

Resources

Resource Sheet 1: Set Standards

Standards set the minimum level of what is acceptable and expected in health and safety practices.

Standards are important because they:

- clarify the level of performance that's expected and acceptable
- provide a benchmark for evaluating health and safety practices.

Often, the government sets standards. The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* sets out minimum standards for businesses in Ontario. Included in it are the requirements for joint health and safety committees (JHSC) or health and safety representatives, workplace inspections, investigations and reporting requirements.

Other groups who publish health and safety standards include:

- Canadian Standards Association,
- Standards Council of Canada, and
- Canadian General Standards Board.

Your workplace may have set its own standards in the form of rules, policies and procedures. Examples of common workplace rules, policies and procedures include:

- no eating in the work area
- replacement of hearing protection annually
- first aid retraining for all employees
- scheduled daily cleanup procedures.

Examples of standards include:

- specific eye protective equipment
- particular safety footwear
- particular kinds of lift trucks.

Setting standards and establishing policies and expectations is often not enough. You may have to develop procedures to support them and measure compliance with them. Work procedures give step-by-step instructions for particular tasks or processes. Safe work procedures are written directions that include health and safety processes. Clear, safe work procedures are valuable communication and training tools.

Resource Sheet 2: Communication

Communicating effectively means that your message is received and understood. Good communicators know their audience. Be careful about making assumptions about what you think people already know. If you're not sure that a message has been understood, ask audience members to repeat it in his/her own words.

Before sending out a message of any kind, ask yourself:

- Is the message written/spoken in a language that is easily understood by the audience?
- Is it written/spoken at the proper comprehension level for the audience?
- Are there any barriers to understanding such as sight or hearing impairments?

Keys to Successful Communication

- Organize your message logically.
- Use the best medium (written, spoken or visual) for your message and for your audience.
- Check that the message has been understood.

Resource Sheet 3: Training

Workplace training occurs in many different ways: planned training sessions, demonstrations by a supervisor, or watching a colleague.

Training is effective when it is:

- based on adult learning principles (see below)
- delivered in a positive, supportive manner, for example:
 - classroom training when group discussion and sharing of ideas is encouraged
 - shop floor or field training when practical hands-on experience using tools or equipment is involved
 - computer-based training when independent learning is needed
- presented at a comprehension level and in a language that is easily understood by all participants
- focused on opportunities to practise what is learned
- relevant and applicable to the participants' job duties.

Ask for an evaluation of the training session and follow up with participants. Ensure that they're able to apply what they learned.

Document the training and have employees sign the training record.

Principles of Adult Learning

- We learn what we see as relevant.
- We learn best by doing.
- We learn more when we participate and train others.
- We learn better when we know where we are heading.
- We learn best when we get feedback.
- We learn best when we see the whole and then are taught the building blocks.
- We learn best when we feel valued by the organization.

Resource Sheet 5:

Evaluating for Health and Safety

Evaluating for health and safety means determining if the standards and procedures are working as they should.

- Is the health and safety policy being implemented?
- Are the health and safety goals being met?
- Is communication to and from employees clear and understood?
- Is training being completed and are employees benefiting from it?

There are many methods for evaluations of health and safety, including:

- Walking around to see if a process or task is being completed correctly and safely
- Examining workplace records such as first aid reports to look for trends
- Asking employees for feedback
- Assessing injury and illness statistics and WSIB claims.

Keeping track of these evaluations is helpful, particularly when implementing new programs.

Resource Sheet 6: Acknowledge Success and Make Improvements

Recognize and acknowledge behaviours and conditions that support company standards through:

- performance appraisals,
- employee rewards,
- public recognition of individual contributions to improved performance, or
- an incentive program.

When evaluation indicates a need for improvement, you can use co-operative mechanisms to significantly improve your company's performance. Your objectives might include:

- returning performance to company expectations,
- raising company standards and expectations, or
- improving application of the health and safety management system.

You can also encourage the development of teams to solve problems and set company standards. Teams may be of any size and composition. They may include management, supervisors, lead hands, joint health and safety committee members, health and safety representatives, health and safety professionals, WSIB representatives, suppliers' representatives, and others appropriate to the issue or problem at hand.