

# Benson Training Module

## Supervisor Health and Safety Awareness with Due Diligence



# An Introduction to Occupational Health and Safety

- Owners and managers need to understand that by spending time and dollars on adequate training, personal protective devices and the proper maintenance of their equipment, they are ensuring the well-being of their most important asset: their workers.
- Workers need to understand that a safe workplace and working safely begins, and ends, with them. Everyone in a workplace needs to work together to ensure a safe work environment for everyone.

# Legal Considerations

- The Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act requires employers to “take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker” (Section 25 (2)(h))
- The legal term used for this requirement is referred to as “due diligence”

# Due Diligence

- As a legal defense.
- As a management tool.
- A documented record.
- For measurement of effectiveness and enforcement.

# Due Diligence

- What does due diligence mean to your company?
- What measures does your company have in place to support their role in due diligence?
- A legal moral obligation

# Due Diligence

- “Due Diligence” is considered to be such a measure of prudence, activity, or assiduity, as is properly to be expected from, and ordinarily exercised by, a reasonable and prudent person under the particular circumstances, not measured by any absolute standard, but depending on the relative facts of the special case. (Turner 1995)

# Due Diligence

- Due Diligence does not require a business to prevent all unsafe conditions or acts, but it does require them to take precautions to prevent accidents that can reasonably be anticipated. (Stammer 1994)

# Due Diligence

- Working with care and showing that you care.
- A constantly advancing standard of care.
- Being active in communicating workplace hazards.
- The implementation of special preventative measures.

# Understanding the Act and the Role You Play

# The Foundation of Workplace Safety is the I.R.S

- I = Internal
- R = Responsibility
- S = System

**Define Your Role in Support of a Workplace Safety Culture**



# The Workplace Partnership

- The Occupational Health and Safety Act is designed to support an arrangement known as the **Internal Responsibility System (IRS)**. The spirit of the legislation is based on the premise that workers and management are in the best position to promote a safe workplace by developing policies and procedures and to provide training.

# Workers' Rights

- Right to know
- Right to participate
- Right to refuse unsafe work
- Bilateral work stoppage for dangerous work

# Understanding the Occupational Health and Safety Act

- The Occupational Health and Safety Act. – Who is responsible for what (Employers, Supervisors, Workers)
- The Regulations – Outlines how to go about what workers do.
- Guidelines, Codes and Standards incorporated by the Occupational Health and Safety Act or Regulations. – are an extension of the Act and Regulations.

# Who is Covered by the Act?

- All workers, supervisors and managers who work in Ontario
- The only exceptions to this rule are the federally controlled agencies such as banks, airports, and crown corporations.

# Definition of Employer

- **Employer:** a person who employs one or more workers or contracts for the services of one or more workers and includes a contractor or subcontractor who performs work or supplies services and a contractor or subcontractor who undertakes with an owner, constructor, contractor or subcontractor to perform work or supply services.

# Main Duties of Employers

- The equipment, materials and protective devices as prescribed are provided (section 25(1)(a)).
- The equipment, materials and protective devices provided by the employer are maintained in good condition (section 25(1)(b)).
- The measures and procedures prescribed are carried out in the workplace (section 25(1)(c)).
- The equipment, materials and protective devices provided by the employer are used as prescribed (section 25(1)(d)).

# Main Duties of Employers

- Provide information, instruction and supervision to a worker to protect the health or safety of the worker (section 25(2)(1)).
- When appointing a supervisor, appoint a competent person (section 25(2)(c)).
- Only employ in or about a workplace a person over such age as may be prescribed (section 25(2)(f)).
- Take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker (section 25(2)(h)).

# Main Duties of Employers

- Post, in the workplace, a copy of this Act and any explanatory material prepared by the ministry, both in English and the majority language of the workplace, outlining the rights, responsibilities and duties of workers (section 25(2)(i)).
- Prepare and review at least annually a written occupational health and safety policy and develop and maintain a program to implement that policy (section 25(2)(j)).

# Definition of a Supervisor

- **Supervisor:** a person who has charge of a workplace or authority over a worker.

# Duties of Supervisors

A supervisor must ensure that a worker:

- Works in the manner and with the protective devices, measures and procedures required by this Act and the regulations (section 27(1)(a)).
- Uses or wears the equipment, protective devices or clothing that the worker's employer requires to be used or worn (section 27(1)(b)).

# Duties of Supervisors

- Without limiting the duty imposed by subsection (1), a supervisor shall,
  - Advise a worker of the existence of any potential or actual danger to the health or safety of the worker of which the supervisor is aware (section 27(2)(a)).
  - Where so prescribed, provide a worker with written instructions as to the measures and procedures to be taken for the protection of the worker (section 27(2)(b)).
  - Take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker (section 27(2)(c)).

# Definition of a Worker

- **Worker:** a person who performs work or supplies services for a monetary compensation.
- Can be full or part time.
- Some age restrictions apply (Factory, Mines, Logging).

