

Support for employers

Training and orientation for young and new workers



Training and orienting young and new workers is a regulatory requirement and is part of your overall health and safety program. This resource outlines the requirements for young and new worker orientation and training, and offers guidance on how you can implement these requirements in your workplace.

Who are young and new workers?

As defined in [section 3.22](#) of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation, a young worker is any worker who is under 25 years of age. A new worker can be any age, and includes workers who are:

- New to the workplace
- Facing hazards that have changed or developed while they were at work or absent from work
- In a new workplace or location that has different hazards than the old one

Why specific requirements for young and new workers?

Young and new workers need special attention because they may be at more risk of injury than their more experienced counterparts. The injury rate for young male workers is much higher than that of the overall workforce.

The risk of injury for new workers is higher than for those who have been doing a job for more than a year. And the risk is over three times higher for workers in their first month on the job. Workers who are new to Canada may also be at higher risk of injury.

Reasons for the higher risk of injury for young and new workers may include the following:

- Inexperience and lack of training
- Lack of understanding of their rights
- Lack of preparation for the workplace
- Lack of supervision
- Asked to do more dangerous jobs
- Unwillingness to ask questions
- Language barriers

Why are orientation and training necessary?

Providing effective orientation and training is the best way to prevent workplace incidents that can cause injuries or damage to property and equipment. As an employer, you are responsible for ensuring that your workers are prepared for the job before they start working.

Training must be specific to the workplace and should be an ongoing process. Even experienced workers will require reorientation if their work circumstances change or new hazards develop. For example, there may be a new work process or new equipment, or the worker may be moved to a new work location or assigned to a different task.

Employers should also reorient workers who return to the workplace after a lengthy absence.

How do I conduct an orientation?

Although there are many ways to conduct an orientation, the following four basic steps can be used to guide your orientation and training sessions.

Step 1: Evaluate the situation

First decide what areas the worker needs training in. A good starting place is to use the worker's job description along with a checklist such as the one provided in this resource. This sample checklist includes all the topics required under the Regulation for a young or new worker orientation, but needs to be tailored to the specifics of your workplace. Information about how to use the checklist is included later in this resource. In addition, you can find a modifiable [Word version of the checklist](#) on worksafebc.com that you can download and alter to fit the specific needs of your workplace.

If this is the first time orienting the worker, plan for a thorough training session. If you are reorienting the worker, focus on the topics that relate to the new situation or new hazards.

It's a good idea to prepare training materials for the worker that they can take away and refer to later, including information such as contact information for supervisors and first aid attendants, specific safe work procedures, and where to find more information about worker rights and responsibilities.

Step 2: Orient and train the worker

Conduct the orientation session, using the checklist as a guide. Lead a walk-through of the workplace, showing emergency exits, first aid facilities, hazardous areas, and so on.

A typical orientation for a lower-risk work environment could take one to four hours. In a higher-risk workplace, the orientation may take a full day. An effective orientation should make workers aware of potential hazards and let them know who to talk to if they have questions about health and safety in the future.

The process of training on specific work tasks can take much longer and will depend on the nature of the task. One approach is to break the task down into smaller steps, giving the new worker time to learn each step under the supervision of a mentor or experienced worker before moving on to the next.

Keep in mind that some work tasks (such as forklift operation or traffic control) require workers to be trained and **certified** by an acceptable agency.

Step 3: Test the worker

To check understanding, ask the worker to recall specific procedures (for example, how to clean the grill and dispose of hot oil) or general requirements (for example, when and how they need to use personal protective equipment). Follow up — ask workers questions within a few days and periodically over the next months.

Step 4: Keep records of the training and orientation

Be sure to document all training. This is a requirement under the Regulation ([section 3.25](#)) as well as a good practice to help you manage health and safety in your workplace.

An orientation checklist, such as the one provided in this resource, will ensure that you have covered all the key topics when training a new worker. Give copies of the checklist to each new worker, and keep copies for your own records.

What are some tips for training young and new workers?

- Develop a mentorship program. Pair up new workers with more experienced workers. Having a mentor will give the new worker a more personal introduction to the worksite and their work tasks.
- Use engaging training approaches such as simulations, interactive media, and hands-on demonstrations and practice. Tell them, show them, involve them.
- When explaining safety rules and safe work procedures, make sure workers understand why a procedure is done a certain way. Young workers in particular are more likely to follow the instructions if they are given clear reasons for doing so.

