

# Healthy Living 9

## **Workplace Health and Safety, A Curriculum Supplement**

February 20, 2014

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Healthy Living 9: Workplace Health and Safety, A Curriculum Supplement

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# Introduction

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The aim of this Workplace Health and Safety module is to build awareness among grade 9 students of the importance of workplace health and safety; to enhance capacity among youth to analyze any work environment in which they might find themselves (for paid and unpaid work); and for students to develop critical thinking, reflection, and communication skills needed to contribute to the development of a culture of safety within their work lives.

New and unfamiliar terminology related to workplace culture and workplace health and safety will be introduced to students as part of learning and teaching during this module. Therefore, it is suggested that teachers have a prepared word wall for the beginning of this module. Terms can be posted around the room for continued reference throughout the module.

## Suggested Time Frame

This module has been designed to be delivered in eight hours. It is suggested that teachers introduce this module after students return from March break, closer to the spring when students may be thinking of summer work. In this way, workplace health and safety becomes more relevant to youth, as opposed to early in the school year when the majority of grade 9 students are not yet involved in the workplace beyond school.

## Specific Curriculum Outcome

Students will be expected to identify and practise strategies for staying healthy and safe in the workplace.

## Enduring Understandings

By the end of this outcome, students should understand that

- through recognition of hazards and controls in the workplace, one reduces the primary causes of injury to young workers
- there are standard guidelines and procedures for reducing risk and injury in the workplace, as well as rights and responsibilities associated with the workplace
- there are benefits to safe workplaces for self and others
- there are factors that contribute to making workplaces physically and emotionally safe (e.g., attitudes, policies, team building, training programs)



# Unit 1: Workplace Hazards— Awareness and Control

**Students will be expected to identify and practise strategies for staying healthy and safe in the workplace.**

## Assessment, Teaching, and Learning

Invite students to design displays that show types of hazards in the home and/or types of hazards at workplaces and examples of controls that can be used to stay safe and healthy. Content can be broad or specific to one type of workplace or hazard (e.g., chemicals).

Teachers can present students with different PPE or a visual of a hazard and have students identify practices that could help to keep someone safe while they are working with or around that hazard or explain how the PPE provides for a safer working environment.

Having reviewed the WHMIS section of Appendix C and discussed how to work safely around hazardous materials, students can distinguish between consumer and household hazardous materials and design small poster displays or artistic representations (sculptures, structures) of examples of WHMIS symbols and where they may be found.

Students can design and present different types of graphs and charts reflecting youth injury statistics (Appendix D). These could be displayed around the school to increase awareness of the school community.

Having examined various workplace hazardous circumstances or emergencies, students can perform a script, dramatization, or role play showing how people could react, and how they should react. Prior to this, students can review first-aid or other emergency procedures they already know (stop, drop, and roll) and/or use the scenarios in Appendix B.

Students can reflect on their own workplaces, create questions they can ask, and practise asking them with a peer or in small groups.

Ask students to think about their definition of health and apply this definition of health in terms of workplaces. There are physical health considerations related to environment that students should be aware of when making decisions about where to work and considering awareness and safety practices when beginning work. Provide students with examples of health-related issues associated with long-term and short-term exposure to products that can have health consequences if proper protection is not used.

Discuss the role of “work” in our personal development. How could we define “work” in our lives right now? Why do we work? How does it influence how we grow personally and socially? Ask students to discuss places they have worked and/or where they may like to work in the next few years. Students can think about these questions

individually or in a group, write response on sticky notes, and post responses for classroom discussion and exploration. It is important that students understand that work can be paid or unpaid.

Discuss different types of work done at home. What kinds of home-related work could be hazardous to our health and safety? What are some things that we use or do in home-related work that could be hazardous to our health and safety? Students can conduct a media search for examples of hazards and of hazard controls in workplaces, home, and community; research primary causes of injury to young workers; and present findings to the class.

Discuss different types of workplaces. Where do family members and friends work? Do you think that school is considered a workplace? What are some things that we use or do in workplaces that could be hazardous to our health and safety?

Have students suggest practices to keep safe from hazardous things or situations that can be found at home, while playing sports or being physically active (e.g., cycling, skateboarding, driving, walking), and in workplaces. Introduce the different types (referred to as classes) of hazards found in all workplaces (Appendix C.) Are there similarities between work and home? Students and teachers should explore the use of electronic devices and their capacity to distract while working or operating machinery, including a motor vehicle. Teachers can then introduce the different types of hazard control (Appendix C) including personal protective equipment (PPE). Explore different PPE that we may use at home or while playing sports and at the workplace to protect ourselves from injury (Appendix C).

Teachers can invite Building Futures for Youth students (through the board Community-Based Learning Consultant), O2 students, and/or students from the Co-operative Education program from their school or a nearby high school to the class to talk about their knowledge of safety in the workplace and credentials they may have acquired through their work placement experiences.

Discuss the importance of sleep and the role that fatigue can play in terms of workplace health and safety. How much sleep do youth in their age group require?

Discuss how Canada's Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) helps us to control hazards, both at work and at home (Appendix C). How can learning about the control of workplace hazards also protect our health and safety at home? What are some potential consequences of not being taught how to safely work around hazardous things or situations?

Read and discuss the case study "Britney's Story" found in Appendix A.

Students can create their own case studies from stories or experiences they may be familiar with, being mindful not to share names or lay blame. Encourage them to include their ideas on how to prevent a workplace illness or injury.

Enlist the help of your school custodian(s). Ask that they take the class or small groups of students on a tour and explain what, how, when, and where they perform their duties in order to keep the school safe for staff and students. The custodian or a Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (JOSHE) member may be willing to supply the class with their checklist and/or forms for inspection. Students can analyze the form and modify it for various environments.

Ask students to conduct a hazard assessment of the school, home, or a workplace they have access to or are familiar with. Students and teachers can co-create the hazard assessment.

Teachers or students can prepare a media portfolio that provides media coverage of regional and/or national workplace health and safety incidences or issues.

## Resources/Notes



### Internet

- *Labour and Advanced Education, "Health and Safety."* (Province of Nova Scotia 2013)  
<http://novascotia.ca/lae/healthandsafety>  
Go to left side menu, select Publications, Regulations and Related Materials, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS).
- *Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS)* (Government of Canada 2014)  
[www.ccohs.ca](http://www.ccohs.ca)  
Go to the left side menu, select OSH Answers, Chemicals & Materials.
- *Work Safe. For Life.: Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia* (Workers Compensation Board of Nova Scotia 2008)  
[www.wcb.ns.ca](http://www.wcb.ns.ca)  
– Young worker safety key search terms: WCB, Nova Scotia, young worker, workplace safety.
- *Work Safe. For Life.: Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia, "Resources for Educators."* (Workers Compensation Board of Nova Scotia 2014)  
<http://worksafeforlife.ca/Home/GettingStarted/ForEducators/ResourcesForEducators.aspx>



### Print

- Glossary
- Hazard Awareness and Control (Appendix C)
- Case Studies (Appendix A)
- Scenarios (Appendix B)
- Nova Scotia Youth: Work and Injury Statistics (Appendix E)



### Notes



# Unit 2: Workplace Attitudes and Impact on Safety

**Students will be expected to identify and practise strategies for staying healthy and safe in the workplace.**

## Assessment, Teaching, and Learning

Students can write a poem, short story, write/sing a song or rap, or create a visual of effects that positive and/or negative attitudes can have on safety, and/or explore through design and presentation of role-play (or posters, video, etc.), examples of how our attitudes, and those of co-workers, can affect our feelings of well-being and safety at work. Teachers may wish to use Appendix B as a starter.