# Duties of Workers

- Work in compliance with the provisions of this Act and the regulations (section 28(1)(a)).
- User or wear the equipment, protective devices or clothing that the worker's employer requires to be used or worn (section 28(1)(b)).
- Report to his or her employer or supervisor the absence of or defect in any equipment or protective device of which the worker is aware and which may endanger himself, herself or another worker (section 28(1)(c)).

# Duties of Workers

- Report to his or her employer or supervisor any contravention of this Act or the regulations or the existence of any hazard of which he or she knows (section 28(1)(d)).

## No worker Shall

- Remove or make ineffective any protective device required by the regulations or by his or her employer, without providing an adequate temporary protective device and when the need for removing or making ineffective the protective device has ceased, the protective device shall be replaced immediately (section 28(2)(a)).

# Duties of Workers

- Use or operate equipment, machine, device or thing or work in a manner that may endanger himself, herself or any other worker (section 28(2)(b)).
- Engage in any prank, contest, feat of strength, unnecessary running or rough and boisterous conduct (section 28(2)(c)).

# Unsafe Work Refusal

- A worker may refuse to work, or do particular work, where he/she has reason to believe that:
  - Any equipment, machine, device or thing the worker is to use or operate is likely to endanger himself, herself or another worker (section 43(3)(a)).
  - The physical condition of the workplace or the part thereof in which he or she works or is to work is likely to endanger himself/herself (section 43(3)(b)).

## Unsafe Work Refusal cont'd...

- Any equipment, machine, device or thing he or she is to use or operate or the physical condition of the workplace or the part thereof in which he or she works or is to work is in contravention of this Act or the regulations and such contravention is likely endanger himself, herself or another worker (section 43(3)(c)).

# Bilateral Work Stoppage Due to Dangerous Circumstances

- Work can only be stopped if a dangerous circumstance exists (section 44(1)). In order to be classified as a dangerous circumstance under the Occupational Health and Safety Act three (3) separate criteria must be met:
  - Part of the Occupational Health and Safety Act or regulations are being violated.
  - The violation poses a danger or hazard to a worker.
  - Any delay in controlling the danger or hazard may seriously endanger a worker.

# Practicing Due Diligence

- Recognition/Identification of the specific hazards in the workplace.
- Understanding of the statutory/regulatory requirements relevant to the hazard.
- Implementation of measures to control/reduce the hazard.
- Monitoring the ensure compliance.
- Documentation of all the above.

# Health and Safety Control

**Occupational Injuries** – injuries that cause immediate physical harm to a worker as a result of performing work activities.

**Occupational illness** – medical conditions that are a result of performing or being exposed to work activities that cause health problems.

# Hazard Control Methods

- Pre-Contact Control
  - Policies and Procedures
  - Lockout and Tag out
  - Confined space training
  - Supervisor and Worker training
  - And more

# Hazard Control Methods

- Contact Controls
  - Suppression
  - Barriers
  - Modification
  - Isolation
  - Enhancing Strength

# Hazard Control Methods

- Post Contact
  - Give medical aid or assistance
  - Disable equipment
  - Investigate with JH&SC, Supervisor and project manager
  - Complete accident report
  - Review policy and make changes
  - Hold safety meeting to communicate issues

# Source-Path-Human

- **At the Source:** Engineering chemicals to travel through pipes or in closed lines.
- **Along the Path:** Using a hood overtop of a workstation to catch and ventilate fumes.
- **At the Human:** Wearing the necessary personal protective equipment as prescribed under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations

# Health Hazards

- Physical Hazards
  - Noise
  - Temperature
  - Vibration
  - Radiation

# Toxic Substances: Chemical and Biological Hazards

- **Chemical agents:** chemical substances that may cause health effects to the human body or its functions. Chemical agents include fuels, cleaners, paints, thinners, coolants and many more.
- **Biological agents:** organisms or toxic substances produced by living things that can cause illnesses or diseases in humans. Biological agents include bacteria, viruses, fungus, parasites and insects.

# Occupational Exposure Limits

- **Time weighted average exposure value – (TWAEV):** the average of the airborne concentrations that a worker can be exposed to during the course of an eight (8) hour workday or forty (40) hour workweek.
- **Short Term Exposure Value – (STEV):** the maximum concentration to which a worker can be exposed to in any fifteen (15) minute period.
- **Ceiling Exposure Value – (CEV):** the maximum concentration to which a worker can be exposed to at any time.

# Control of Toxic Substances

- Designated Substance Regulations.
- Regulation to Control Exposure to Biological or Chemical agents.
- Workplace Hazards Material Information System (WHMIS).

# Health Effects from Toxic Substances

- **Acute Effects:** a change in the body, parts of the body, or systems that happen a short time after exposure to a toxic substance.
- **Chronic Effects:** a change in the body, parts of the body or systems that happens over a long period of time for a one time exposure or multiple exposures to a toxic substance.
- **Systemic Effect:** an ill effect enters the body and causes harmful effects to the entire body system(s) or parts of the system.
- **Local Effect:** an ill affect that will harm the areas at the point of contact.

