment Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, 2020 are available for your reference. The legislation is available for your reference online.
- Provide a healthy and safe work environment
- Put first aid and emergency arrangements in place
- Promptly report incidents to Occupational Health and Safety
- Know and follow the appropriate legislation for the industry

Your employer must train you in all matters that are necessary to protect your health and safety before you start work, are assigned different duties or are moved to a new worksite. Also, your employer must pay you while you are being trained.

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