

Health & Safety Guide for Garden Centre Workers



Produced by BC Garden Centre Retailers

Garden Centre retail businesses have unique health and safety issues...

Every good employer knows the importance of a safe and healthy workplace. Not only is it good for workers but it makes good business sense as well. This booklet identifies several safety issues that are specific to Garden Retail Centres and it includes some basic information and practical tips to help keep your workplace safe.

Why a safe workplace makes good business sense

For smaller business, work-related injuries have hidden costs and production effects that may not be easily identified until after there is an injury. Hiring new staff, rescheduling remaining staff and picking up the slack yourself are just some, to name a few.

What this booklet contains

This booklet has 4 sections:

Section 1. Your basic health and safety responsibilities

Section 2. Safety topics

Section 3. Finding More Information

Section 4. Helping to improve this booklet

How to use the information

Each topic provides information on what you can do to prevent accidents and injuries and it also provides practical safety tips that you can discuss with your employees.

Each topic can be used as a starting point during meetings or safety talks. Once you have discussed the general information provided in this booklet, you can then discuss your specific workplace and emphasize the procedures you would like to see.

Where to find copies

You can find electronic copies of the booklet by visiting <http://www.bclna.com>, <http://www.horteducationbc.com/> or <http://www.worksafebc.com>

The booklet is free for printing and distribution.

Contributing organizations

The development of this booklet was sponsored by HortEducation BC, which is responsible for the promotion, development and management of the delivery of industry training and qualifications in BC's horticulture industry.

As well, representatives from David Hunter Garden centre, Trice Farms Pond & Garden Centre, and GardenWorks met on several occasions to share their knowledge and ideas to support the development of this booklet.

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SECTION I

Your basic health and safety responsibilities

As an employer you are responsible for ensuring the health and safety of workers in your workplace. See the Health and Safety Checklist on page 25 to get started. The *Workers' Compensation Act* and *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* include the following general duties:

- Have written safe work procedures and an emergency response plan
- Provide orientation, education, training and supervision for workers. (See the Workers Orientation Checklist on page 24 of this booklet)
- Have a process for identifying, assessing, and controlling hazards
- Inspect your worksite, equipment, and work procedures regularly to help identify hazards
- Investigate incidents (accidents) to identify causes and prevent recurrences
- Hold regular health and safety meetings, and include workers
- Keep records related to health and safety, such as training, first aid treatments, safety discussions, safety inspections and incident investigations
- Do a first aid assessment to find out the requirements for your worksite

For more information regarding safety responsibilities, refer to: *Safety on the Job is Everyone's Business*. This publication can be found on the WorkSafeBC website at www.worksafefbc.com

Lead by example

Take the time to show workers how you want them to do something. If you just tell someone how you expect them to do something, they may misunderstand you. You may be surprised how people misinterpret your words based on their previous experiences (or lack of work experience).

Involve workers

Encourage your workers to ask questions if they do not understand something, especially if they are younger or new to the job. A few minutes spent explaining or re-explaining something could prevent a costly accident. Make sure your workers know the following:

- Their rights and responsibilities
- How to perform tasks safely
- Who to ask if they have questions
- Where to get first aid if they are injured

Deal with worker concerns quickly

Deal with worker concerns as they arise. If something is broken, fix it. If workers need a stepladder to reach items, buy it. Avoiding these types of minor expenses could be more costly if a worker is injured.

More information

For more information regarding first aid requirements, refer to Parts 3.14 to 3.21 of the OHS Regulation at www.worksafefbc.com

SECTION 2

Safety Info Sheets

Safety in the workplace is everyone's responsibility. This section identifies some of the most common safety concerns in the Garden Retail Industry. These include:

1. Lifting and handling materials
2. Preventing slips and trips
3. Using hand tools
4. Using ladders
5. Using forklifts and pallet jacks
6. Using chainsaws
7. Electrical safety
8. Tractors
9. Summer Safety
10. Allergies to insects
11. Pesticides, chemicals and biological hazards
12. Preventing violence in the workplace
13. Dealing with emergencies

More information:

The brochures "Safety on the Job is Everyone's Business" and "3 Steps to Effective Worker Education and Training" are available online at www.worksafebc.com. Both publications outline the basic responsibilities of employers, supervisors and workers.

How to use them

Each topic includes information that you, the employer, should know as well some safety tips that can be used during safety talks. The safety info sheets can also be used as handouts or posted near work areas.

Please remember that these safety tips are general tips and that you need to provide additional information that is specific for your workplace.

If you model safe work practices, employees will have a good example to follow.

Safety Info Sheet:

Lifting and handling materials

Improper handling and lifting of heavy or bulky objects is a major source of strains, sprains, neck and back injuries, cuts, bruises, broken bones and hernias. Any one of these injuries can affect people for the rest of their lives.

Sprains and strains (known as musculoskeletal injuries, or “MSIs”) are the most common type of work-related injury. These can arise from repetitive movement, awkward postures or, more often, from overexertion associated with lifting.

