

# Occupational Health and Safety Legislation

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The purpose of Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) legislation is to protect employees against hazards on the job by establishing a minimum set of expectations for all workplace parties (e.g. employer, supervisor, employee). OHS legislation outlines the general rights and responsibilities of all workplace parties for health and safety.

Every province, territory and the federal government have their own OH&S legislation. Most often the details of OH&S legislation will vary slightly from one jurisdiction to another. This can often lead to misunderstanding or uncertainty with respect to health and safety as boilermakers work between provinces. However, irregardless of jurisdiction, some basic health and safety elements remain the same, such as:

## Worker Rights (The 3 'R's)

- **to refuse** unsafe work
- **to participate** in the workplace health and safety activities through Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) or worker health and safety representative
- **to know** actual and potential dangers in the workplace

## Worker Responsibilities

- to work in compliance with OH&S Act, regulations and company policies
- to use personal protective equipment and clothing as directed by the employer
- to report workplace hazards and dangers
- to participate in OH&S training

## Supervisor's Responsibilities

- to advise workers of potential and actual hazards
- to take every reasonable precaution in the circumstances for the protection of workers
- to ensure that workers use prescribed protective equipment devices

## Employer's Responsibilities

- to take every reasonable precaution to ensure workplace is safe
- to establish and maintain a joint health and safety committee, or cause workers to select at least one health and safety representative
- to consult with and cooperate with the joint health and safety committee or worker health and safety representative
- to train employees about any potential hazards
- to supply personal protective equipment and ensure workers know how to use the equipment safely and properly
- to immediately report all critical injuries to the government department responsible for OH&S
- to train all employees on how to safely use, handle, store and dispose of hazardous substances and handle emergencies

## Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC)

- typically composed of one half management and at least one half labour representatives
- meet regularly according to time intervals specified in the health and safety legislation

- co-chaired by one management chairperson and one worker chairperson
- employee representatives are elected or selected by the workers or their union

## **Role of JHSC or Worker Health & Safety Representative**

- to act as an advisory body
- to identify hazards and obtain information
- to recommend corrective actions
- to assist in resolving work refusal cases
- to participate in accident investigations and workplace inspections

\*Source: CCOHS. Additional information on basic OHS legislation can be found at [CCOHS](#).

**Remember:** for specific health and safety requirements, consult the appropriate OHS regulations or your local lodge.