Have students practise approaching their supervisor on a safety/health concern. What does this look like? What does this sound like? Have students provide feedback to their peers and offer suggestions. Have students share what was difficult about this exercise. What might affect the ease or discomfort in doing this in a live work situation?

Students can design and deliver a role-play, dramatization, or comic strip that illustrates

- how to talk to parents/guardians about situations at work that make us uncomfortable or unsafe
- how to talk to a work supervisor about job situations that make us (or someone else) uncomfortable or unsafe

Students can design and deliver an advertising campaign that demonstrates awareness of their workplace safety rights and responsibilities (Appendix E) that meets the following criteria:

- Makes youth aware of their rights associated with the workplace.
- Makes employers aware of their workplace safety responsibilities (Appendix E).
- Shows links among attitude, behaviour, and workplace safety.

Students can write a letter to a local newspaper or politician that proposes ways and gives examples of how workplaces (specifically where youth most commonly work) could be safer and healthier.

Students can design a board game or active game, such as an obstacle course, that integrates hazards and safety.

Teachers can facilitate discussion on how our personal attitudes can impact others and environments and how the attitudes of others impact us. Teachers can facilitate a T-chart exercise exploring what positive attitudes and negative attitudes look like and sound like in the workplace (could be broadened to connect to other environments such as home, school, or other peer environments) and debrief with discussion. Teachers can facilitate a think-pair-share exercise on factors that shape personal attitudes (e.g., social conditions, the values of the people we grow up with, our experiences, the expectations that others have of us). Discuss and give examples of positive and negative attitudes—our own and those of others—that can impact us emotionally and physically, and in turn, our safety at work.

Share the following statement, “Your boss is not your mom.” Ask students to give examples of responsibilities that parents/guardians typically have in regard to their physical and emotional well-being and safety (list on one side of the board) and then examples of responsibilities that they think employers or bosses may have in regard to the physical and emotional well-being and safety of employees (list on other side of the board). Search for similar points (e.g., they are not allowed to hit you), obvious dissimilar points (e.g., parents/guardians give love, bosses do not have to like or love you) and points that may be related somehow (e.g., parents and/or guardians protect us, employers cannot hurt us / have to give us some protection). Extend the discussion so that students have the opportunity to reflect on who is a safe and trusted adult in their lives who could provide support and help them if and when they have to address an unsafe work environment.

Review what the workplace health and safety measures are at school. Connect the first day of school with the first day of work. What are aspects of safety both teachers and students should know?

Present and discuss the case study, “Yang’s Story” (Appendix A).

Explain that Nova Scotia has a safety law, the Nova Scotia *Occupational Health and Safety Act* that covers the rights and responsibilities of all to keep each other safe at work (Appendix E: Rights and Responsibilities). Introduce and discuss the three key workplace safety rights that all workers have: the right to know, the right to participate, and the right to refuse (Appendix E). Teachers may wish to have students investigate a website exploring workplace safety rights. Ask students to give examples of how these three rights are exercised when workplace hazards are identified and controlled.

Choose a piece of safety legislation or regulation and explore with the class how it protects young workers. Regulations for Workplace Violence, first aid, and WHMIS are good starting points (Nova Scotia OHS Division website in Resources).

## Resources/Notes



### Internet

- *Labour and Advanced Education*, “Health and Safety.” (Province of Nova Scotia 2013)  
<http://novascotia.ca/lae/healthandsafety>  
 Go to left side menu and select the following:
  - Workplace Violence
  - Young Workers Resource
    - > Health and Safety Guide for New Retail Workers
  - Publications, Regulations and Related Materials
    - > Violence in the Workplace Regulations
    - > First Aid Regulations
    - > Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System
- *Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS)* (Government of Canada 2014)  
[www.ccohs.ca](http://www.ccohs.ca)

- *Work Safe. For Life.: Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia* (Workers Compensation Board of Nova Scotia 2008)  
[www.wcb.ns.ca](http://www.wcb.ns.ca)
  - Young worker safety key search terms: WCB, Nova Scotia, young worker, workplace safety.
- *Work Safe. For Life.: Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia, "Resources for Educators."* (Workers Compensation Board of Nova Scotia 2014)  
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## Print

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- Glossary
- Case Studies (Appendix A)
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- Nova Scotia Youth: Work and Injury Statistics (Appendix D)
- Rights, Responsibilities, and Relationships (Appendix E)



## Notes

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# Unit 3: Understanding Safer Workplaces and Their Impact on Self and Others

**Students will be expected to identify and practise strategies for staying healthy and safe in the workplace.**

## Assessment, Teaching, and Learning

Scenarios or scripts can be provided to students or created by them to perform dramatizations or role-plays that show how two to three different hazards in a workplace are handled: first by workers who feel safe and respected in their jobs, and then by workers who may not feel safe and respected in their jobs. Ask the class and the actors to analyze the differences. Teachers may wish to use Appendices A, D, and E as a reference for this activity.

Students can conduct a hazard assessment of the school or their home.

Invite students to identify or imagine a summer job they would like to have. Have students provide a written or verbal analysis of what they might expect a safe working environment to be like, and ask what their checklist would look like.

Have students envision a future LifeWork scenario that highlights the interconnectedness between a physically, socially, and emotionally healthy workplace and a healthy home life. This could be represented through art, a storyboard, or an inventory checklist. Students may wish to add this to their LifeWork Portfolio.

After having read and discussed the case study “Keisha and Jamal” from Appendix B, have students choose one or two hazards in a workplace common to young workers and, like Keisha and Jamal, write an action plan to make safe positive change when working around those hazards.

Have students choose a type of job and investigate some of the needed safety measures to do that job (e.g., the PPE required, safety training, safe work practices). (The OHS Division and CCOHS websites will show some examples.) Invite students to design a poster, a triptych, or a comic strip that illustrates these jobs or workplaces operating safely and in a positive manner.

Ask students to choose either “Britney’s Story” or “Yang’s Story” (Appendix A) and individually to write in bullet form at least four to five reasons why these events would not have occurred in a safe workplace. In small groups, have students discuss their reasoning and compile on flip chart paper each student’s different points. Post the rewritten case studies around the room.

Ask the class to create a Safety Award Program for businesses. What must they do to be eligible for your award? Create a checklist of measures the business must meet to prove their safe and healthy workplace practices. Name your program, design a prize or certificate, and present it to the class or small group along with a brief description of a prize-winning business and what it did to win the safety award.

Ask students individually or in pairs to select a volunteer or workplace setting (e.g., grocery/retail, fast food / coffee shop, movie theatre, child care, farm/landscaping) and design a “Welcome to Your Safe Workplace!” brochure/booklet for new workers.

Students can co-create assessment for this brochure/booklet. The criteria might include

- what the workplace is doing now to ensure safe and healthy work
- how workers and managers will benefit by respecting each other’s safety and health
- what workers and managers need to do, and how they need to act, to keep themselves and others safe

Ask students to reflect on and describe places and/or situations where they feel (or have felt) safe (e.g., where they live, at school, with friends, place of worship, the library, community centres, with trusted people). List these situations on one side of the board. Next, ask for descriptions of some of the qualities that these safe places (or situations) have—physical (security systems), emotional/attitudinal (nature of how people interact), behavioural (how people act). List these qualities on the other side of the board. Compare and look for shared qualities. This activity provides an opportunity to instill the importance of identifying safe and trusted adults in all aspects of their lives who can help them.