Employers are required to assess the risk for sprains and strains by understanding the factors that lead to injury. These factors include:

- the size, shape and weight of the object being lifted
- whether they need to bend, twist or reach
- how long (the total time) they will be doing the task
- how often are they are required to do the task

If there is a sprain or strain injury that requires medical attention or time off work, employers need to investigate the cause to prevent recurrence.

Signs and symptoms of sprains and strains

Both employers and workers need to be able to recognize the early signs and symptoms of injury. The sooner treatment starts, the better. Signs and symptoms include:

- swelling
- redness
- difficulty moving a particular body part
- numbness
- tingling
- pain

Workers should report early signs or symptoms of sprains and strains to a supervisor, manager, first aid attendant, or safety representative. Employers should have a system in place for keeping detailed records of signs and symptoms of injury.

More information:

For more information about preventing Musculoskeletal injuries, see these WorkSafeBC publications:

- Back Talk: An Owner’s Manual For Backs
- Understanding the Risks of Musculoskeletal Injury (MSI)
- Preventing Musculoskeletal Injury (MSI)

Each of these free publications can be found at www.worksafebc.com



Safety Tips

Lifting techniques

- Whenever possible, avoid manually lifting and carrying awkward or heavy objects. Instead, use mechanical devices such as dollies or hand trucks
- Before you lift something, take a few moments to plan it out:
 - distribute your weight evenly
 - place your feet apart for good balance
 - bend your knees so that the stronger muscles in your legs take most of the load
 - balance the load you are carrying between both hands
 - minimize the distance you need to reach when picking up the object
 - get a good grip – use your hands, not just your fingers
 - hold the object as close to your body as possible, between your knees and shoulders
 - lift smoothly and slowly
 - don't twist your back – pivot your feet if you need to turn while carrying something
- When performing repetitive lifts, like unloading nursery plants from a truck, stop to stretch and rest your back every so often or switch tasks now and then to use different muscles
- Know your strength. Don't overdo it. You could pay for the rest of your life

If it makes sense, try to work with a partner to share the load. But if you do, communicate clearly so that your partner knows what movements to expect. **The helper on a lift is often the one who gets hurt, due to a misunderstanding.**

Safety Tips

Working in storage areas

- When stacking items, stack the heaviest objects at knee to chest level to minimize lifting
- Make sure stacked objects are stable enough not to tip over or fall
- Use a ladder or step stool to reach high items
- Take short breaks, stretch and vary the load by alternating heavy and light items

Safety Info Sheet:

Preventing slips and trips

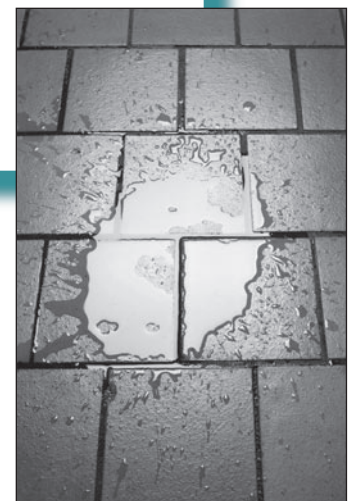
Slipping and falling on wet floors, or tripping over clutter or uneven walkways can cause injury to you, workers, and customers.

Good housekeeping and regular clean-up may seem easy but is often overlooked as part of daily work, especially when people are busy. Most slips and trips can be avoided if workers are encouraged to take the time to do a task properly and to deal with potential hazards immediately.

Safety Tips

Preventing Slips and Trips

- Wear non-slip footwear that fits properly
- Keep footwear clean and soles free from oil and grease
- Make sure pathways and aisles are free of clutter, pots, flats and merchandise. Stop and move any obstacle as soon as you see it
- Secure electrical wires and cords away from walkways. This is especially important during the Christmas season when extra cords are being used for lights and displays
- When watering, either indoors or out, make sure the hose lies flat without loops or curls. Prevent trips by using a “wet floor” or “caution” sign to mark the location of the hose
- Clean up any leaked oil or grease immediately
- Prevent moss from building up on stairs and outdoor surfaces
- Repair any deeply cracked or uneven surfaces. If they can't be repaired, make them visible by painting them with bright paint
- Clear walkways of snow and ice in the winter
- Clear loose gravel from walkways
- Don't leave garden hoses, tools, or other equipment lying around



Safety Info Sheet:

Using hand tools

Using hand tools may seem like common sense, but employers should never assume that workers know how to use them safely. Take the time to show workers how to use each tool safely and follow up with some brief visits to ensure they are performing the task properly.

Safety Tips

General safety

- Visually check tools before use to ensure they are in good working order
- Keep cutting tools sharp so that you do not need to use extra force to cut

Box-cutters

When using a retractable knife, such as an Xacto® blade, don't extend the blade farther than one inch. Be sure to close it after use and before putting it in your pocket. Use the attachment or pliers to break off dull sections, not your fingers.