# Routes of Entry

- **Inhalation:** Breathing in through the nose and or mouth. Some substances can be absorbed through the mucus membrane of the nose and sinuses.
- **Ingestion:** A major route of entry is through the mouth and digestive tract. Once swallowed, the substances enter the digestive tract and may enter the blood stream.
- **Absorption:** Many substances can enter the body through the skin.
- **Injection:** A less common route of entry is by injection below the skin. This is not a very common hazard in most workplaces.

# Contributing to Health and Safety Hazards

- People
- Equipment
- Materials
- Environment
- Process

# Workplace Hazard Control: R.A.C. System

- Recognition
- Assessment
- Control

# Workplace Inspections

## Inspections

- **Spot Inspections** – performed by managers, supervisors and health and safety officials as part of the quality assurance program to promote and maintain health and safety awareness within the organization.
- **Pre-operation Inspection** – These inspections need to be completed prior to operating equipment or machinery to ensure that the equipment is functioning properly.

# Workplace Inspections cont...

- **Critical Parts Inspection** – Machinery and equipment that have the potential to cause accidents and injury if they are not maintained should, as a reasonable precaution, have a critical parts inspection or safety inspection to ensure that they are functioning correctly

# Hazard Classification

- **Class A** – Great danger/hazard
  - Immediate action required
- **Class B** – Moderate danger/hazard
  - Action required in seven (7) days
- **Class C** – Minor danger/hazard
  - Action required in thirty (30) days

# Workplace Inspection Procedure

- Create a Policy, Procedure and Inspection Schedule
- Preparing for the Inspection
- Performing the inspection (ISF-015)
- Reporting of Inspection
- Follow up of Inspection

# Accident Investigation

- All critical injuries as defined by the Occupational health and Safety Act:
  - Places life in jeopardy.
  - Produces unconsciousness.
  - Results in substantial blood loss.
  - Involves a fracture of leg/arm but not a toe/finger.
  - Involves the amputation of a leg/arm/foot/hand but not a toe/finger.
  - Burns to major part of body.
  - Loss of sight in an eye.
- All lost time injuries.

# Accidents to be Investigated

- Acute or chronic occupational illnesses.
- All medical aid injuries.
- Damage to equipment or loss of product exceeding five hundred dollars (\$500).
- All work stoppage involving one (1) or more workers (example: refusal of unsafe work, fire, explosion, chemical spills etc.).
- All incidents with the potential for serious injury or loss.

# Benefits of an Investigation

- Determine direct causes: An investigation will help uncover the direct causes of the accident, thereby allowing the management and Health and Safety Representative to make recommendations for corrective measures.
- Identifies contributing causes: Some accidents may be the result of many factors. Contributing factors may include, protective equipment, inadequate equipment safeguards, lack of proper instruction, etc.

# Benefits of an Investigation

- Prevent similar accidents: Once the direct and contributing causes are identified, corrective measures such as retaining workers, equipment design improvements, etc. can be implemented to prevent similar accidents.
- Creates a permanent record which allows safety specialists, Health and Safety Representatives and management to identify trends, inefficient layouts and designs, and substandard operating procedures. These reports can also be valuable in case of litigation or compensation claims.

# Accident Investigation Procedure

- Secure and manage the accident scene, provide first aid or medical attention to the injured worker(s). Try not to disturb the scene while getting the injured worker(s) help. Barricade the area off, and leave all equipment and materials in place where they were found.
- Notify the appropriate people of the accident.
- Investigate accident scene.

# Accident Investigation Procedure cont...

- Analyze data looking for reasons/causes of the accident and try and make suggestions or recommendations to protect employees from a reoccurrence. When reviewing data consider the following contributing factors.

# Supervisor Health and Safety Awareness in 5 Steps

## Step 1: Make a difference

### **Why the supervisor is so important**

When a person is hired or promoted to the position of a supervisor, it usually means a pay raise. But it also means more responsibilities, including legal responsibilities relating to the health and safety of the workers under your supervision. It's a natural thing for a new supervisor to wonder if he or she is up to the challenge. In fact, asking yourself that question will help you figure out what additional information or instruction you might need to do your job well.

People expect a lot for a supervisor, no matter how big or small the workplace is. A healthy and safe workplace matters to everyone, and the OSHA expects supervisors to be the front-line guardians of healthy and safe workers, whether the work is performed on a construction project, in a healthcare facility, an industrial establishment or in a mine. Every good employer also expects that from you, and so do the people you supervise.



A supervisor has to play a lot of different roles, often at the same time. Think about the roles that people play at a basketball game. From the list below, check off the roles that you think apply to a supervisor's work:

- ✓ Coach
- ✓ Trainer
- ✓ Referee
- ✓ Cheerleader
- ✓ Captain

If you didn't check off all of the above boxes, go ahead and do it now. Because chances are you will be called upon to play any and all of the above roles as you strive to keep your workplace healthy, safe and productive.