- Encourage young and new workers to ask questions of their mentors, supervisors, managers, and co-workers.
- Get workers involved in making health and safety decisions at your workplace. Encourage their participation in your joint health and safety committee.
- For young workers, consider involving parents and other family members. Let them know about any safety concerns in the workplace and encourage them to talk with their kids about workplace safety.
- Identify your new workers in some way (for example, with special hard hats, aprons, or name tags) so that everyone knows they are new to the job. Encourage your experienced workers to assist them when needed.
- Observe workers while they work and correct any mistakes. Suggest other ways of doing things and praise good results.
- Get help when orienting and training workers who do not speak English. Have someone available to interpret and help ensure understanding.
- Translate written policies and procedures into the languages of your workers.

Sample new worker orientation checklist

Note: A modifiable [Word version](#) of this checklist is also available for you to download and alter to fit the specific needs of your workplace.

Employee name

Position (tasks)

Date hired

Date of orientation

Person providing orientation

Company name

Topics addressed during orientation*	Initials	
	Trainer	Worker
1. Supervisor name and contact information		
2. Rights and responsibilities		
a) General duties of employers, workers, and supervisors		
b) Worker's right to refuse unsafe work and procedure for doing so		
c) Worker's responsibility to report hazards and procedure for doing so		
3. Workplace health and safety rules: <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>		

* Attach additional sheets with more details if necessary. Cross out any topics that don't apply to your workplace.

Topics addressed during orientation*	Initials	
	Trainer	Worker
<p>4. Known hazards in the workplace and how to deal with them:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		
<p>5. Safe work procedures for carrying out tasks:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		
<p>6. Procedures for working alone or in isolation</p>		
<p>7. Measures to reduce the risk of violence in the workplace and procedures for dealing with violent situations</p>		
<p>8. Personal protective equipment (PPE) — what to use, when to use it, and where to find it:</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p> <p>_____</p>		
<p>9. First aid and incident reporting</p> <p>a) First aid attendant name and contact information</p>		
<p>b) Locations of first aid kits and eye wash facilities</p>		
<p>c) How to report an illness, injury, or incident (including near misses)</p>		

Topics addressed during orientation*	Initials	
	Trainer	Worker
10. Emergency procedures		
a) Locations of emergency exits and meeting points		
b) Locations of fire extinguishers and fire alarms		
c) How to use fire extinguishers		
d) What to do in an emergency (including events such as wildfires and floods)		
11. Basic contents of the occupational health and safety program (formal or informal)		
12. Hazardous products and Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS)		
a) What hazardous products are in the workplace		
b) Purpose and significance of hazard information on WHMIS labels		
c) Location, purpose, and significance of safety data sheets (SDSs)		
d) How to handle, use, store, and dispose of hazardous products safely		
e) Procedures for an emergency involving hazardous products, including cleanup of spills		
13. Contact information for the joint health and safety committee or worker health and safety representative		
14. Bullying and harassment		
a) What is workplace bullying and harassment		
b) How to report incidents of workplace bullying and harassment (e.g., forms, procedures, contact information)		
c) Who is responsible for following up on complaints		

How to use the training and orientation checklist

The sample checklist provided here covers the topics specified in [section 3.23\(2\)](#) of the Regulation, which are the minimum requirements for any young or new worker's training and orientation.

Topics 3, 4, 5, and 8 on the checklist include blank lines so you can add information specific to your workplace. Once a topic has been discussed or demonstrated, the trainer and the worker should both initial the item. If the topic is irrelevant for your workplace, mark "N/A."

Here's a brief explanation of each item on the sample checklist:

1. Provide workers with contact information for their supervisors. You may want to provide a wallet card with this information, or ask workers to add the contact in their phones. If possible, introduce workers to their supervisors as part of the orientation session.
2. a) Go over the specific **duties, rights, and responsibilities** specified in [sections 21–23](#) of the *Workers Compensation Act*.
b) Tell workers that it is their right and their duty to refuse to perform work if they believe it may be dangerous to themselves or others, and that they cannot be punished for doing so. See [sections 3.12–3.13](#) of the Regulation.
c) Tell workers that hazards should be reported immediately, and identify who they should report hazards to (for example, their supervisor or a safety coordinator). See [section 3.10](#) of the Regulation.
3. Go over general rules, which include following work procedures, using personal protective equipment (PPE), and operating equipment safely.
4. Inform workers about any known hazards that apply to them and tell them how to deal safely with these hazards. For example, tell them to wear respirators while sanding and discuss respirator care. The table on the next page ("Discussing workplace hazards") contains information that can help you discuss the specific hazards in your workplace.
5. Demonstrate specific tasks (for example, cleaning equipment or using ladders) and safe work procedures (for example, locking out equipment before cleaning or repairing it).
6. Tell workers about procedures and safety strategies for working alone or in isolation. See [sections 4.21–4.23](#) of the Regulation.
7. Warn workers about any potential for violence. Tell them how to prevent incidents (for example, remain calm with abusive customers) and how to deal with incidents (for example, do not attempt to restrain shoplifters or robbers). See [sections 4.27–4.31](#) of the Regulation.
8. If workers need to use PPE (for example, high-visibility clothing, hard hats, safety glasses), tell them what equipment to use and teach them how to use it properly. See [Part 8](#) of the Regulation.
9. Make sure workers know where to find first aid personnel and supplies, and how to report injuries and incidents.