Using a knife

- Whenever possible, use a knife with a locking blade, not a pen-knife that can close on your finger
- Use the right knife for the job and make sure it is sharp
- Always cut away from yourself
- Store knives separately from other tools
- Cut on a flat surface or cutting board
- Never use a knife for anything other than cutting
- Hold the knife in your stronger hand
- To clean a knife, direct the edge away from you and wipe with the cloth on the dull edge of the blade
- Protect your hands by wearing the appropriate gloves

Using pruners

- Lock pruners when not in use
- Wear gloves
- Watch for potential pinch-points
- Do not twist pruners while cutting
- Use the right tool for the job. Don't try to cut branches that are too large
- If you are doing a repetitive task, stop to rest your hands occasionally or vary the job with something else
- Keep pruners clean – use bleach to prevent the spread of disease

Safety Info Sheet:

Using ladders

Many workers are injured each year by falls from ladders. Step ladders, extension ladders and rolling ladders are all commonly used in Garden Centres. Employers need to ensure that the proper ladders are available for the specific tasks that workers are required to perform. Workers also need basic training on which ladders to use for which task.

Regular inspection of ladders should be included as part of regular safety inspections and broken ladders need to be identified and repaired as soon as possible.

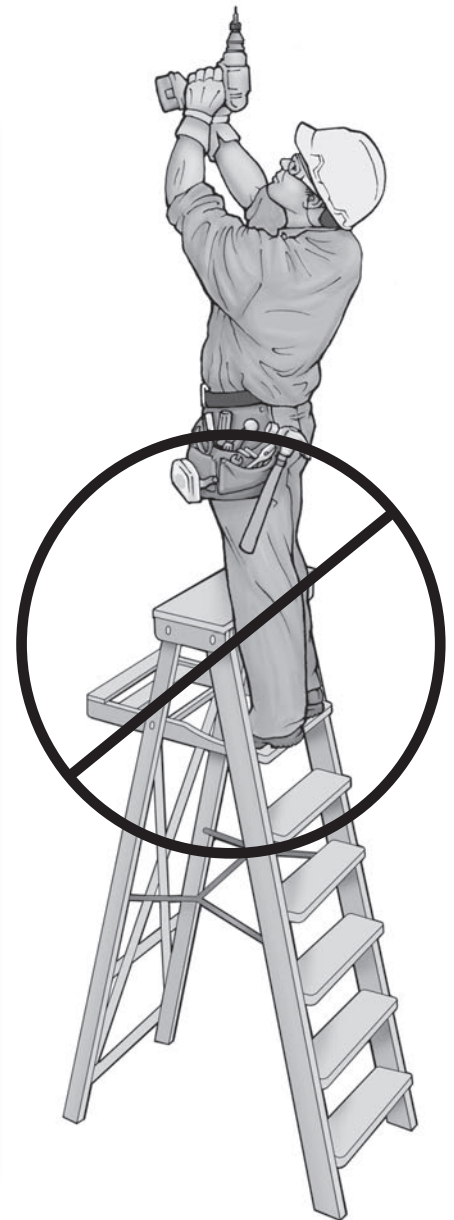
Safety Tips

Some general guidelines apply to using any kind of ladder:

- Take a close look at the ladder before you use it to ensure that no parts are broken, cracked or missing
- Make sure you place the ladder on a firm, level surface
- Make sure the areas around the base and the top of the ladder are clear of obstructions. Avoid contact with wiring or electrical cords, especially if you are using a metal ladder
- Try to position the ladder away from doorways and walkways to prevent collisions
- Avoid slipping. Ensure that the ladder rungs are free of oil, grease or other slippery substances, and wear slip-resistant footwear
- Climb with both hands. If you need to take something up, have someone pass it to you from below
- When you are on the ladder, keep your centre of gravity between the side rails, especially if you need to carry materials

Using step-ladders:

- Ensure that the spreaders are engaged and properly locked in place before climbing
- Don't climb past the second rung from the top
- If possible, brace yourself with your free hand



Never use the top two steps of a step ladder!

Safety Tips

Using extension ladders:

- **Use the “4 to 1” rule:** The ladder base should be 1 foot out from a wall for every 4 feet up
- Never lean the ladder against flexible or moveable objects
- Make sure that the safety feet are intact and undamaged
- Keep three points of contact with the ladder at all times
- Don’t climb past the third rung from the top
- Always have a “spotter” to support the ladder from the bottom
- If you must place the ladder in front of a door, lock the door or block off the feet of the ladder so they can’t move

Safety Info Sheet:

Using forklifts and pallet jacks

Forklifts, powered or manual pallet jacks, and similar equipment are a vital part of Garden Centre operations. Generally known as “lift-trucks”, these machines have also killed and injured people.

Training requirements

Employers must ensure all workers are properly trained **BEFORE** they operate forklifts and pallet jacks. As part of the training, workers must demonstrate to a qualified supervisor or instructor competency in operating the equipment. This training must be documented and recorded.

Lift truck operators must take a refresher course at least every two years or if there is an accident or incident attributable to operator error. The employer is responsible for assessing each lift truck operator’s performance on an ongoing basis.

If workers are required to refuel the lift truck with propane or change or recharge batteries, the operator’s training should cover these tasks.