Discuss the importance of sleep and the implications for workplace health and safety. What is the impact of sleep deprivation on the job?

Make a list of distractions that can occur at the workplace, both those that are employee-driven and those that are employer-driven (cell phones, noise, etc.).

Explore with students how our behaviour and that of others is influenced by being in places/situations/environments where we feel safe. For example, are we more respectful of others? Do we feel more free to ask questions? Are we more likely to act when something needs to be done to keep ourselves/others safe? Why?

Have students envision and describe what they see as a safe workplace. What can be seen? What is the “mood” of the workplace? How do people interact with one another? This can also be explored by looking at workplaces often common to youth (e.g., fast food, grocery retail, clothing retail) and how the hazards there (hot materials and surfaces, heavy lifting, slips and falls, violence and harassment) are safely handled.

After reviewing Appendix E, ask students to describe a workplace where the employer and workers are fulfilling their safety responsibilities. What is the employer doing? What are the workers and supervisors doing? What are some of the emotional, social, and physical benefits of healthy and safe work? To us as workers? To our families, friends, and communities? To workplaces and their business?

## Resources/Notes



### Internet

- *Labour and Advanced Education, "Health and Safety."* (Province of Nova Scotia 2013)  
<http://novascotia.ca/lae/healthandsafety>
- *Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS)* (Government of Canada 2014)  
[www.ccohs.ca](http://www.ccohs.ca)
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### Notes



# Appendix A: Short Case Studies

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Following are three short case studies and suggested questions to support an analysis.

- What are some of the underlying factors influencing the situations described?
- Is there an immediate or emergency response required? How is this done?
- What did the main character do to protect his or her own safety?
- How do others fulfil or fail in their own safety responsibilities? What is the impact?
- What changes need to be made? Which practices show a healthy workplace?

## Britney's Story

Britney has always helped to support her mom and little brother; the three of them are a tight-knit family. Whether it is helping around the house, babysitting her brother, or contributing what she can to the groceries and monthly rent, Britney is proud that she can do this for her family. For several months she has been working at a fast-food restaurant in her neighbourhood. Britney's supervisor always tells her that she is one of the few workers she can really count on because Britney works so quickly and always makes herself available for shifts. Britney is pleased and hopes that she can soon move up to supervisor, which would mean more money.

One evening her supervisor tells Britney that she has to leave early, and asks her to train Erin, a new employee. Britney's never done this before, and is proud about being asked, but also nervous. There is no orientation checklist. Whenever a new person is hired, he or she just follows the supervisor or another employee around until he or she knows where everything is, so this is what Britney does as well. At the end of shift, she and Erin begin the clean-up of the grills. Britney looks around for the degreaser, and finds an unfamiliar container with a sticky note that says "grill." She has never seen this product before and phones her supervisor at home to find out how to use it. The supervisor sounds irritated and says that if Britney cannot handle a simple cleaning job, then she will have to come in herself. Britney does not want to make trouble, so she says that she will take care of it. The girls sprinkle the cleaning product all over the still warm grill. Within seconds they both begin coughing and soon start to vomit. They help each other crawl outside where they are discovered and rushed to hospital.

## Yang's Story

Yang works part-time doing vegetable prep in a fast-paced kitchen of a popular downtown restaurant. The atmosphere is loud and profane, which the head chef promotes as a "toughening up" experience for the younger workers. Yang does not like it, but knows that working here will look good on his resumé. He always chats casually with the other staff, but rarely discusses life outside of work. Some of Yang's co-workers have met his boyfriend Mark, which does not seem to be an issue with anyone, until one of the sous-chefs and the evening dishwasher find out. Within days they were regularly calling him nasty names and telling discriminatory jokes.

Yang eventually puts in a complaint with the head chef, but, in front of everyone, is basically told that this is how kitchens run so he had better just “toughen up.” Yang does his best to ignore the comments, and the other kitchen staff do not say anything to the bullies. They just keep their head down so that they will not be targeted.

The situation starts to get worse. One day someone “accidentally” shuts the door to the walk-in refrigerator that Yang is working in. He has to struggle in the dark to find the release handle. Whenever he comes back from his supper break, he finds crude cartoons taped above his work station and old coffee grounds smeared all over his clean cutting board. Midway through the next evening, Yang has finished preparing the onions and goes to the hand-washing station to wash up before beginning the celery. He returns, picks up his knife, and begins the cut when the handle of the knife suddenly shifts in his right hand. Someone has smeared the knife handle with cooking oil. The blade cuts deeply into the tops of the four fingers on his left hand.

## Keisha and Jamal

Keisha and Jamal work in a very large “big box” grocery store. Keisha works on cash and Jamal usually works on the floor, but he is often asked to bring shopping carts back into the store from the parking lot. So that they do not have to do the long walk too often, the guys often stack up to 25 carts at a time or move two strings by pushing one and pulling the other. Several of them have suffered some pretty significant injuries: two were hit by cars after dark, at least three to four are out with shoulder and back injuries, and one broke his ankle and another his elbow after slipping on wet pavement. Along with these injuries come the daily bumps, bruises, and cuts that come with maneuvering and fighting with the carts.

The number of shifts in which Jamal is asked to do this work increases; he tells Keisha he is pretty sure it is only a matter of time before he gets hurt. Together they decide to do something about this and start by filling out a hazard report along with a letter to the evening supervisor. They give the following suggestions:

1. Limit the number of carts that can be pushed.
2. Give reflective vests to anyone doing this work.
3. Make sure that people are wearing sturdy non-slip footwear.
4. Provide staff training to everyone on preventing back and shoulder injuries.
5. Make sure that supervisors know that working safely will mean working more carefully.
6. Consider buying one or two of the motorized cart pushers in use at other stores.

They finish their letter by saying that doing even a few of these things will probably mean a safer and healthier workforce. A week later the store manager pages Keisha and Jamal to come to his office. Nervously they go in, expecting to be chastised for being uppity, but instead are thanked by the manager. It seems no one has ever before made a hazard report about this task, and the store has decided to follow through on all of Keisha and Jamal’s suggestions. They each make employee-of-the-month and are invited to be on the store’s safety committee.

## Cassie's Story

As she walks to work, the cell in Cassie's purse starts to buzz. Tiredly she digs for it and reads the message. For the last couple of days she and her best friend have almost constantly texted back and forth about what Cassie should do about her cheating boyfriend. Cassie is emotionally worn out and physically exhausted. Jolted awake with each buzz of the phone under her pillow, she has barely slept for two nights. Sighing, she puts the phone in her pocket. Cassie knows there is a strict "no phones while with kids" rule at the daycare where she works, but today feels that she cannot go the whole shift without hearing from her bff.

When she gets to work, she and her co-worker Mike are given the "Tigers"—the busy kids—to take for a walk to the park. Cassie groans knowing that this group needs a constant eye every minute of any outing. She is also pretty sure that she is not up to that this morning, but rather than asking for another assignment, Cassie quietly helps to get the kids ready—all the while anxiously aware of the phone insistently buzzing in her pocket.