As a supervisor, you are a crucial part of your workplace's Internal Responsibility System. This is a very important concept for the workplace health and safety and you will learn more about this throughout this training.

The number of people in Ontario who suffer a work-related illness or injury each would fill the seats of a dozen big hockey arenas. New and young workers in Ontario are four times more likely to get hurt during the first month on the job than at any other time. They often aren't told about or understand the hazards of the job. They don't know what to expect from their employer and supervisor. Sometimes they aren't sure what questions to ask; sometimes they don't even know who to ask. That's where you come in. It's a big challenge, but it's also a big opportunity to make a difference.



## Your duties as a supervisor

Under the OHSA, every supervisor is also considered to be a worker and has the same workplace duties and rights as a worker. But the OHSA also gives you specific duties related to your role as a supervisor, including:

- Telling workers about hazards and dangers and responding to their concerns.
- Showing workers how to work safely and making sure they follow the law, and the workplace health and safety policies and procedures.
- Making sure workers wear and use the right protective equipment.
- Doing everything reasonable in their circumstances to protect workers from being hurt or getting a work-related illness.

# Supervisor Health and Safety Awareness in 5 Steps

The OHSA requires every employer to prepare a written occupational health and safety policy for that workplace and to develop and maintain a program to implement that policy. One of your tasks as a supervisor is to put your program into action. Here is how you do it:

1. **You know the OHSA and the various Regulations attached to it that apply to your workplace.** A supervisor who knows and understands the OHSA and Regulations can make sure workers follow the law, and can identify ways to make the workplace safer. The various Regulations under OHSA contain detailed requirements about how to make the workplace safe. For example, several Regulations, such as the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) Regulation, explain what workers need in order to work safely with chemical and other hazardous materials or designated substances – things like training, warning labels on products and information sheets. There are also Regulations that specify requirements for different types of workplaces, such as construction projects, health care facilities, industrial establishments and mines.

2. **You make sure workers wear and use the right protective equipment.** Your employer is responsible for telling you what types of protective equipment, device or clothing they require workers to use or wear, and both of you are responsible for making sure the workers are using or wearing it. That means you need to know and understand the requirements in the Act and its regulations about equipment, devices and clothing, as well as your employer's health and safety policy, program and work procedures.
3. **You tell workers about the hazards in their work.** Every workplace has hazards, hazards include everything in the workplace that can hurt workers or make them sick. A supervisor must know and be able to explain the actual and potential dangers involved in the work he or she is supervising, and ensure that the workers do their work safely. A few Regulations even say that you have to give written instructions that tell the workers what steps and procedures must be followed to stay safe. You need to know about these Regulations if they apply to the work you are supervising. Your general duties as a supervisor also apply to the prevention of workplace violence.
4. **You plan the work so that it can be done safely.** The people you supervise are relying on your knowledge and experience of the work to make sure it's done safely. The OHS Act requires employers to make sure you have the necessary competence to be a supervisor. Later we will look at this responsibility in more detail.

5. **You make sure workers know and follow through on their health and safety duties.** It's your job to monitor the work, to remind the workers of their health and safety duties if necessary, to show them how to work safely, and to enforce the employer's workplace health and safety policies and procedures if they aren't being followed.

Doing the five things we have just reviewed will help you to carry out your duties under the OHS. To make sure you're doing your job right, here are a few important questions you should ask yourself:

- Do I understand the OHS and the Regulations that apply to the work we do?
- Can I explain these sections of the OHS and regulations to the workers?
- Am I informing the workers about hazards?
- Have I planned the work so that it can be done safely?
- Am I making sure the workers wear or use protective gear, clothing and devices as required by the employer?

# Supervisor Health and Safety Awareness in 5 Steps

## Duties of the employer and the worker

As you can see, a supervisor has a lot of serious responsibilities. To carry out those responsibilities you need the help of your employer and of the people you supervise. The Occupational Health and Safety Act gives duties to employers and workers that will help you do your job.

The OHS Act says it's the employer's duty to appoint a "competent person" as a supervisor. To be a competent supervisor under the OHS Act, you must:

1. Have knowledge, training and experience to organize work for your workers.
2. Be familiar with the OHS Act and the regulations that apply to the work you are supervising.
3. Have knowledge of any potential or actual danger to health and safety in the workplace.

Your employer must ensure that you are competent **before** you start supervising. This includes ensuring that you know the OHS Act and the Regulations that apply to the work, and that you know about any potential or actual dangers to health and safety in the work you are supervising. If your workplace is a small one and the supervisor and employer are the same person, then that one person must comply with both employer and supervisor duties.



