HEALTH AND SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE

Training of the Health and Safety Representative

* The employer must ensure that the health and safety representative receives the necessary training in health and safety and is informed of their responsibilities under the Canada Labour Code.

Health and Safety Representative Liability

* No health and safety representative is personally liable for anything done, or not done, in good faith under the Canada Labour Code.

Health and Safety Representative Orders

* Note: The Minister of Labour may make regulations specifying the qualifications and terms of office of a health and safety representative, and the method of selecting a health and safety representative if the employees are not represented by a trade union. The Minister may also make a regulation specifying the manner in which a health and safety representative may exercise their powers and perform their functions.

Health and Safety Representative Record-Keeping

* The health and safety representative must keep records of all matters that come before them. They must be provided to a health and safety officer if they are requested.

Selection of the Health and Safety Representative

* The employees of the workplace who do not exercise managerial functions select, from among themselves, the person to be appointed health and safety representative.

Information for the Health and Safety Representative

* A health and safety representative may request from their employer any information that the representative considers necessary to identify existing or potential hazards in the workplace. The representative has full access to all government and employer reports, studies and tests relating to the health and safety of employees. The representative does not have access to the medical records of any individual except with the person's consent.

Duties of the Health and Safety Representative

The representative must:

* Receive and take care of health and safety complaints (taking action where necessary, and explaining inaction where necessary);
* Keep adequate records of work accidents, health hazards, and how they dealt with health and safety complaints, and regularly monitor this data;
* Inspect all of the workplace each month;
* Meet with the employer as necessary to address health and safety issues;
* Participate in all inquiries, investigations, studies, and inspections pertaining to the health and safety of employees;
* Cooperate with health and safety officers;
* Participate in the planning and implementation of changes that may affect occupational health and safety, including work processes and procedures;
* Participate in the development of health and safety policies and programs;
* Assist the employer in investigating and assessing the exposure of employees to hazardous substances;
* Participate in the development, implementation, and monitoring of a program for the provision of personal protective equipment, clothing, devices, or materials;
* Participate in the development, implementation and monitoring of a workplace violence prevention policy.

Why Perform Inspections?

* They are a critical component of a good accident prevention, occupational disease, and fire prevention program.
* They help to ensure that workplaces are in compliance with the requirements laid out in the Canada Labour Code.
* To identify and record actual and potential hazards posed by buildings, equipment, the environment, processes, and practices;
* To record any hazards requiring immediate attention;
* To determine whether existing hazard controls are adequate and operational; and
* To recommend corrective action where appropriate.

Types of Inspections

* **Spot inspections** are carried out on occasion in order to meet a range of responsibilities with respect to workplace health and safety. They focus on a specific hazard associated with a specific work station or work area for example, noise made by a shredder, operation of a pump, pressure from a boiler or exposure to a solvent.
* **Pre-operation inspections of special equipment and processes** are often required before starting the inspection itself, such as equipment checks before working under water or entering a closed area.
* **Critical parts inspections** are regular inspections of the critical parts of a machine, piece of equipment, or a system that have a high potential for serious accidents. These inspections are often part of a preventive maintenance program or hazard control program. Checklists can be used for forklifts, tractor semi-trailers, etc.
* **New equipment inspections** involve a series of specific tests and checks that are carried out before starting up any new piece of equipment. E.g., a new compressor is checked to ensure that all the parts are in the right place and are working properly.
* **Routine inspections** are inspections carried out on a regular basis in a workplace. They cover all working conditions, including work hazards, processes, and practices.

Workplace Inspections – Four Steps

1. Planning the action to be taken
   1. When inspecting equipment and work processes and practices, the representative should be able to rely on an expert, such as an engineer, an electrician, a mechanic or a material handler (or truck driver/warehouse worker).