The walk to the park goes smoothly, and every couple of minutes Cassie secretly reads and replies to the texts that fill the screen. When they arrive at the park, she and Mike place the kids in two groups and Mike leaves with his, walking past the new skateboarding common, on their way to the swing sets. A boy in Cassie's group is upset because he wants to go with Mike. When she again turns away to reply to another text, the boy quietly runs off. At the shouts of the other children, Cassie looks up to see the boy at least 50 metres away and heading toward the lip of the deep concrete skate bowl. Leaving the other kids she runs after him, shouting for Mike to catch the boy. She arrives as Mike swiftly grabs him from the edge of the bowl, turns on the spot, and passes him to Cassie. With relief, she hugs the youngster and looks up to thank Mike. She sees him wildly circling his arms trying to regain his balance at the edge of the skate bowl. Cassie lunges forward to grab Mike, who has already dropped backwards with a sharp cry onto the concrete base.

## Michel's Story

(Written in collaboration with the Society of Farm Safety Nova Scotia)

Michel whistles happily as he enters his uncle's dairy barn. By the time he turned 15, he knew that he wanted to farm. His plan is to finish school, work with his uncle, and then eventually have a small farm of his own. This morning Michel looks up from cleaning the stalls and sees his uncle enter the barn with a couple different key chains in his hand. His uncle says he thinks it is time for Michel to start learning to drive the different farm vehicles, and he could start with the skid steer. After his uncle shows him the basic functions of the skidder, Michel spends all week practising the tricky steering by driving the barnyard, scooping and dumping the manure from the barn to the manure pit. The skidder is old, its hydraulics is not in good condition, and the side screens are pretty much missing, but Michel thinks it is the coolest thing going.

Early the next Sunday morning, Michel's uncle meets him at the barn door and asks if he would take the skidder out to the back field and bring up a hay bale to the barn. He tells Michel that he has changed the bucket to a bale fork, and explains that all he has to do is insert the fork into the hay bale, raise the bale, and drive it back. As Michel

walks to the skidder, his uncle says he will be along in about ten minutes, and then turns back to the barn. Michel roars the old loader to life and heads out across the bumpy field.

Almost right away Michel notices that the skidder handles differently on the uneven ground. He slows his speed and decides to turn down and follow a smoother path beside the drainage ditch that edges the field. The skidder feels more even and Michel relaxes. He drives up to the closest hay bale, stops, and lets the engine idle as he thinks about how to do the task. Hoping to see his uncle, Michel looks over his shoulder, but there's no sign of him yet. Determinedly, he manoeuvres the arms and the bale fork until he feels it is in position. Michel pauses for a moment, then steps on the gas. Michel is pretty sure he only has to lift the bale a few inches off the ground—just enough to half hoist, half drag the bale back up to the barn. He raises the arms and carefully begins to pivot the loader to the right so that he can drive back on the smooth shoulder of the drainage ditch. Out of the corner of his eye Michel can see his uncle coming on the ATV. He grins and waves at him, and continues his turn. Just then the left side tires begin to lift and Michel is thrown sharply to the right of his seatbelt. The skid steer tips and crashes down onto the sharp rocks of the deep drainage ditch. Over the roar of the loader's engine, Michel can hear his uncle screaming his name.

## Jamie's Story

Turning out to sea, Jamie's father could hear the clink of colourful nail polish bottles that Jamie always kept in a little box in the wheelhouse. He chuckled to himself as he thought about how the mood onboard lightened whenever she came on, and how she always brought a smile to him and his two brothers who made up the crew of the *Miss Jamie*. He was every bit as proud of Jamie as his friends were of their sons working alongside them. And secretly he liked to see the flash of colour on his daughter's hands as she helped on the boat.

From the deck where she was carefully coiling lines, Jamie looked back at her father. She was just as proud of him. His skill as a captain and his concern for his crew showed in what he did and how he did it. Jamie respected him as a parent and as a boss, but over the last few days this was making her life pretty confusing. The week before Jamie had seen her uncle nearly washed off the deck of her father's *Cape Islander*. His brother's quick action saved him, but Jamie could not stop the frightening scene from playing over and over in her head. She knew that rolling seas combined with setting the lines and buoys, and working the winch could quickly make the deck of the boat a dangerous place. Her father constantly watched what was going on and frequently hollered to her and his brothers to be careful and to watch their feet. Jamie understood that he cared about his crew, so it was hard to understand why he did not make anyone wear a lifejacket.

After a good trip out, Jamie and her father returned home and made supper together. As usual they went in to the livingroom to quietly eat and watch the news, but tonight Jamie decided it had to be different. She got up from the couch and turned off the television. Her dad looked up in surprise and asked what she was doing. "Dad, I need to talk to you about something."

Her father replied, "OK, as long as it's not about the birds and the bees or something ..."

“Dad! Quit it! No, it’s not that!” Now they were both laughing. Then Jamie said, “Seriously, Dad, do you make the rules on your boat?”

“Yes.”

“And Uncle Steve and Uncle Mark have to listen to you?”

Her father said, “Yes,” and is looking at her funny.

Jamie felt all weird in her stomach, but took a deep breath and said, “I need you to make a rule that everyone has to wear a life jacket when they’re onboard. Please Dad. You’re the captain, you make the rules.” Her eyes felt all hot, but Jamie kept going. She heard herself telling her father how she had been feeling since Uncle Mark almost went overboard and that she was not so sure she felt so safe anymore. Before her father could say anything she kept going and said she knew fishing would always be really risky, but she really loved it, and if everyone would just wear a lifejacket it would be less dangerous, and please, Dad, please make the rule. “It’s your responsibility, Dad, you’re the captain.”

Her father looked at Jamie and set his plate aside. He got up and walked to the big window that looked out over the cove. Jamie sat nervously. She had never spoken to her father like this before. After a few silent minutes he turned back to her from the window and said, “You’re right.” He said that he had been thinking about Mark’s close call as well, and that he thought it was time to make some changes. He crossed the room, folded Jamie into his arms with a big bear hug and said, “I am so proud of you, sweetie.” That night Jamie had the best sleep ever.

The next morning the entire crew met (they include Jamie) to discuss the captain’s new safety rules for wearing a lifejacket whenever onboard. They brought out what they had now from the cupboard in the wheelhouse and inspected it. Her father decided that some new pieces had to be bought and sent Uncle Mark to the marine supply store that afternoon. Uncle Steve was tasked with mounting heavy duty hooks in the wheelhouse so that the lifejackets would always be easily seen and worn. As he worked he looked over at Jamie and said, “Was this your doing, kiddo?”

Jamie smiled and said, “Yeah, it was.”



# Appendix B: Scenarios

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The following are five short scenarios and suggested questions to support discussion.