In planning the training you must assess the risk of your workplace. Factors to consider include the nature of the travel surface, slope of the travel surface, and activities to be undertaken.

For more information see “*Safe Operation of Lift Trucks*” and Guideline G16.7(j) “*Lift Truck Operator Training*” available on the WorkSafeBC website at www.worksafefbc.com

What factors contribute to lift-truck accidents?

- Lack of training or improper training of workers who have to operate lift-trucks
- Production factors such as speed or stress
- Unavailability of proper tools, attachments and accessories
- Improper assignment of equipment and operators
- Poor maintenance
- Age of equipment

Employers can also consider modifying the layout of their workplace to make it safer to operate lift-trucks. Consider ways to:

- Eliminate narrow, crowded and cluttered aisles
- Eliminate obstructions at intersections and doors
- Minimize amount of other work to be done around forklift operation areas
- Minimize the number of ramps and different surfaces that the lift-trucks need to use
- Improve loading areas

Safety Tips

Basic forklift safety

- Make sure you have been properly trained before operating a forklift or pallet jack
- Do not operate the forklift unless it's running properly. Get it fixed first
- Wear the required personal protective equipment, such as safety boots and head protection
- Wear a high-visibility vest when you are working in busy areas
- Make sure you are properly trained in changing the propane fuel tank
- Your employer should make sure that regular maintenance required by the manufacturer is kept up
- Never carry a passenger or elevate a person on forks, pallets or loads
- Never stand or pass under an elevated load. Don't let anyone else do it either
- When not stacking, carry loads at the lowest possible position

Securing loads

- Check the load capacity of the forklift before loading
- Make sure the pallet is secured against the elbow of the forks to prevent it from shifting during movement
- Move a load only when you are sure it is stable and that there are no loose objects. Re-stack the load if necessary
- Don't overload the forklift, even for short distances

Driving

- Make sure you have a clear line of vision on all sides and that the work area is free of obstructions. If you can't see past the load, use reverse
- Forklifts can tip. Never make a turn on a sloped surface
- When carrying a load on a slope, drive in reverse on the way down and in forward on the way up
- Drive at a speed that will allow for a safe stop
- Yield the right-of-way to pedestrians
- For a quick emergency stop, lower the load

When the job is done

- When you are finished using the forklift:
 - lower the forks to the floor
 - set the brakes and put the controls in low gear or “park”
 - turn off the motor, turn off the propane tank, remove the key

Using pallet jacks

- Wear safety boots and keep your toes and fingers out from under the pallet
- Secure the load to make sure it is stable and will not shift during movement. Restack it if necessary
- Make sure the rollers are free of the bottom of the pallet
- Push, don't pull: it puts less strain on your back and it's easier to stop
- Know how to use the release handle
- Get help if you are having a problem and work with a partner when you're dealing with heavy loads such as fertilizer or pots
- For a quick stop, just lower the load

Safety Info Sheet:

Using chainsaws

More information:

For guidelines on using chainsaws, see the brochure "Chainsaw Safety" available from WorkSafeBC at www.worksafebc.com

Some Garden Retail Centres may use chainsaws to trim Christmas trees. Common injuries from chainsaws include severe cuts and amputations, burns from hot machine parts, eye injuries, hearing loss, sprains and strains, and injuries from the vibration of the chainsaw.

It is essential that anyone using a chainsaw be trained in how to fuel, start, use, turn off, and store it. They must also know how to use the safety features, such as the chain guard and chain brake. Employers also need to ensure that the chainsaw is regularly maintained and filed for safe use.