10. Explain emergency procedures, including emergency exits, meeting points, locations of fire alarms and fire extinguishers, and how to use extinguishers.
11. Explain what an occupational health and safety program is. Tell them the specifics of the program for your workplace, and where they can find a written copy. See [sections 3.1–3.3](#) of the Regulation.
12. Inform workers about the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) and any hazardous products used in the workplace (such as solvents, cleaning products, or pesticides). Tell them how to handle and dispose of such products safely, and where to find more information (for example, on WHMIS labels and SDSs). Tell them that they should not handle hazardous products if they have not been trained to do so.
13. Where applicable, introduce workers to joint health and safety committee members or the worker representative, and identify the location of the joint committee minutes. Tell them why there is a committee or representative, and provide them with contact information.
14. Explain what bullying and harassment means in the workplace, and what your procedures are for reporting and responding to harassment complaints.

Discussing workplace hazards

The following table describes some of the types of workplace hazards you may need to discuss with workers during orientation and training. Please note that this list is not comprehensive — your orientation will need to include hazards specific to your workplace that may not be described here. That’s why it’s important to [identify hazards](#) and [assess risks](#) for your specific workplace. An assessment will help you identify any other necessary health and safety topics for training.

Topic	Things to discuss
Falls from elevation (including ladder safety)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fall protection system being used • Fall protection procedures • Proper use of fall protection equipment • Selecting and using ladders safely • Inspection and maintenance of ladders and fall protection equipment
Slips, trips, and falls	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keeping work areas free of clutter • Removing tripping hazards • Cleaning up spills promptly • Maintaining three-point contact on stairs • Appropriate footwear

Topic	Things to discuss
Lockout (for machinery and power tools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of lockout • When to lock out • Equipment-specific procedures
Safeguards (for machinery and power tools)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types and purposes of safeguards • Inspection and use of safeguards • Requirement to leave safeguards in place
Electrical hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures for de-energization and lockout • Maintaining safe distances from power lines and conductors
Musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs — e.g., sprains and strains)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use of specialized equipment for lifting or moving materials or people • Storage priorities (heavier items at lower heights and lighter items higher up) • Safe lifting techniques • Office ergonomics • Control measures
Forklifts and other mobile equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintaining eye contact with equipment operator • Speed limits and locations of travel lanes • Equipment inspection and maintenance • Load limits and procedures for safe operation • Risks associated with wearing earbuds or headphones while operating or working around mobile equipment
Confined spaces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazards of specific confined spaces (e.g., tanks, silos, vats, railcars, hoppers, sewers) • Procedures for working safely in specific confined spaces
Chemical and biological hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential health and safety effects of exposure • Workplace sources of exposure • Ways to prevent exposure • How to recognize signs and symptoms of exposure • Control measures and appropriate PPE

Topic	Things to discuss
Environmental hazards (e.g., noise, cold, heat, sun, wildlife)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Potential health and safety effects of exposure• Workplace sources of exposure• Control measures and appropriate PPE

Resources

Visit [worksafebc.com](https://www.worksafebc.com) for information and resources on a wide range of topics including the following:

- [Searchable OHS Regulation & related materials](#)
- [Training & orienting workers](#)
- [Young & new workers](#)
- [Roles, rights & responsibilities](#)
- [Tools, machinery & equipment](#) (e.g., ladders, safeguarding, kitchen equipment, personal protective equipment)
- [Hazards & exposures](#) (e.g., noise, sun, confined spaces, violence)
- [Injuries & diseases](#) (e.g., hearing loss, sprains and strains, burns)
- [Start safe, stay safe — from day one](#)