- What are the characters' options?
  - What should they do next? What needs to be done immediately? Why?
  - How could they respond? How can they prepare?
  - Will there be results that they need to live with? How can they prepare for these?
1. Anna volunteered at the local animal shelter for a year, and now has been hired to work part-time. On Anna's first day, she has a new job orientation with a supervisor whom she often volunteered for in the past. Throughout the day the supervisor skips over many of the orientation points, saying "I know that you already know this, Anna." As a volunteer Anna never worked on her own. She is really not sure that she knows as much as the supervisor assumes.
  2. William works with his uncle mowing lawns and laying sod. He always makes sure that Will wears steel-toed boots and is trained for the power equipment they use. Will really likes his uncle, and his mom is confident that her brother is running a safe business. Even though Will does not have his license yet, his uncle has started letting him drive the company truck short distances. William loves to drive, but knows he should not. He does not want to disappoint his uncle or make his mom angry.
  3. Brin and Hannah are best friends and have both started working at the Co-op. Part of each shift is outside in the garden centre. Brin hates the bugs but Hannah does not, so she always does Brin's garden centre time for her. Brin always makes sure to go out and see Hannah whenever she can. On many evenings Brin sees Hannah's nasty ex-boyfriend hanging around the garden centre. It worries her, but Hannah says it is no big deal. One night she sees him go into the garden centre. Brin hears shouting and Hannah crying.
  4. Yaz's aunt has asked him to work as a full-time assistant to Mike, one of the journeyperson carpenters in her renovation business. Mike always takes the time to teach Yaz about his trade and craft. He shows him how to safely use the many different types of power and hand tools. Yaz feels respected and really enjoys the work. He would like to pursue carpentry as a career and study as Mike's apprentice, which makes knowing what to do about Mike's noon-hour drinking even more difficult.

5. Jason is a lifeguard and enjoys his work at the local pool. Every week he teaches classes, supervises public swims, and takes his turn in the lifeguards' office. Yesterday his supervisor called him at home to say that the water-quality technician who does all the testing and mixing of chemicals for the pool would be off sick for two weeks. She tells Jason that the lifeguards will have to help out with this or the pool will be closed. Jason does not want this to happen, and the next day he finds himself in the tiny chemical shed with an instruction binder that he does not understand.

# Appendix C: Introduction to Hazard Awareness and Control

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The belief that workplace injury, illness, and even death should be expected and, in some types of industry, accepted as a “cost of doing business” is one that many Nova Scotians still hold. By engaging learners to consider and discuss their thoughts about how this sort of belief came to be, and how it can be changed, educators are supporting students to question and work toward changing the attitude that workplace injury is inevitable. Doing this means that teachers are influencing how young people work now and how they will work in the future.

## Workplace Hazard Awareness

A workplace hazard is something that can hurt you, or has the potential to hurt you. There are hazards in every type of job and every type of workplace. Everyone (the employer, workers, supervisors, etc.) at the workplace shares responsibility to identify and control hazards. For workers, this first step usually means recognizing what a workplace hazard is (or could be) and knowing how to report it to the employer. For employers, the first step is to inform workers of potential hazards and to have reporting and control systems in place. But what if you are not quite sure what to look for? What is a workplace hazard, anyway?

### Workplace Hazards: Classes

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Even though hazards look different in every workplace and in every type of industry, there are five defined classes. Below is a list and introductory definitions for each.

#### PHYSICAL

Physical hazards are things or agents that we come into contact with that carry potential for harm. Many physical hazards are things that can be seen: slippery floors, stairways without railings, frayed cords on equipment, or rickety ladders. Other physical hazards are referred to as physical agents. These are sources of energy that cannot always be seen, but still have potential to harm the body. Physical agents include things like level and nature of noise, vibration, radiation, temperature, or pressure.

#### CHEMICAL

Chemicals are in everything around us. Natural and manufactured chemicals both have potential for harm and come in the form of liquids, gases, vapours, solids, or particulates. The type of risk that a chemical can pose is based on the level and type of exposure that someone may have to it. In Canada, laws like WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System) and Transportation of Dangerous Goods are in place for the safe handling, transportation, and disposal of certain chemical products.

**BIOLOGICAL**

Biological hazards are typically in the form of bacteria and viruses transmitted by contact with insects, birds, animals, plants and fungi, and other humans. Unprotected exposure to biological hazards can result in a range of infections, illnesses, and disease. Some biological hazards may appear fairly commonplace, like the risk of catching a cold from a customer. Other types of biological hazards, such as exposure to body fluid-borne viruses, or bacteria carried by some fungi, can be extremely dangerous.

**ERGONOMIC**

Ergonomic hazards are caused by the way work tasks are designed and carried out. The injuries that result from ergonomic hazards always affect the muscles and the skeleton and are the most common type of workplace injury in Nova Scotia. These injuries may happen suddenly, but are more likely to form over very long periods of time. Ergonomic hazards can be seen in work that involves awkward body postures (working in the same body posture for long periods), high body force (lifting or carrying heavy or awkward loads), and high-task repetition (same movements over long periods.) Improper or poorly designed work stations, tools, and equipment are also a part of ergonomic hazards.

**PSYCHO-SOCIAL**

Psycho-social hazards can arise out of the many different ways that people interact with each other. This type of hazard may show up as negative workplace conditions like bullying, violence, or sexual harassment. It can be due to stress outside or inside the workplace, the type of work being done, or because of the attitudes and behaviours that different people bring to their jobs. Psycho-social hazards have the potential to harm the physical and mental health and safety of persons at the workplace. Nova Scotia's Workplace Violence Regulation is one example of safety law that guides employers and workers to recognize and deal with psycho-social hazards as seriously as they would any other class of hazard.

**Workplace Hazards: Contributing Factors**

Other factors contribute to how hazards impact a workplace and the people in it. There are four main types of contributing factors; they can be remembered by the acronym **PEME**.

- **People** as contributing factors to workplace hazards means considering how the action, or non-action, of a person influences workplace hazards and situations.
  - For example, during the supper hour rush at a fast-food restaurant, two workers crash into each other in the kitchen and one falls and breaks her elbow. It seems clear that people's actions of rushing, combined with the hazard of a slippery floor, clearly led to the serious injury. However, it is people who design work process. It is important to question why people were rushing, and whether the risk for injury could be decreased by improving the process for safely dealing with rush-hour work.

- **Equipment** as contributing factors to workplace hazards means determining whether equipment and tools, and even protective equipment or clothing, are proper for the job.
  - Preparing burgers in a fast-food restaurant requires a metal spatula with a handle long enough to protect the worker from the hot surface. Equipment can also refer to personal protective equipment or clothing. If workers are wearing protective gear that does not fit them, is not in good condition, or is not appropriate to the task, then the equipment itself can be a contributing factor to the risk for injury.
- **Materials** as contributing factors to workplace hazards means thinking about whether a material is proper for the job and if it is being properly used and handled.
  - One example is the use of cleaning products. Not all cleaning products are appropriate for all settings. Using a strong degreasing product designed for industrial kitchens on the counters of a clothing store can create risk for injury to both workers and customers. The existing workplace hazard (“germy” counters) becomes worsened by the improper handling and use of a material. Safe work requires proper materials and the proper use of those materials.
- **Environment** as a contributing factor refers to how conditions around workers and supervisors further impact hazards and workplace safety.
  - Some aspects are more obvious than others. Are work areas too cold or too hot? Is lighting adequate or is it not suitable for the work being done? Are work areas cluttered, crowded, or dirty? Other factors may not be as easy to see. Are key pads on computers or cash registers clean? Is the air in the workplace healthy? It is important to recognize that many jobs are carried out in difficult and hazardous settings. To ensure workplace environment is not creating even more harm, workers and employers need to identify when further hazard controls are needed.

All workplaces and types of work have different hazards. This is normal. Working safely means recognizing hazards and contributing factors, talking to your supervisor about how to work safely around those hazards, and then doing everything possible to work safely and prevent injury and illness.