Safety Tips

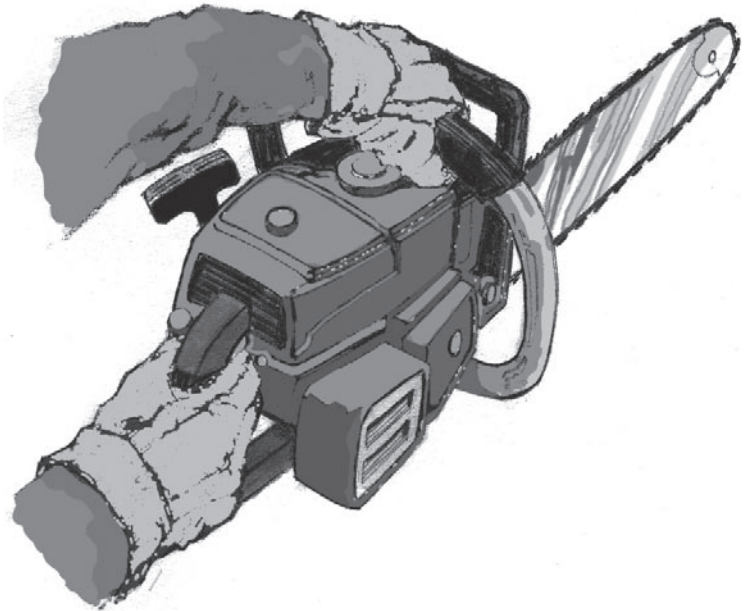
Safety tips for using chainsaws

- Before you start, read the operator's manual and inspect the chainsaw
- Make sure you know where to get first aid
- Make sure you know how to refuel a chainsaw safely. Only refuel when the engine is cool – never when the chainsaw is running
- Make sure other workers and customers are kept away from the area
- Wear personal protective equipment to protect yourself from cuts, scratches, noise, and debris:
 - goggles or a face shield
 - hearing protection
 - head protection
 - gloves
 - long sleeves and long pants
 - safety boots
- Put the saw down before starting it. Do not dangle it in one hand when starting
- Be sure that the chainsaw is running properly, not backfiring or leaking fuel, and that the chain is sharp
- Check to see that the chain brake is working and that the chain guards are in place
- If the saw is not running well, don't use it
- Get a good grip and keep both hands on the saw while cutting
- Make sure you have secure footing and good balance
- Work in a covered area and don't stand in water
- Don't stand directly behind the chainsaw while cutting
- Avoid kickback situations – use common sense and don't operate a chainsaw above waist level
- Unplug electric saws when they are not being used

Safety Tips

General power tools

When using any kind of power tool, be very careful that nothing gets caught in moving parts. Avoid wearing jewellery such as bracelets and rings. Tie back long hair, and keep clothing, fingers and toes away from machinery.



Safety Info Sheet:

Electrical safety

More information:

For more information see the booklet "Working Safely Around Electricity" at www.worksafefbc.com

The electrical current in regular businesses is strong enough to cause serious injury or kill. Train workers on electrical safety when training them to use equipment and tools. Workers need to know how to lock out equipment and de-energize power tools.

Safety Tips

Using power tools

- **Before each use**, inspect tools, power cords, and electrical fittings for damage, wear or exposed wiring. Repair defective equipment if you have been trained to do so. Otherwise tag it for repair and do not use
- Know where the breakers and fuse boxes are located in case of an emergency, and make sure that nothing is blocking access to them
- Check to see if all circuit breakers and fuse boxes are labeled so you can tell which appliances or plugs they feed
- **WARNING:** Unusually warm or hot outlets may be a sign of unsafe wiring. Unplug any cords in these outlets and do not use them until a qualified electrician has checked the wiring
- Don't use power tools with the guards removed
- Always unplug tools when they are not in use. Pull on the plug, not the cord!
- Don't pull out a plug when your hands are wet or when you are touching metal
- Use cords or equipment that are rated for the amount of current you are using
- Always use ladders made of wood or other non-conductive materials when working with or near electricity
- Avoid contact with overhead power lines when using a ladder
- Use **Ground Fault Circuit Interrupters** (GFCIs) on all plugs located outdoors. Never use a two-pronged extension cord outdoors
- If using a space heater, make sure it's the only thing operating on that circuit
- Keep power bars mounted on their side to help keep them dry
- Read the label when installing strings of lights so that you know how many you can safely string together
- Always tape cords to walls or floors whenever possible. If you have to use a staple gun to put up strings of lights, don't staple through the cord! Use staples that are long enough to go around the cord
- Don't touch a person or electrical apparatus in the event of an electrical accident. Always disconnect the current first
- If someone is electrocuted get them emergency medical care right away. An electrical shock can burn internal organs without burning the skin

Repairing and maintaining power tools

- Always de-energize and lockout equipment and tools before working on them and ensure all moving parts have come to a complete stop
- Always use the right sized fuse. Never replace a fuse with a stronger one

Safety Info Sheet:

Tractors

Tractors are common in Garden Centres. Similar training requirements apply for tractor operators as for forklift operators: workers must demonstrate to a qualified supervisor or instructor competency in operating the equipment.

Safety Tips

Don't operate a tractor unless you have been properly trained!

What should you do when operating a tractor?

- Wear close-fitting clothes that are not frayed. Tuck in shirts, and tie back long hair
- Use footwear with slip-resistant soles
- Wear a seat belt if the tractor is equipped with ROPS (roll-over protection structure)
- Maintain guards on PTOs (power take-offs)
- Before starting the engine, make sure no one else is near the tractor
- Use hearing protection unless there is a soundproof cab
- Don't start the engine while standing beside the tractor
- Operate controls from the tractor seat only
- Always engage the clutch slowly – don't ever 'pop' it
- Don't let anyone ride with you except during training
- Don't overload the tractor
- Don't drive so fast that the tractor wheels bounce. It's very dangerous and many people have died under tipped tractors

Tractors tip very easily!

Safety Info Sheet:

Summer safety

If you work outside on a hot, sunny day, it's important to protect yourself from the sun. Here are some tips on recognizing the signs of heat exhaustion and heatstroke and on getting help when you notice them.

For more information see the WorkSafeBC publication "Preventing Heat Stress at Work" at www.worksafebc.com

Safety Tips

Protect yourself from too much sun...

- Wear a hat and light-coloured long-sleeved shirts and pants
- Put on sunscreen before going out and re-apply it often
- Wear sunglasses to protect your eyes

Stay cool in the heat...