Here are some things the OSHA says the employer must do:

Where there are more than five workers regularly employed in the workplace:

- Create and review on an annual basis a health and safety policy
- Develop a program to implement that policy
- Post the policy in the workplace

For all workplaces:

- Make sure workers and supervisors know about hazards in the work they do and provide them with the information, instruction and supervision to protect their health and safety
- Take steps to eliminate hazards in the workplace, and where elimination is not possible, to control them
- Make sure workers use and wear protective equipment, material and devices where required by the Regulations
- Do everything reasonable in their circumstances to protect workers from being hurt or getting a work-related illness.

If you work in construction, it's important to know that the constructor of the project also has duties to keep the workplace safe. This means that on a construction site, the constructor and your employer both have distinct responsibilities under the law. Sometimes the constructor is also your employer, in which case that one person must comply with both constructor and employer duties.



The OHSA also gives workers certain duties that support your role as supervisor:

- Workers have to follow the law and workplace health and safety policies and procedures
- Workers have to use and wear the protective equipment required by the employer
- Workers have to act in a way that won't hurt themselves or anyone else
- If workers see anything that's unsafe or that goes against the Act, they have to tell you or the employer about it, so that you can take the necessary steps with your employer to solve the problem.

They have to report to you or the employer the absence of or any defect in any equipment or protective device of which they become aware.

As a supervisor, you can make a difference in your workplace, but you can't do it alone. You need your employer and workers you supervise to do their respective part to keep the workplace safe. Like you, they need to be aware of their health and safety duties under the OHSA and regulations. That's the first step in creating an effective Internal Responsibility System. Prevention starts here, but it doesn't end here.



# Supervisor Health and Safety Awareness in 5 Steps

## Step 2: Lead the Way

### **Teamwork and the Internal Responsibility System (IRS)**

People in successful workplaces understand that a safe and healthy workplace is a productive workplace. They also know that they have to work together to create and maintain a safe and healthy workplace. As you have seen, the Occupational Health and Safety Act is very clear about the different roles of the employer, supervisor and worker, and how those roles cooperate to make a safe and healthy workplace. This is the Internal Responsibility System, or IRS as it's commonly known.

Communication is a big part of the IRS in any workplace, and the ability to communicate effectively is an important skill for any supervisor. To communicate effectively, you need to be good at both listening and speaking. You need to be a leader as well as a supervisor. A leader adds to the supervisor's basic role of overseeing the work by listening to the workers, trying to understand their point of view, supporting them when they need help, and always setting a good example.



As the person in the highest leadership position, the employer has the most important role in creating an effective Internal Responsibility System in the workplace. You need the support of the employer to carry out your supervisor duties, and the workers need to know that their supervisor and employer will listen to their concerns and work with them to recognize, assess and control hazards. In fact, the OSHA says workers have the legal right to expect that support.

You should inform the employer of any health and safety concern, even if you have the ability and authority to handle it yourself. Your employer may need to know about the problem in order to fulfill his or her duties.

The logo for Benson, featuring the name in a stylized, yellow, cursive font with a black outline, set against a blue background.

# Supervisor Health and Safety Awareness in 5 Steps

## The three rights of workers

The OHSA gives workers three important rights:

- ✓ The right to know about workplace hazards and what to do about them
- ✓ The right to participate in solving workplace health and safety problems
- ✓ The right to refuse work that they believe is unsafe

As a supervisor, it's important to know and understand those three worker rights. They are the heart of the OHSA and the Internal Responsibility System and they connect directly to your duties as a supervisor and those of the employer. Here's how:

**The right to know.** It's your job to tell the workers about any health and safety hazards and to show them how to work safely. This supports workers' right to know about hazards to which they might be exposed. For example, the law says workers have to receive information and training on the chemicals or hazardous materials that are used, handled or stored at work. This information is available either on warning labels or information sheets. Sometimes you may also have to give the worker written instructions on how to do the work.



The employer supports the workers' right to know by making sure they get:

- Information about the hazards in the work they are doing.
- Training to do the work in a healthy and safe way.
- Competent supervision to stay healthy and safe. That means the employer made sure that you know how to do your job.

**The right to participate.** As a supervisor, you support the workers' right to participate in health and safety by encouraging them to get involved. There are various ways to be involved in workplace health and safety such as asking questions, raising concerns and giving positive feedback. One of the most effective ways workers can participate in health and safety is by becoming a health and safety representative or a joint health and safety committee member.

Number of workers	Legislative Requirement
1 - 5	There is no legislative requirement for a JHSC or a Health and Safety representative. However, if your workplace uses designated substances a JHSC is required.
6 - 19	One Health and Safety representative, selected by the employees they represent, is required
20 - 49	A JHSC is required. The committee must have at least two (2) members
50+	A JHSC is required. The committee must have at least four (4) members



In most workplaces with 6 to 19 regularly employed workers, the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* makes the employer responsible for ensuring that the workers choose a health and safety representative. In most workplaces where there are 20 or more regularly employed workers, the OHSA says the employer is responsible for making sure a joint health and safety committee is set up. The committee has to have at least two people on it, and one of them has to be chosen by the workers. Workplaces with 50 or more regularly employed workers must have a JHSC with at least four people on it, with two of them chosen by workers. Generally, JHSCs must have a worker representative and an employer representative who are certified members. (The requirements for JHSCs do not apply to construction projects at which work is expected to last less than three months.)