## **Workplace Hazards: Reporting**

Analyzing and controlling hazards first requires that employers have a process in place for identifying and reporting hazards. This information usually comes in three different ways:

- Hazard reporting by workers and supervisors
- Through workplace safety inspections
- Results of investigations done after an incident in the workplace

Identifying and reporting hazards are crucial first steps to preventing workplace injury, and reporting can be done face to face, in writing, over the phone, by email, or even text message. Nova Scotia safety law requires that employers have a process in place for hazard reporting and for following up on hazard reports, and that workers are told about this process. For workers, our safety law requires that hazards are reported to supervisors. Everyone at the workplace shares responsibility. Everyone has a part to play.

## **Workplace Hazards: Safe Work Procedures**

Safe work procedures (also called “practices”) are a necessary part of hazard awareness and control. When employers and employees are working together for healthy and safe workplaces, they often collaborate in the writing of safe work procedures.

Safe work procedures can be written for one or more tasks and are often completed after a process called “job hazard analysis,” which involves these basic steps:

1. Select the item/task or process to be analyzed.
2. Break the task, process, or use of the item into a sequence of steps.
3. Observe an experienced worker(s) using the item or performing the task or process.
4. Identify potential and/or immediate hazards.
5. Put hazard controls in place to protect the health and safety of workers and of the business. (See below for a brief explanation of hazard controls.)
6. Write the steps in a safe work procedure and train workers. Review it on a regular basis.

## **Workplace Hazards: Controls**

A hazard control is a thing or a process designed and implemented to decrease or eliminate a worker’s exposure to that hazard and their risk for injury. Hazard control is described as being “at the source,” “along the path,” and/or “at the worker,” which show how and where controls are placed between the worker and the hazard.

### **CONTROL AT THE SOURCE**

The best control is to eliminate the source of the hazard. If this is not possible, the substitution of a non-hazardous or less-hazardous approach is the next step. If substitution is not appropriate, then the hazard is enclosed or isolated from workers. For example, you are mowing lawns for the summer and that rickety, unguarded gas-powered lawn mower that will drive away on its own is a real hazard. Because of the type of areas you will be mowing, substituting a human-powered push mower is not appropriate. In this case, enclosing the hazard and isolating it from you means getting a new lawn mower with proper guards at the blades and an emergency stop bar.

### **CONTROL ALONG THE PATH**

Some hazards cannot be fully enclosed or isolated from workers. Placing a control “along the path” describes how different protective measures are put in place between the hazard and the worker, eliminating or decreasing risk for injury. Mowing lawns for the summer means that along-the-path controls can be things like guards or stop bars on equipment, or processes like training regarding the safe use of a lawnmower and how to safely mow on a hill.

**CONTROL AT THE WORKER**

If controls at the source and along the path may not be enough to prevent injury, or the risk for injury, then placing controls “at the worker” will be necessary. These often consist of personal protective clothing and equipment that must be worn while performing certain tasks. Wearing steel-toed boots and hearing protection—even sunscreen and a hat—are forms of hazard control that is “at the worker.” These types of personal controls are often the first that we think about. It is necessary that employers and workers work together to control hazards at the source and along the path as well.



# Appendix D: Nova Scotia Youth— Work and Injury Statistics

The WCBNS collects the registered claims statistics from injury reports sent by injured workers, their employers, or their healthcare professionals. Not all registered claims will result in the worker seeking emergency medical attention or losing time from work. However, all registered claims do reflect that a workplace injury has occurred.

This appendix shows statistics for the years 2009–2012 for workers aged 14–20. Each year has the same four sections: injury description, body part injured, type of injury, and number of claims by industry group; each of these sections have a “top 10.” Please note that the content of the four headings are not in the same order in each column, and that they may differ from year to year. For current statistics, phone the WCBNS (1-800-870-3331; Halifax: 902-491-8999) or visit its website at [www.worksafeforlife.ca/Home/GettingStarted/InjuryStatistics.aspx](http://www.worksafeforlife.ca/Home/GettingStarted/InjuryStatistics.aspx).

## Some Ideas for Activities

- Copy and distribute statistics sheets and compare and contrast the statistics listed in the four sections:
  - in one year
  - over multiple years
  - by injury, body part, type or by industry group, over one or more years
  - other chosen criteria
- Show statistics by percentages and visual representation, using
  - tables
  - charts
  - graphs
  - other chosen criteria
- Explore possible trends and themes
  - over two or more years
  - by type of injury and industry group
  - by injury description and body part
  - other chosen criteria

This appendix does not define the terminology used, nor does it reflect the number of young workers (14–25 yrs.) who have died as a result of workplace injury and illness. For this information, please email [info@wcb.gov.ns.ca](mailto:info@wcb.gov.ns.ca) with “high school request for information” in the subject line.

## WCBNS 2012 Registered Claims

Age	# Claims
14–25	3456
Top 10 injury descriptions	# Claims
Struck by object	552
Overexertion	541
Not coded	352
Unknown	298
Bodily reaction	247
Struck against object	216
Rubbed or abraded by friction or pressure	169
Fall on same level	163
Exposure to caustic, noxious, or allergenic substances	151
Contact with objects and equipment, unspecified	141
Top 10 body parts injured	# Claims
Finger(s), fingernail(s)	575
Back, including spine, spinal cord	490
Face	311
Hand(s), except finger(s)	238
Leg(s)	229
Arm(s)	173
Shoulder, including clavicle, scapula	162
Wrist(s)	135
Multiple body parts	128
Unknown	351

Top 10 injury descriptions	# Claims
Traumatic injuries to muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, etc.	998
Open wounds	634
Surface wounds and bruises	552
Null	351
Other traumatic injuries and disorders	246
Burns	185
Traumatic injuries to bones, nerves, spinal cord	104
Unknown	74
Intracranial injuries	73
Musculoskeletal system and connective tissue diseases and disorders	53
Claims by industry group	# Claims
Retail trade	655
Accommodation / food / beverages	575
Manufacturing	488
Construction	439
Health / social services	298
Wholesale trade	264
Unknown	201
Transportation / storage	100
Government services	98
Other services	97
Business services	79
Communication / utilities	62
Fishing / trapping	32
Agriculture / related services	26
Educational services	15
Logging / forestry	10
Real estate / insurance agents	9
Mining / quarries / oil wells	5
Finance / insurance	3
Note: due to small data set, industry name removed to prevent potential identification.	
<b>Total Claims</b>	<b>3456</b>

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## WCBNS 2011 Registered Claims

<b>Age</b>	<b># Claims</b>
14–25	3567
<b>Top 10 injury descriptions</b>	<b># Claims</b>
Struck by object	604
Overexertion	541
Other events or exposures	339
Struck against object	320
Bodily reaction	294
Fall on same level	200
Contact with objects and equipment	194
Rubbed or abraded by friction or pressure	177
Exposure to caustic, noxious, or allergenic substances	168
Caught in or compressed by equipment or objects	154
<b>Top 10 body parts injured</b>	<b># Claims</b>
Finger(s), fingernail(s)	700
Back, including spine, spinal cord	511
Face	363
Hand(s), except finger(s)	267
Leg(s)	243
Shoulder, including clavicle, scapula	176
Arm(s)	172
Multiple body parts	166
Ankle(s)	145
Wrist(s)	141

