

# Occupational Health & Safety

## What is the Occupational Health and Safety Act?

*Alberta's Occupational Health and Safety Act (Act)* is a law that sets out the basic duties and obligations of employers and workers to promote the health and safety of workers throughout the province.

The Act states that employers and workers should concern themselves with safe workplaces, adequate training, and enforcement of safety regulations. The government's role is to make sure that the rules are followed to prevent work-related incidents, injuries and illnesses, and to make sure Albertans are educated about workplace health and safety.

Fair, safe and healthy workplaces help keep the province prosperous and protect the well-being of Alberta's labour force. Employment, Immigration and Industry (EII) continues to develop and monitor employment standards, occupational health and safety and labour relations legislation to keep workplaces fair and safe.

One of the resources EII uses to monitor workplaces is the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Officer, who visits places of employment to detect unsafe or unhealthy working conditions. OHS officers receive extensive training on current health and safety legislation to fully understand the rights and responsibilities of employers and workers. EII employs 83 officers in Alberta to assist employers in complying with health and safety legislation.

For more information on the Occupational Health and Safety Officers, contact Gerry Wagner, Manager, Compliance Programs Workplace Health and Safety, EII at (780) 422-6205.

Sharon Chadwick from Alberta Occupational Health and Safety, will present at the CRDHA ACC Event, Thursday, April 28, 2011.

## A Few Questions To Ask Your Employer

By actively promoting health and safety in the workplace, employers send a message to their staff that they are valued. If you're thinking about working for a particular employer, getting ready for a job interview, or about to start a new job, ask these questions. Work isn't just about benefits, holidays and getting paid. Find out about how serious the employer will be about your safety. Here are some questions you should ask, as well as the kind of answers you should expect to hear.

### 1. Where are fire extinguishers, first aid kits, and other emergency equipment located?

The law requires your employer to control the hazards at your workplace. This includes providing fire extinguishers and specialized equipment required to control the hazards that may arise during emergencies.

### 2. What do I do if I get hurt?

Who is the first aid person? The law requires your employer to provide first aid equipment and services at your workplace. This

means that the right type of first aid kit must be on-site and an appropriate number of individuals must be trained in first aid and available at all times. Find out who the first aiders are in case you ever need their help. If you do get injured and require first aid, you are required by law to report the injury to your employer as soon as possible.

### 3. What are my health and safety responsibilities?

The law requires you to take reasonable care to protect the health and safety of you and your co-workers. This includes cooperating with your employer by following the employer's safety rules and taking required safety training.

Remember that if you've been asked to do something that may endanger you or your co-workers, and have not been given adequate training or supervision, the law requires you to refuse to do that work.

### 4. Who do I ask if I have a health and safety question?

The first person to ask should always be your employer, usually a supervisor, since they know your workplace best. However, you can contact the Workplace Health and Safety Contact Centre, by dialing toll free 1-866-415-8690 and talk with one of our staff, or reach us on the Internet at [www.worksafely.org](http://www.worksafely.org). All calls are kept confidential.

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