Note: The effectiveness of an inspection can depend on the ability of the representative to identify hazards. The representative should keep in mind:

* The nature of the workplace processes, tasks, and operations;
* The relevant safety requirements and standards, as identified in the policies;
* The hazards associated with equipment, machines, processes, and the work environment; and
* Any previous accidents and work areas that are problematic from the standpoint of workplace health and safety.

Note 2: the representative may benefit from floor plan guides that will help to identify the main pieces of equipment, workflow, storage, and traffic areas. Other information to remember includes: the location of first aid kits, fire extinguishers, ventilation outlets, sewers, etc.

1. Physical inspection of premises.
   1. No workplace can be considered perfectly safe. That means that all work places including offices, storage areas, and maintenance areas need to be inspected.
   2. You should also inspect areas such as parking facilities, cafeterias, and locker rooms (as applicable).

***If the workplace is too big to check monthly, a part of the workplace can be checked each month so long as all of the workplace is checked yearly.***

* 1. When determining the number of inspections to be performed and how often they will occur, the following points should be considered:
* The number and scale of the processes, operations, or tasks to be inspected;
* Hazardous equipment requiring inspections at fixed intervals;
* Processes that pose a significant hazard, requiring separate and more frequent inspections;
* The number of shifts, because work activities may vary from one shift to another; and
* Any introduction of a new process or new machine in the workplace, requiring a special inspection.

To ensure consistency and avoid possibly disastrous oversights, it is recommended that you prepare checklists that identify all potential hazards. These lists should be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they reflect changes to equipment or processes, as well as accident reports.

1. Writing reports
   1. The representative must inform management if it becomes necessary to take steps to mitigate or eliminate a risk.
   2. Good reports make it easier to obtain management's support for observations made as a result of inspections.
   3. Inspections will only be truly effective if the findings are quickly passed on and corrective action is immediately contemplated and implemented.
2. Following up on recommendations
   1. The information collected from inspections must be analyzed and put to use.
   2. The representative must take responsibility for analyzing the situation and determining what action is required.
   3. An inspection will only be worthwhile if the concerns noted by the team are carefully examined and appropriate corrective action is taken.

Points to remember:

* Analyzing the inspection reports is one of the primary functions of the workplace health and safety representative.
* It is important to inform the safety representative of any follow-up measures that are to be taken.
* If, during an inspection, concerns are raised that pose an immediate danger, these concerns should be immediately reported to the responsible manager, and corrective action should be taken at once.

Feedback:

* The health and safety representative should receive timely feedback.

Analysis:

* Diligent analysis of inspection reports has the potential to accomplish, in particular, the following:
* Identify the need for training in certain areas;
* Explain why certain types of accidents occur in certain areas;
* Establish an order of priority for corrective action;
* Help to establish healthy work methods or improve existing methods; and
* Identify areas, equipment, and tasks, for which a more in-depth risk analysis would be helpful.

Sources:

* <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/health-safety/reports/representatives.html>
* <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/health-safety/committess.html#represent>
* <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/services/health-safety/reports/inspections.html>