<b>Top 10 types of injury</b>	<b># Claims</b>
Traumatic injuries to muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, etc.	909
Open wounds	753
Surface wounds and bruises	640
Other traumatic injuries and disorders	415
Burns	191
Unknown	144
Traumatic injuries to bones, nerves, spinal cord	102
Traumatic injuries and disorders	76
Multiple traumatic injuries and disorders	54
Intracranial injuries	54
<b>Claims by industry group</b>	<b># Claims</b>
Retail trade	707
Accommodation / food / beverages	606
Construction	472
Manufacturing	467
Health / social services	325
Wholesale trade	243
Unknown	225
Other services	119
Government services	89
Transportation / storage	76
Business services	72
Communication / utilities	63
Agriculture / related services	30
Fishing / trapping	26
Logging / forestry	14
Mining / quarries / oil wells	13
Educational services	12
Real estate / insurance agents	8
<b>Total Claims</b>	<b>3567</b>

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## WCBNS 2010 Registered Claims

Age	# Claims
14–25	3665
Top 10 injury descriptions	# Claims
Struck by object	587
Overexertion	513
Unknown	445
Contact with objects and equipment, unspecified	301
Struck against object	267
Bodily reaction	234
Fall on same level	168
Caught in or compressed by equipment or objects	153
Rubbed or abraded by friction or pressure	143
Exposure to caustic, noxious, or allergenic substances	124
Top 10 body parts injured	# Claims
Finger(s), fingernail(s)	670
Back, including spine, spinal cord	531
Face	352
Hand(s), except finger(s)	295
Leg(s)	234
Arm(s)	218
Multiple body parts	211
Shoulder, including clavicle, scapula	190
Wrist(s)	158
Ankle(s)	142

Top 10 types of injury	# Claims
Traumatic injuries and disorders, unspecified	825
Open wounds	735
Traumatic injuries to muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, etc.	714
Surface wounds and bruises	366
Other traumatic injuries and disorders	338
Burns	166
Unknown	127
Traumatic injuries to bones, nerves, spinal cord	89
Musculoskeletal system and connective tissue diseases and disorders	61
Exposure symptoms	45
Claims by industry group	# Claims
Retail trade	719
Accommodation / food / beverages	630
Construction	487
Manufacturing	467
Wholesale trade	276
Health / social services	256
Unknown	215
Government services	121
Other services	111
Transportation / storage	106
Business services	89
Communication / utilities	72
Fishing / trapping	32
Agriculture / related services	26
Logging / forestry	21
Educational services	18
Mining / quarries / oil wells	10
Real estate / insurance agents	9
<b>Total Claims</b>	<b>3665</b>

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## WCBNS 2009 Registered Claims

Age	# Claims
14–25	3533
Top 10 injury event descriptions	# Claims
Overexertion	473
Bodily reaction	291
Struck by object	494
Non classifiable	413
Fall on same level	187
Caught in or compressed by equipment or objects	183
Contact with objects and equipment	353
Fall to lower level	87
Contact with temperature extremes	137
Struck against object	235
Top 10 body parts injured	# Claims
Back	531
Finger(s)	727
Leg(s)	248
Shoulder	170
Hand(s)	269
Ankle(s)	126
Multiple body parts	180
Foot(feet)	98
Wrist(s)	146
Arm(s)	160

Top 10 types of injuries	# Claims
Traumatic injuries to muscles	680
Other traumatic injuries and disorders	426
Traumatic injuries and disorders	677
Open wounds	768
Traumatic injuries to bones	108
Burns	173
Surface wounds and bruises	379
Musculoskeletal system and connective tissue diseases and disorders	41
Multiple traumatic injuries and disorders	28
Intracranial injuries	17
Claims by industry	# Claims
Retail trade	767
Accommodation / food / beverages	636
Manufacturing	424
Construction	388
Health / social services	277
Wholesale trade	267
Other services	118
Transportation / storage	92
Government services	109
Fishing / trapping	32
Communication / utilities	68
Business services	75
Agriculture / related services	31
Real estate / insurance agents	10
Logging / forestry	21
Educational services	10
Mining / quarries / oil wells	14
Unknown	194
<b>Total Claims</b>	<b>3533</b>

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# Appendix E: Rights, Responsibilities, and Relationships—Speaking Up

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This section introduces the Internal Responsibility System (IRS), workplace health and safety rights and responsibilities, speaking up (the influence of attitudes and behaviours on exercising these rights and responsibilities), and a brief introduction to Nova Scotia's safety legislation.

## The Internal Responsibility System

Nova Scotia is unique in Canada because we clearly and purposefully included the Internal Responsibility System to our *OHS Act*. The IRS provides the foundation and the framework for our safety law. It is a safety philosophy that says employers and workers share a direct responsibility for health and safety as an essential part of their work. Nova Scotia's safety law makes clear that this responsibility sharing is based on the level of authority and accountability that different people in the workplace have.

Here are some of the employer and worker responsibilities required by Nova Scotia occupational safety law, all of which reflect the Internal Responsibility System.

### Worker Responsibilities

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- Take every precaution to ensure your own health safety and that of others.
- Follow the company's safety rules, policies, and safe-work procedures.
- Wear personal protective equipment as required by the employer or by the law.
- Use equipment and materials only as authorized by the employer and/or by manufacturer's specifications.
- Co-operate with the employer and the workplace's health and safety committee or representative, for workplace safety.
- Report all hazardous incidents and situations.

### Employer Responsibilities

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- Ensure the health and safety of anyone at or near the workplace.
- Maintain equipment safely and ensure that it is appropriate for the job.
- Inform workers of hazards in the workplace.
- Ensure workers are using correct safety gear to work safely.
- Establish a safety policy and/or program, including safe work procedures, orientation and training programs, and hazard reporting and investigation process.
- Establish a health and safety committee and/or representative, and ensure they have training to fulfill this role.
- Follow safety law and make sure that workers do so as well.

The IRS also includes three principles, which are known as workers' three key safety rights:

- **Right to know** about workplace hazards that can affect their health and safety.
- **Right to participate** in their own health and safety.
- **Right to refuse** work they feel is unsafe or unhealthy to them or someone else.

The **right to know** about the hazards of a workplace should be in action the first day a young worker heads off to his or her job. Having the right to know about hazards includes the workers' right to ask about hazards, and employers' responsibility to tell him or her about the hazards at that workplace. This includes how to avoid potential injury from those hazards. Every workplace and every job has hazards. But when workers exercise their right to know, and employers fulfill their responsibility to tell and educate, the chance of being injured goes down, and the health and safety of the workplace goes up!

The **right to participate** in our own health and safety, and that of others, is a cornerstone of the Internal Responsibility System. When workers exercise their right to participate, they are working to ensure that their voices are heard. When employers put programs in place that support the right to participate in safety, they are showing that they value the health, safety, and input of workers. In action, the right to participate may look like joining the health and safety committee (a process for reporting hazards) and everyone at the workplace taking part in safety training.

Workers may exercise their **right to refuse** where they have reasonable grounds to believe that an assigned task will likely hurt them or someone else at the work place. For instance, if a worker finds themselves faced with a task for which there are few or no safety measures in place, that they have no training or proper equipment for, or that other workers have been injured while completing, it is likely the time to exercise the right to refuse. Nova Scotia's OHS Act clearly explains the right to refuse, including the need to always report the situation first to a supervisor and ways in which workers who exercise their right to refuse are protected from discrimination.