The committee has many powers, including the power to identify workplace health and safety problems and recommend to the employer ways to solve problems and improve health and safety in the workplace. For example, a member of the committee who represents workers must regularly inspect the workplace. Information from these inspections is brought back to the committee. The committee then makes recommendations to the employer to improve health and safety. The employer has to respond to these recommendations within 21 days. Because the employer and the workers are represented on the committee, everybody has a role in recognizing, assessing and controlling hazards. More details are provided in the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skill's Development's guide to JHSCs (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/guide-health-and-safety-committees-and-representatives>).

In smaller workplaces, the health and safety representative has a similar role in helping improve health and safety conditions. Their duties and powers, like those of a joint health and safety committee, include inspecting the workplace regularly and making recommendations to the employer about how to fix hazards and solve other health and safety problems.

It's important to know that the OHS Act strictly forbids the employer or a supervisor from firing, disciplining or even threatening a worker for doing what the OHS Act expects them to do. This includes workers reporting hazards to you or asking you or the employer to do what the OHS Act expects you or the employer to do.

**The right to refuse.** The third right of workers in the OHS Act is the right to refuse to do work that they have reason to believe is unsafe for them or another worker. As a supervisor, you respect that right by taking “every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect workers” and by complying with the process for work refusals specified in the Act. When a worker comes to tell you that he or she is refusing to do particular work because it is likely to endanger him or herself, you must look into the worker’s concerns and do everything you can to help the employer address them. Most of the time, the employer or you will be able to solve the problem with the worker’s health and safety representative or JHSC member. But if you can’t agree on how to solve it and the worker still feels the work is unsafe, a Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development inspector will be called in to investigate.

There is a detailed description of the work refusal process, and the steps to take, in the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development’s Guide to the Occupational Health and Safety Act (<https://www.ontario.ca/document/guide-occupational-health-and-safety-act>).



Supervisors are also workers. As a worker, you too may exercise the right to refuse unsafe work in the circumstances specified in the OHSA. As we saw earlier, the OHSA prohibits the employer from taking actions against a worker for such things as complying with the OHSA or seeking its enforcement.

Together, the OHSA duties support a strong internal responsibility system in the workplace. Different people have different roles or positions, but they all have the same goal. As a supervisor, you can be a leader in making your workplace safer and healthier, but you can't do it alone.



# Supervisor Health and Safety Awareness in 5 Steps

## Step 3: The Supervisor's Toolkit

### **Know the hazards in your workplace**

One of your jobs as a supervisor is to help plan and organize the work. This is a big job. To do it well, you need to understand the work and the hazards associated with it. You also need to know how to eliminate or control those hazards and to make sure the health and safety program implemented in your workplace is effective in doing so.

At the root of every work-related death injury or sickness is a hazard of some kind. Hazards can take many forms. Sometimes more than one hazard can combine to make an even bigger hazard. Here are some of the most common hazards in Ontario workplaces:

- Repeating the same movements over and over, especially if you are in an awkward position or you use a lot of force. Think of someone who bends down all day, or someone who lifts heavy things over and over again.
- Slipping, tripping or falling. Think of something as simple as spilled coffee on the floor, a cluttered work area or a raised platform with no guardrails.

- Motorized vehicles. Think of being hit by a dump truck that is backing up on a construction site, or someone getting hit by a forklift truck in a warehouse or on a loading dock.
- Using or working near machinery. Many workers have been killed or seriously injured by the equipment they were operating.
- Workplace violence. It can happen to workers in many situations, such as retail employee working alone at night, or a health care worker in a hospital or in the community.

You also need to think about less apparent hazards – things like chemicals, fumes, toxic dust or germs and viruses in workplaces such as schools, labs and healthcare facilities. Some of these hazards can make a worker very sick. Sometimes the worker gets sick right away; other times, the worker doesn't know he or she is sick until months later or even years. That's why it's important that you know about these hazards.

One of the **employer's duties** is to make sure that the supervisor knows enough and has the experience and necessary training to keep the workers safe. One of a **supervisor's duties** is to inform workers of health and safety hazards. If a worker sees a hazard or practice that goes against the OSHA or workplace health and safety policies or procedures, that worker has a duty to tell their supervisor or employer. This should be done as soon as possible so that the hazard can be fixed. That's how employers, supervisors and workers come together to make the workplace safer. This is an example of the **Internal Responsibility System** in action.

## Dealing with hazards

RACE is a commonly used process for dealing with hazards. RACE stands for Recognize, Assess, Control and Evaluate. These steps, when done in order, help the workplace identify and control hazards. Supervisors are encouraged to communicate with workers, the employer, and the joint health and safety committee/health and safety representative throughout this type of process.