Sample Inspection Form – *this should change based on the workplace*

| **Inspectors:** | **Date:** | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | (O) Satisfactory (X) Requires Action | | |
| * Location | * Condition | * Comments |
| **Bulletin Boards and Signs** | | | |
| * Are they clean and readable? |  |  |  |
| * Is the material changed frequently? |  |  |  |
| * Do items interfere with people walking by? |  |  |  |
| **Floors** | | | |
| * Is there loose material, debris, worn carpeting? |  |  |  |
| * Are the floors slippery, oily or wet? |  |  |  |
| **Stairways and Aisles** | | | |
| * Are they clear and unblocked? |  |  |  |
| * Are stairways well lighted? |  |  |  |
| * Are handrails, handholds in place? |  |  |  |
| * Are the aisles marked and visible? |  |  |  |
| **Equipment** | | | |
| * Are guards, screens, and sound-dampening devices in place and effective? |  |  |  |
| * Is the furniture in good repair and safe to use?  Look for: |  |  |  |
| - chairs in poor repair |  |  |  |
| - sharp edges on desks and cabinets |  |  |  |
| - poor ergonomics (keyboard elevation, chair adjustment, desk height) |  |  |  |
| - crowding |  |  |  |
| * Are ladders maintained and safe to use? |  |  |  |
| **Emergency Equipment** | | | |
| * Is all fire control equipment regularly tested and certified? |  |  |  |
| * Is fire control equipment appropriate for the type of fire it must control? |  |  |  |
| * Is emergency lighting in place and regularly tested? |  |  |  |
| **Building** | | | |
| * Do buildings conform to standards for use, occupancy, building services, and plumbing facilities? |  |  |  |
| * Check the following structures to ensure safety: |  |  |  |
| - swinging doors |  |  |  |
| - floor and wall openings |  |  |  |
| - ladders, stairways and ramps |  |  |  |
| - guardrails |  |  |  |
| * Are materials stored safely? |  |  |  |
| **Air Handling System** | | | |
| * Does air exchange rate meet standard requirements? |  |  |  |
| * Is the system free of sources of contamination (asbestos, dust, microorganisms, fumes)? |  |  |  |
| * Is humidity within the recommended range? |  |  |  |
| **Hazardous Products** | | | |
| * Are there any hazardous products (WHMIS)? |  |  |  |
| - If yes, are the products properly labelled? |  |  |  |
| - If yes, do they have a safety data sheet (SDS)? |  |  |  |
| - If yes, are workers trained in how to work with or near these products safely? |  |  |  |
| **Sanitation** | | | |
| * Are washrooms and food preparation areas clean? |  |  |  |
| * Are the following provided adequately? |  |  |  |
| - toilets |  |  |  |
| - showers |  |  |  |
| - potable (drinkable) water |  |  |  |
| - clothing storage |  |  |  |
| - change rooms |  |  |  |
| - field accommodations |  |  |  |
| - lunchrooms |  |  |  |
| * Are measures in place to prevent the spread of disease? (Covid-19) |  |  |  |
| **Security** | | | |
| * Do entry and exit procedures provide workers personal security at night? |  |  |  |
| * Are emergency (evacuation, fire, bomb threat, hostile person) procedures in place? |  |  |  |
| **Lighting** | | | |
| * Are lamp reflectors clean? |  |  |  |
| * Are bulbs missing? |  |  |  |
| * Are any areas dark? |  |  |  |
| **Material Storage** | | | |
| * Are materials neatly and safely piled? |  |  |  |
| * Are there step ladders or stools to get to materials on higher shelves? |  |  |  |
| * Are storage shelves overloaded or beyond their rated capacity? |  |  |  |
| * Are large and heavy objects stored on lower shelves? |  |  |  |
| * Are passageways and work areas clear of obstructions? |  |  |  |
| **General** | | | |
| * Are extension cords used extensively? (consider permanent wiring) |  |  |  |
| * Are electrical or telephone cords exposed in areas where people may become entangled? |  |  |  |
| * Is electrical wiring properly installed? |  |  |  |
| * Are machines properly guarded? |  |  |  |
| * Does any equipment have sharp metal projections? |  |  |  |
| * Are wall and ceiling fixtures fastened securely? |  |  |  |
| * Are paper and waste properly disposed of? |  |  |  |
| * Are desk and file drawers kept closed when not in use? |  |  |  |
| * Are office accessories stored appropriately? |  |  |  |
| * Are materials stacked on desks or cabinets? |  |  |  |
| * Are file cabinet drawers overloaded? |  |  |  |
| * Are file cabinets loaded with the heaviest items in the bottom drawers? |  |  |  |
| * Are shelves securely fastened to the wall? |  |  |  |
| * Are filing stools or wastebaskets tripping hazards? |  |  |  |

Source:

* <https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/hsprograms/list_off.html>