

May 16, 2018

Occupational Health and Safety Act Update

Alberta's **Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act** is being updated with most changes coming into effect June 1, 2018.

December 15, 2017, the Government of Alberta began a consultation process with stakeholders to determine and consider changes for workplaces across the province. Alberta's *OHS Act* sets the minimum standards for workplace health and safety and outlines the roles and responsibilities of employers and employees. Starting June 1, 2018, **new legislation** will come into effect providing the necessary structural supports and basic rights. The government has committed to maintaining reasonable standards to protect workplace health and safety with a review of the *Act* every five years. In addition, there will be a published plan for the review and collected statistics.

Key Additions and Changes

Click [here](#) to read all the details.

- Workers have the right to know of potential hazards and have access to basic health and safety information in the workplace. All worksite parties must ensure information on health and safety hazards is available onsite
- Workers have the right to refuse dangerous work and are protected from reprisal for exercising this right. Employers must ensure workers understand the hazards at the workplace, know what needs to be reported, and have the support to exercise their right. In this scenario, workers must continue to be paid while a work refusal is being investigated.
- Workers have the right to be involved in health and safety discussions, as well as participate in health and safety committees.
- Employers with 20 or more workers at a work site must have a written health and safety program. The program must have 10 mandated elements and be reviewed every 3 years. They must also have a joint worksite health and safety committee. Whereas employers with less than 20 employees at a work site must involve workers in hazard assessment and control, and have health and safety representative lasting 90 days or more.
- Employers and supervisors must ensure workers are not subject to nor participate in workplace harassment or violence. The new rules define workplace harassment and violence in all forms, including domestic violence. It also provides language requiring employers to investigate incidents and take corrective action.

Specific definitions describing areas of workforce

- **Employers** will be responsible for ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of workers and the public. Employers are

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also responsible for providing competent supervisors, training workers, and preventing both violence and harassment. Lastly, they must work with the joint worksite health and safety committee or health and safety representative

- **Supervisors** will have legal responsibilities for OHS and be responsible for preventing violence and harassment.
- **Workers** will be responsible for protecting their own and others' health and safety at worksites and refraining from violence and harassment.
- **Contractors** will be responsible for ensuring that work under their control does not endanger health and safety.
- **Prime contractors** will have added responsibilities to ensure worker health and safety. They will also be required in construction, oil and gas worksites, or any other projects that are designated by the OHS director.
- **Owners of worksites** will be responsible for ensuring that property under their control does not endanger health and safety.
- **Suppliers** will have to ensure their products are safe to use, and must include user instructions for all equipment. They will also have to provide a notice when their product or equipment does not comply with the law.
- **Service providers** will have to ensure the services they provide are provided by a competent person, comply with the laws, and do not create a hazard.
- **Self-employed persons** will have responsibilities to ensure they do not create a hazard to others and to comply with OHS laws.
- **Temporary staffing agencies** will comply with OHS laws.

For more information, visit [Alberta Labour website](#).

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