**Recognize** where there are potential hazards in the workplace. Here's how you do that:

- Watch the work as it's being done.
- Talk to workers about the work and the areas where work happens.
- Participate in workplace inspections.
- Look at reports and records that your workplace has about the work.
- Listen to the concerns workers have about the they're doing.

**Assess** the hazard. You need to understand how likely it is that a worker will get hurt or made sick by the hazard. To assess the hazard, you ask these questions:

1. How does the hazard compare to legislation, standards and guidelines?
2. How can the worker get hurt or sick?
3. How likely is the hazard to affect worker health and safety?
4. How badly could the worker get hurt or sick?

**Control** the hazards by looking for ways to get rid of the hazard or to make the job safer:

- The safest thing to do is to remove the hazard.
- If removing the hazard is not possible, look for ways to prevent workers from coming in contact with the hazard, such as separating the hazard from the worker.

If neither of the above solutions protects the worker, workers can use protective equipment, devices and other materials to help keep them safe. It's your obligation as a supervisor to make sure workers use this equipment where required by the OSHA and Regulations or by the employer.

**Evaluate** how well the hazard controls are working:

- Talk about the work to the workers who report to you.
- Watch them do their work.
- Listen to what they say and look for ways to **improve health and safety**.

The RACE process is one good way to get a close look at the work and the hazards associated with it. You are always keeping your eyes and ears open for hazards; you pay attention to the way people are doing their work; and you listen to their concerns.

If you find a hazard, you know that you need to do something about it. You use your experience and the information and training you got from your employer to help you make decisions on what to do. If you don't know how to deal with the hazard, talk to your employer. You can also involve the health and safety representative or JHSC if there is one. And you can refer to external sources such as legislation, standards, codes or expert consultants to help you solve the problem. If necessary, you can stop the work until you know it's safe.



## Handling problems as they arise

The RACE process is a way to help you deal with hazards, but it isn't everything. You also need to monitor the work. This means that you need to take steps to make sure the workers understood the information you gave them and are following the workplace safety procedures AND are using or wearing their protective equipment. If you see a worker exposed to a hazard, it's your job to talk to them about it. You have to make sure the OHSA, any applicable regulations and the workplace safety procedures are being followed, and you have to enforce those procedures.

If someone comes to you with a health and safety concern or to report a close call, you need to listen to them, because these are warning signs of potentially serious problems ahead. You also need to inform your employer of these concerns. If you can solve a problem on your own or with the worker, you should do that. If you need help, you should ask your employer. Your health and safety representative or JHSC are also there to provide information. Reports from workplace inspections by health and safety representatives or JHSCs, along with incident investigations done internally or by the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, are important tools in your supervisor's toolkit. When they are used effectively, they help to control hazards and prevent injuries.

As you can see, there is definitely a lot to know when you're a supervisor. It's an important role, and if you don't carry out the duties that are assigned to you by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, you can face consequences. For example, a Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development inspector could issue an order against you. Also, you could be charged with an offence.

This is serious work and it may seem overwhelming at first. But you don't have to do it alone.



# Supervisor Health and Safety Awareness in 5 Steps

## Step 4: You Are Not Alone

### Getting the help you need

Many supervisors are promoted to that position because they were good at their previous job. They learned as much as they could about that job, the hazards involved and how to work safely. They knew how to do their work in a safe and healthy way. But they may not be too sure about what's involved in supervising work. Now they are a supervisor and their duties have changed. But do they know everything they need to know about this new role?

That's the question you should ask yourself. You may know a bit about the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and the various regulations that are attached to it, but do you know enough about the specific requirements in the OHS Act and about which of its regulations apply to your workplace? You may have the necessary experience in the work you are being called upon to supervise, but do you know enough about what's actually involved in supervising workers?

We have reviewed various duties the OSHA assigns to you as a supervisor. If you feel that you don't have the necessary knowledge, training and experience to carry out those duties, it's important that you talk to the employer. Tell him or her you are happy to be a supervisor, but that you need more information and training in certain areas to do your job. Perhaps you need to attend a training course on the OSHA and regulations. Maybe you need to learn more about how to recognize, assess and control hazards and to evaluate the hazard controls. Maybe you want to know more about leadership skills and communication, about how to develop your listening skills and about what the workers expect from their supervisor. Don't hesitate to ask the employer for help if you feel that you don't know enough about something.

Even when you have the necessary knowledge, training and experience to be a competent supervisor, fixing a health and safety problem will sometimes be out of your control. Maybe it's a hazard that affects the whole staff. Or it might cost a lot of money to fix it and you may not be able to approve that expense. If that happens, you need to let your employer know that you need help with solving the problem. Bring the ideas you got from the workers and from the health and safety rep or committee. Together you can figure out the best way to eliminate or control the hazard. The workers need to know that you will do what's right for them, and you need to know that the employer will do what's right for everyone.