- Wear 'breathable' cotton fabrics
- Drink LOTS of fluids; at least a cup every half hour when it's really hot
- Alternate between water and sports drinks (isotonic fluids)
- Avoid alcohol and caffeine – they dry you out

Pay attention to signs of heat exhaustion

- Nausea
- Dizziness
- Headache
- Blurred vision
- Cold/wet (clammy) grayish skin or disorientation

Watch for signs of heat stroke! (It can kill you)

- Chills
- Irritability and restlessness
- Convulsions or rapid shallow breathing
- Disorientation or euphoria
- Red face and skin
- Dry skin
- Fainting

Get help if you think you have heat exhaustion or stroke

- Get medical help. Contact the first aid attendant or call 911 if it seems serious
- Get out of the heat
- Lie on your back with your feet up
- Cool down with the help of wet cloths, alcohol wipes or immersion into tepid water
- Replenish fluids; drink water and sport drinks (isotonic fluids)
- Get rest. Recovery may take days

Some common products increase sun sensitivity!

Cosmetics with alpha hydroxyl acids (AHAs) make you more sensitive to the sun and its aging effects.

Some medications do too, like:

- tetracycline antibiotics
- sulfonamides such as Bactrim,
- non-steroidal anti-inflammatories like ibuprofen
- some fluoroquinolones.

(If you are taking medication, ask your pharmacist)

Wear extra sunscreen if you need it!

Safety Info Sheet:

Allergies to insects

Got Allergies?

Workers who are allergic to insect stings should inform their employer and indicate whether they carry an Epi-pen (auto-injector). This will allow the employer to provide assistance.

Colourful flowers in Garden Centres tend to attract stinging insects such as bees and wasps. Many people can have allergic reactions to insect stings. These can range from mild swelling and redness to severe allergic reactions that could be fatal if not promptly treated.

You may consider having your staff complete a Staff Medical Information form. There is a sample of one on page 25 of this booklet.

How to recognize a serious allergic reaction

These symptoms could indicate a systemic (serious) allergic reaction to insect stings. Seek first aid or emergency care if any of the following are present.

- Tightness of the throat or upper airway
- Breathing difficulty
- Weakness
- Generalized itching and redness of the skin
- Numbness and tingling
- Hives
- Anxiety
- Abdominal cramps, diarrhea, or vomiting

People may show signs of shock and may die if the reaction is extreme

Safety Tips

Tips for avoiding insect stings

- Bees and wasps rarely sting unless they are aggravated
- Avoid perfume, cologne or scented soaps if you are going into an area where there are likely to be bees or wasps
- Bees and wasps are attracted to brightly coloured, patterned clothing
- Insect repellent doesn't work on stinging insects. It might even attract them
- Stay calm if a bee lands on you. It will eventually leave of its own accord. If you don't want to wait for it to leave, slowly and gently brush it away

If you are stung

- If you are stung in the mouth or nose, get immediate medical help as swelling could block airways
- Remove the stinger without squeezing the bag of venom. Gently scrape it out using a blunt object such as a credit card or scraper. The sooner you can remove it, the better
- Prevent infection: wash the affected area carefully with soap and water and keep it clean until it is completely healed
- Applying a preparation containing aluminum salt (e.g. Burrow's Solution, BuroSol, or an antiperspirant) may provide relief from pain and swelling
- Reduce swelling by applying a cold pack or an ice pack wrapped in a cloth
- Commercially available antihistamines are useful for reducing redness, itchiness and swelling. You can take acetaminophen for the pain if necessary

Safety Info Sheet:

Pesticides, biohazards, and other chemicals

Did you know . . .

Workers spraying pesticides require a Pesticide Applicator Certificate.

For more information:

about pesticides and chemicals, visit the FARSHA website at www.farsha.bc.ca

Most garden retail centres use pesticides and other chemicals that can be hazardous if they aren't used properly. The effects of exposure to chemicals can happen right away, or they can take up to several years, but either way the effects can be very serious. In order to handle them safely, workers need to be trained on the safe use, handling and storage of all chemicals as well as emergency procedures for spills and clean-up. Training for chemicals used in the workplace is covered under WHMIS.

WHMIS training

Pesticides are “partially exempt” from WHMIS and do not require WHMIS labels and MSDSs because they are already covered by labelling legislation under the Pest Control Products Act. However, provincial WHMIS legislation still applies and employers must:

- provide workers with hazard information about the product (including understanding how to read the information and symbols on pesticide labels)
- educate workers about the hazards of the product
- educate and train workers on the safe use, handling, storage, and disposal of the product

WHMIS training is required for all workers who work with or near chemicals or pesticides. Put up a pesticide spray notice if you plan to use pesticides (see sample on page 26.)

Spills and cleanup

Employers must have spill clean-up procedures. Workers need to be trained on these procedures and know where the spill kits and other cleaning kits are located.

Safety Tips

Before using any chemical or pesticide, you should be able to answer these four questions:

1. What are the hazards of the product you are using?
2. How do you protect yourself?
3. What should you do in case of an emergency or spill?
4. Where do you get more information on this product?