## Exercising Rights and Responsibilities: Speaking Up

Even though Nova Scotia safety law protects workers from being discriminated against for exercising their safety rights, putting workplace safety rights and responsibilities into action may be challenging. Exercising our workplace safety rights and responsibilities by speaking up about unsafe and unhealthy situations or things can be difficult, but it needs to be done!

## **Speaking Up**

Speaking up and being assertive does not always come naturally. We may be uncomfortable speaking up to a supervisor or to an employer because we can get “speaking up” mixed up with “talking back.” But speaking up in a professional, courteous, and respectful manner is a skill that needs to be learned and practiced. The following are few ways to practise. You could

- do role-plays with your teachers and friends at school
- practise in front of the mirror in the privacy of your bedroom or bathroom
- talk to a trusted adult about how to handle a situation
- ask loved ones how they have learned to successfully “speak up”

## **Setting the Tone for Speaking Up**

As a worker you can show your maturity and professionalism and “set the tone” early for your workplace safety expectations by

- understanding your three key safety rights and the responsibilities that go with them
- talking to your supervisor and asking questions about workplace safety
- taking your work seriously and treating people with respect and courtesy
- following the safety rules at work and asking if you do not understand something
- not following the crowd when it means breaking workplace rules
- getting involved in safety and health committees at work
- admitting when you do not know how or have not been trained to do something

## **When Speaking Up May Be Hard to Do**

Sometimes speaking up about safety may be hard to do (for workers of all ages) because of challenging and unhealthy conditions at work, such as

- unsafe things or situations that everyone seems aware of, but never get fixed
- lack of workplace safety rules or safety rules that are never followed
- supervisors that brush aside or never follow up on hazard reports
- disrespectful behaviour between co-workers, and co-workers and supervisors
- workers and supervisors who do not seem to care about the work they do
- direct or indirect expectation that safety can be ignored as long as a task is done
- behaviours and attitudes like racism, bullying, gender discrimination, hazing

In these situations, how to speak up, when to speak up, or even whether to speak up will be different from worker to worker. Depending on life experiences and career paths, some workers will remain in challenging work settings and others will make the decision to leave. It is very important that workers talk to someone about difficult or dangerous work situations and, if necessary, report hazardous conditions and dangerous work situations to the proper authorities (i.e., the OHS Division of Labour and Advanced Education or to local police).

## Workplace Health and Safety Law

### Nova Scotia’s OHS Division and Officers

In Nova Scotia the staff and officers of the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Division of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education are responsible for promoting, administering, and enforcing occupational health and safety law in workplaces and for the general public. A key focus of the OHS Division is promoting the Internal Responsibility System.

### Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* provides for the administration and enforcement of occupational health and safety in Nova Scotia. By adhering to the Internal Responsibility System, *the Act* emphasizes proactive approaches to preventing injury and illness. The broad duties identified by *the Act* are more specifically defined by another level of legislation called regulations.

### Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Regulations

Regulations are a part of Nova Scotia’s *OHS Act*. They are specific to many different health and safety issues, circumstances, hazards, and controls that affect either certain types of work or general conditions across many types of work. Our province’s workplace health and safety regulations are as follows:

- **Occupational Safety General Regulation:** Defines requirements for specific types of work and tasks; and specific types of equipment, materials, and tools.
- **Workplace Health and Safety Regulation:** Newly enacted in 2013, this regulation currently defines all legal requirements for Occupational Health, Fall Protection, and Temporary Workplaces on Highways. The Workplace Health and Safety Regulation will eventually encompass several other regulations as well.
- **Occupational Diving:** Defines safety requirements for work that occurs underwater.
- **Occupational Health and Safety First Aid:** Defines requirements for type and provision of emergency first aid in a variety of work settings.
- **Violence in the Workplace:** Defines requirements for how certain workplaces must assess and control for risk of workplace violence .
- **Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System:** Defines requirements for handling of controlled products; is linked to Canada’s Federal WHMIS legislation.
- **Underground Mining:** Defines requirements for all mining operations, including emergency response.
- **Blasting Safety:** Defines requirements for workplace blasting, other than in mining.
- **Regulations for the Occupational Health and Safety Appeal Panel, the Occupational Health and Safety Administrative Penalties, and Disclosure of Information:** Defines how all of the legislation is administered.

All Nova Scotia regulations can be found at [www.novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regsxact.htm#O](http://www.novascotia.ca/just/regulations/regsxact.htm#O).

# Glossary

**Note: These definitions are intended to be introductory. Please consult an appropriate source for more information.**

**chemical.** Natural or manufactured, chemicals may exist as solids, liquids, gases, vapours, or particulates.

**emergency.** A real or potentially dangerous situation requiring immediate action.

**first aid.** Help given to a sick or injured person until full medical treatment is available.

**hazard.** A thing, condition, or process that can, or has the potential to, hurt a person or damage property and the environment. (adj.: hazardous)

**hazard control.** A measure or measures used to decrease, or remove, the risk that a hazard will result in injury and damage.

**hazard identification.** Measures used to identify the presence and severity of a hazardous thing, condition, or process.

**health.** A state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

**Industry.** A particular branch of economic or commercial/work activity.

**Internal Responsibility System (IRS).** A health and safety philosophy in place across Canada that says everyone at the workplace has and shares responsibility for health and safety. Nova Scotia's safety law is based on the IRS and states that everyone shares responsibility for health and safety to the extent of their workplace authority and accountability.

**legislation.** Refers to a collective of laws; Nova Scotia's legislation includes Statutes (also called Acts), Regulations (which come under an Act), Codes, and Codes of Practice.

**Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Act.** Law that promotes, co-ordinates, administers, and enforces occupational health and safety in Nova Scotia. *The OHS Act* also includes several regulations and codes of practice and is administered on behalf of the Minister by the OHS Division of the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education.

**occupational health and safety (OHS).** Refers to the study and implementation of approaches and methods designed to protect the safety, health, and welfare of people at work; is typically interdisciplinary in nature and practice.

**personal protective equipment (PPE).** Refers to equipment or clothing physically worn by a worker that is designed to prevent or decrease the risk for injury while working with or around hazardous things or situations at the workplace.

**responsibilities.** Things or actions that are required to be done as part of a job, a role, or a legal obligation. Everyone at a workplace has safety responsibilities for one another.

**rights.** Powers or privileges; some belong to everyone by virtue of being human (human rights), and some are granted by law (legal rights) or agreement and belong to people in particular settings (e.g., workplaces).

**safe work practice/procedure.** A written plan for the appropriate and safe completion of one or more tasks at a workplace. Safe work practices or procedures are often required by law.

**safety training.** Training required for the appropriate and safe completion of workplace roles and tasks. Some approaches to, and forms of, safety training are guided by law.

**statistics.** The science of collecting and analyzing numerical data.

**work and workplace.** A function or task typically performed for financial payment. Workplace is a common term for the location or space where work may occur.

**Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS).** WHMIS is Canada's law about the safe use, handling, storage, and disposal of certain products and materials in certain settings. WHMIS has application in all provinces and territories and includes the use of proper labelling, Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS), and worker education.

**workplace violence.** Refers to acts at a workplace resulting in a person(s) being abused, threatened, assaulted, or intimidated. Nova Scotia's Workplace Violence Regulation covers both intentional and unintentional violence. Unless the worker feels at risk of physical injury, emotional violence and bullying do not come under this Regulation.

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