The OSHA supports a coordinated approach to workplace health and safety by giving everybody duties according to their position in the workplace. The higher your position is, the more duties you have. When you put all of these duties together, you get a strong IRS in the workplace.



Sometimes you might not understand what the OHSA and regulations are telling you to do, and even your employer might not fully understand. That's when you need outside help. For example, the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development website offers many helpful resources, including a downloadable Guide to the Occupational Health and Safety Act that provides a plain language explanation of the various parts of the Act.

Ontario has a health and safety “system” that’s made up of many organizations. The information below explains more about who they are.

## **Ontario’s Health and Safety System Partners**

### **Ministry of Labour**

Develops, communicates and enforces occupational health and safety requirements and employment standards. Develops, coordinates and implements strategies to prevent workplace injuries and illnesses and can set standards for health and safety training.

1-877-202-0008

[www.labour.gov.on.ca](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca)

### **Workers Health & Safety Centre**

An occupational health and safety training centre for workers, representatives, supervisors and employers.

1-888-869-7950

[www.whsc.on.ca](http://www.whsc.on.ca)



## **Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers**

Six medical clinics located across Ontario that provide occupational health services and information.

1-877-817-0336

[www.ohcow.on.ca](http://www.ohcow.on.ca)

## **Health and Safety Associations**

Four health and safety associations that provide sector specific consulting, training, products and services.

- **Infrastructure Health and Safety Association** – serves electrical, construction and transportation sectors.  
1-800-263-5024
- **Public Services Health and Safety Association** – serves health, education and municipal sectors.  
1-877-250-7444
- **Workplace Safety North** – serves mining, pulp and paper and forestry sectors.  
1-888-730-7821
- **Workplace Safety and Prevention Services** – serves industrial, farming and services sectors.  
1-877-494-9777



## **Workplace Safety and Insurance Board**

Administers Ontario's no-fault workplace insurance for employers and their workers.

1-800-387-0750

[www.wsib.on.ca](http://www.wsib.on.ca)

All of the above organizations are part of Ontario's health and safety system.

Another place you can go for information is the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. They have information and fact sheets on their website. If you are having trouble finding information, you can ask questions by telephone at 1-800-668-4284, or through their website.

The help you can get from these external sources is not just for you – it's for sharing with others in your workplace. That's what the OHSA expects you to do. To be a good supervisor you have to do more than just know things, you have to put what you know into action. Prevention starts here, but it doesn't end here.



# Supervisor Health and Safety Awareness in 5 Steps

## Step 5: Be a Role Model

### **How to send the right message**

Telling people to work in a safe and healthy way isn't all there is to being a supervisor. Sometimes people want to take shortcuts because they think it will help them get the job done faster. Sometimes they're tired, or they're having a bad day. There will be days when you're tired or having a bad day, too. But you need to be a role model for safety at all times.

As a supervisor you need to follow the workplace safety procedures, wear your personal protective equipment and stay safe. If you don't do those things, others will think it's okay to not follow the workplace safety procedures. People are watching you and learning from what you do. How you supervise the work, the way you think about the work and talk about it, can affect the safety of the people you supervise.



You want to help the workers choose the safe path every time. You can help them by being easy to talk to and answering their questions. But the best thing you can do is to “practice what you preach”. That means always complying with the OSHA and following the healthy and safe work practices in your workplace. It means explaining how to work safely and correcting unsafe work situations whenever you see them.

As we saw earlier, the OSHA supports a coordinated approach to workplace health and safety. To be a part of this, you have to understand your legal obligations and put what you know into action. So does everyone else in the workplace. That's how the Internal Responsibility System works.

- If the employer knows about a hazard and doesn't take steps to eliminate or control it, as well as make sure the workers are told about it and how to deal with it, that employer is not doing what the law requires.
- If the supervisor knows about a hazard and doesn't explain to the workers how to deal with it, that supervisor is not doing what the law requires.
- If the worker knows about a hazard and doesn't report it to the supervisor or the employer, that worker is not doing what the law requires.
- The Internal Responsibility System is all about people cooperating to recognize, assess and control hazards in the workplace and to evaluate hazard controls. Every supervisor has a key role to play in that system.



Remember when you were starting out on a job and you felt a bit overwhelmed by all the things you didn't know? Remember that one person – a supervisor or a co-worker – who took the time to show you things?

We all have someone we can think of who helped us settle into a job. They gave us useful tips. They kept us out of harm's way until we learned what we needed to know for ourselves. Well, now it's your turn to give back. You are the supervisor. You are the person with the know-how and experience. If you don't feel that you know enough to carry out your health and safety duties as a supervisor, it's important that you talk to your employer and make sure you get the information you need.

Keep an eye on the new worker and everyone else you supervise. Even those who don't ask you questions are counting on you to show them the right way to do things. By always showing your commitment to health and safety, the people you supervise will follow your example. Prevention starts here, but it doesn't end here.

The logo for Benson, featuring the name in a stylized, yellow, bubbly font with a black outline, set against a blue background.