Biological hazards and infectious diseases

Contact with blood or body fluids might be relatively uncommon in the Garden Retail industry, but it can and does occur, particularly around stores in some urban centres. For more information see WorkSafeBC booklet:

“*HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis B and C: Preventing Exposure at Work*”. This booklet can be found online at www.worksafebc.com

Safety Info Sheet:

Preventing violence in the workplace

Employers need to assess the risk for violence to their workers by looking at things such as the store's neighbourhood, store hours, how often workers are required to work alone, and lighting in the parking lot.

Here are some tips that you can share with your workers.

Safety Tips

Dealing with irate customers:

- Try to stay calm and try to calm the other person
- If you can't calm the person, ask for help
- Avoid focusing on who is right or wrong. Focus instead on what will satisfy the customer and on finding ways to help the customer save face
- Listen carefully and try to put yourself in the customer's shoes so you can better understand how to solve the problem. Ask questions to help you understand what their concerns are
- If the customer is disruptive and noisy, and if it is safe to do so, move to a quieter location, possibly with the help of a co-worker
- If you can't address their concern, take the customer's name and number and promise to forward the information to your manager or supervisor

Working alone:

- Someone should make regular contact with you if you work alone
- Have an emergency phone number handy
- Don't leave back doors open and unattended
- Avoid taking garbage out at night, especially if the dumpster is in a secluded spot or back alley

More Information:

For more information, see the booklet "Preventing Violence, Robbery, and Theft: A Guide for Retail, Owners, Managers, and Workers" at www.worksafefbc.com

Safety Tips

Shoplifting and robbery

Shoplifting and robbery can easily lead to violence. The best way to prevent the violence is to prevent the robbery from happening in the first place.

If someone steals something:

- Don't try to apprehend them. That's not your job. It's a job for trained security staff or the police.
- Write down as much information as possible, including the shoplifter's height, weight, age, hair and skin colour, race and clothing as well as a description of a get-away vehicle.
- Call the police or security. Dial 911 or your emergency number.

If a robbery occurs:

- Keep it short and smooth. The longer a robbery takes, the more nervous the robber becomes. Handle the entire situation as though you were making a sale to a customer.
- Obey the robber's orders— just give them the cash and merchandise they ask for and do exactly as they say.
- If you are not sure what the robber is telling you, ask.
- Warn the robber of any possible surprises. Tell the robber beforehand if you must reach for something or move in any way. Tell them if another employee is in the back room so they are not startled.
- Don't try to stop the robber. Trying to fight with a robber is foolhardy, not heroic. Even if you don't see a weapon, always assume they have one.
- Don't chase or follow the robber. Leave the robber a clear escape path
- Right after the robber has left, write down as much information as possible, including the robber's mannerisms, height, weight, age, hair and skin colour, race and clothing, as well as a description of a get-away vehicle, the time and the direction the robber took when he or she left.
- Dial 911 or your emergency number.

Safety Info Sheet:

Dealing with emergencies

Employers need to have emergency procedures in the event of fire, earthquake or serious workplace injury or accident.

The procedures need to include information such as who to call, what to do, where to go, and where first aid equipment is located.

Central to any safe workplace is a plan for dealing with emergencies. New workers should be instructed in that plan within their first few days on the job. All workers should have refresher training from time to time.

After training, workers should be able to answer the following questions:

- Where are the emergency phone numbers posted?
- Where are the fire extinguishers and how and when should they be used?
- Where are the fire alarms and fire exits?
- What is the evacuation plan for the building?
- What should you do during an earthquake?
- Where is the first aid equipment located?
- In case of evacuation, where outside the building is the assembly point and who should you report to?
- What other specialized equipment may be needed in case of an emergency, and how is it used?

If you are unsure about the answers to any of these questions, find the answers!

Safety Tips

First Aid

It is important to get first aid promptly if an injury occurs. Contact the first aid attendant or call 911. If the injury is severe, call an ambulance right away.

You need to know how and where to get first aid at work. For example:

- How to get help if you are hurt but do not require an ambulance
- Who you should report injuries to
- Whether there is a first aid attendant, first aid room, or first aid kit available, and where they can be found

Fire!

- Review your building's evacuation procedures annually
- Make sure you know what to do if there is a fire
- Know the location of fire extinguishers and escape routes
- If you spot an unintended fire, sound the nearest alarm and call 911
- Use a fire extinguisher only if you have been trained to do so. Be prepared: have someone train you.

