

Health and Safety Representation in the Workplace

Schools with 20 or more staff require a joint health and safety committee (JHSC). Schools with more than nine but fewer than 20 staff members require a worker health and safety representative. Either way, if you are involved, you have an important leadership role to play with respect to safety. Being effective in your role doesn't have to be stressful or onerous. It's mostly a matter of being knowledgeable, organized, and accessible.

Being knowledgeable

B.C.'s *Workers Compensation Act* and the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation* spell out the duties and responsibilities associated with JHSCs and worker health and safety representatives. You need to be clear about your role and be knowledgeable about any past health and safety issues in your school and the potential for future issues. This poster series covers the basics.

Being organized

Records and statistics are important components of occupational health and safety programs. They help JHSC members identify the nature, extent, and cause of health and safety hazards, set prevention activities, and determine if control measures are working. If you are new to the role, check out the existing records and follow established practice, or improve upon it if possible. Your employer stores these records and will make them available to you.

Being accessible

Your colleagues must be aware of your role in helping keep the workplace safe. People must know that you are available and open to hearing about their safety questions or concerns. September is

a perfect time to introduce yourself to fellow workers who are new to the school. Be sure to connect with employer representatives (e.g., administrative personnel) who are responsible for acting on any safety issues you identify. Regular monthly health and safety meetings are an important way to maintain visibility and promote safety awareness and injury prevention.

In the *Workers Compensation Act*

- Part 3, Division 4, Joint Committees and Worker Representatives

Resources

Available from
WorkSafeBC.com/Publications

- *How to Implement a Formal Occupational Health and Safety Program* (BK14)
- *Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee Workbook*

Safety is everyone's responsibility!

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