SECTION 3

Finding more information

BC retail industry health and safety resources

- Health & Safety Guide for New Retail Workers
- Preventing violence, robbery and theft: a guide for retail owners, supervisors and workers
- Back to Work, Back to Health: Return to work for the retail industry

WorksafeBC Resources for Retail

- Health and Safety for Retail Small Business
- Safety on the Job is Everyone's Business
- Small Business Primer (A guide to the WCB)
- 3 Steps to Effective Worker Education and Training
- Understanding the Risks of Musculoskeletal Injury (MSI) An educational guide for workers on sprains, strains and other MSIs
- Back Talk: an owners manual for backs
- Chainsaw Safety (Brochure)
- Lift Trucks (Brochure)
- HIV/AIDS, and Hepatitis B and C: Preventing Exposure at Work

**All of these publications can be found online at
www.worksafebc.com
or www.worksafebcstore.com**

Additional resources

This section includes the following resources and sample checklists:

- Worker orientation checklist
- Health & Safety checklist
- Staff medical information
- Pesticide spray notice

Worker Orientation Checklist

Supervisor (trainer) name:		Employee name:		
Date hired:	Date of orientation:	Position (tasks):		
Topics to be covered		Initials		Comments <small>(for example, state if follow-up needed/not)</small>
		Trainee	Trainer	
Report all injuries and how to do so		_____	_____	
Where and how to get first aid		_____	_____	
Report all hazards and how to do so		_____	_____	
Location of fire exits, extinguishers and evacuation plan		_____	_____	
Dealing with violent or angry customers		_____	_____	
Right to refuse unsafe work and procedure for doing so		_____	_____	
How to safely use and clean equipment:				
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	
How to safely perform specific tasks:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Proper lifting techniques		_____	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	
Explained how to read labels on chemicals				
The WHMIS system and worker's right to know information about hazardous materials:				
<input type="checkbox"/> Location of MSDSs and how to read them		_____	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> How to read labels		_____	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/> How to clean up spills		_____	_____	
Which personal protective equipment is required for various duties (and location):				
<input type="checkbox"/> Gloves		_____	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	
Emergency procedures and where documents are kept				
Topics for future training:				
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	
<input type="checkbox"/>		_____	_____	
Other topics covered:				

Health and Safety Checklist for Small Business

This checklist will give you some idea of the issues you need to address to improve health and safety in your small business.

WORKPLACE HAZARDS

- Do you have an effective method for identifying hazards?
- Do you have effective methods for eliminating, controlling, or minimizing hazards?

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- Are you and your workers familiar with the health and safety regulations that apply to your business?
- Do your workers have information about hazards that they are, or could be, exposed to?
- Are your workers adequately trained in safety procedures for your operation? Is this information written and available to them?

EMERGENCY PREPARATION

- Are emergency procedures in place? Are you and your workers familiar with these procedures?
- Are emergency exits clearly marked?
- Are fire extinguishers properly located and regularly serviced? Do your workers know how to operate them?
- Do you have adequate first aid supplies? Do your workers know where to find and how to use them?

INCIDENTS

- Do you report all serious incidents to the WCB?
- Do you investigate all incidents?
- Do you keep a written record of all incidents?

YOUR WORK ENVIRONMENT

- Are your workers adequately supervised in the safe performance of their duties?
- Are workstations designed to suit your workers' physical requirements?
- Do you train your workers to prevent repetitive strain injuries?
- Are all work areas kept free of tripping and slipping hazards?
- Do you control noise at the source, where possible? Is loud machine noise controlled?
- Do your workers have access to current material safety data sheets (MSDSs) for all the chemicals that require MSDSs?
- Are all chemical containers properly labelled?
- Do your workers have access to and know how to use appropriate personal protective clothing and equipment?

Staff Medical Information

(Confidential)

Should you be involved in an accident at our work site, or have allergic reactions to certain plants or garden centre products while on duty the information you provide will help us provide effective and timely first aid.

Name: _____ S.I.N. _____
(Please print)

*Birth date: _____ *BC Medical Number: _____
(day)/(mo.)/(yr.)

Address: _____ Postal code _____

Phone: _____ Emergency contact person: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Are you aware of any personal allergies or sensitivity to medications (elg., aspirin, penicillin, Tylenol, codeine)? Do you have a blood disorder, e.g., diabetes? If "yes" please list and explain, so the information can be passed to first aid personnel.

Do you carry antihistamines with you to take in case of an emergency, like bee or wasp stings? Yes: ___ No: ___

(cause e.g., bee/wasp sting) (Antihistamine to take)

(cause ...) (Antihistamine to take)

(cause ...) (Antihistamine to take)

Are you aware of any reaction to brushing against the leaves of plants, or to touching bulbs/corns/tubers that may have been dusted with a pesticide product? Yes: ___ No: ___. If "Yes," please list below and explain.

Do you carry an antihistamine for treatment? Yes: ___ No: ___.

Do you have a specific doctor you would want to call in case of emergency? Yes: ___ No: ___. If "Yes," please provide the name and phone number below:

Dr. Name: _____ Dr. Phone: _____

Date this information completed: ___/___/___
(dy) (mo.) (yr.)

Important Notice to all Staff

Pesticide Spraying

On _____ we will be spraying the _____
in the _____ with _____

The spraying will take place at approximately ____ am/pm

If you have any questions or concerns, please see _____
prior to the spray application.

The area can be re-entered at _____ am/pm
on _____

Signature _____

SECTION 4

Help us improve this guide

It is important for us to know if the subject and content of our health and safety publications is useful to you. Your opinion matters and it will help us to make future versions of this Guide more relevant to your needs.

Please fax your comments to the BC Landscaping and Nursery Association at 604 574-7773.

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Tell us what you think about this Guide