Summary

Human resources professionals play an important role in ensuring employee health and safety, as they know the workplace, the employees and their job demands. While human resources professionals are not expected to know the technical aspects of workplace health and safety, they should know when and how to use existing resources to respond to employee concerns.

In many organizations, health and safety responsibilities are within the human resources department. In order to meet these responsibilities, human resources professionals must:

• Understand the health and safety responsibilities of employers, managers, supervisors and employees within the organization;
• Implement personnel management policies to ensure that everyone in the workplace is aware of his/her responsibilities;
• Establish effective ways of meeting health and safety responsibilities; and
• Ensure that employees fulfill their health and safety responsibilities as outlined in the organizational policies and programs.

This guide provides general guidelines for integrating workplace health and safety in human resources management practices which include:

• Preventing work related injuries and illnesses;
• Fostering a workplace safety culture in which employees and their supervisors work together to ensure workplace safety;
• Establishing administrative procedures that encourage employees to report unsafe conditions and unsafe practices to their supervisors without fear of being disciplined;
• Developing appropriate hiring, training and performance appraisal practices;
• Recruiting and retaining the best employees who care about their own well being and the well being of co-workers.
• Ensuring that the health and safety policies and procedures conform with the applicable occupational health and safety legislation and accepted best practices in similar organizations;
• Establishing procedures for enforcing company safety rules;
• Helping reduce costs associated with losses due to absenteeism injuries, Workers' Compensation, disability, and health care;
• Maintaining records of injuries, illnesses and workers’ compensation;
• Coordinating first aid training and the provision of first aid to employees;
• Providing advice to employees and the employer in matters of occupational health and safety.

We hope this guide will assist human resources professionals in carrying out their OHS responsibilities effectively and in conformity with the applicable health and safety legislation. The presentation of the subject matter is in a non-technical and plain language.
Table of Contents

Introduction

Section I Roles and Responsibilities under Health and Safety Legislation

1. Role of Human Resources Personnel .................................. 2
2. Responsibilities Under Health and Safety Legislation .......... 5
   Employer Responsibilities .......................................... 5
   Supervisor Responsibilities ...................................... 6
   Employee Responsibilities ......................................... 6
   Employee Rights ................................................... 7
   Health and Safety Committee Responsibilities .................. 7
   Health and Safety Professionals’ Responsibilities .......... 9
3. Enforcement and penalties for non-compliance .............. 10
4. Criminalization of occupational health and safety offences ..10

Section II Introduction to Occupational Health and Safety

1. Introduction ............................................................ 12
2. Basic Steps in Risk Management .................................. 12
3. Recognition of Safety Hazards ................................... 13
4. Recognition of Health Hazards ................................... 15
5. Hazard Recognition and Control Methodologies .......... 30

Section III Health and Safety as a part of Human Resources Management

1. Human Resources Policies .......................................... 36
2. New Employee Orientation ......................................... 40
3. Transfers and Promotions .......................................... 41
4. On-the-Job Training .................................................. 41
5. Professional Development Training .............................. 43
6. Performance Appraisals ............................................. 43
7. Employee Wellness Programs .................................... 45
8. Workers’ Compensation ............................................ 46
9. Rewards and Recognition .......................................... 46
10. Employee Health and Safety Records .......................... 47
Section IV  Establishing Health and Safety Committees
1. Introduction ........................................... 50
2. Criteria for Establishing Health and Safety Committee .... 50
3. Guidelines for Forming a Health and Safety Committee ... 55

Section V  Health and Safety Policy and Program
1. Role of Human Resources Department ..................... 64
2. Health and Safety Policy .................................. 66
3. Health and Safety Program .................................. 68

Section VI  Employee Training Programs to Meet OHS Responsibilities
1. Role of HR in Employee Training .......................... 80
2. Training for Senior Managers .............................. 80
3. Training for Human Resources Professionals ............. 81
4. Training for Managers and Supervisors .................... 82
5. Training for Health and Safety Committee Members ........ 83
6. Training for Employees ..................................... 84
7. Training for Health and Safety Professionals ............. 84

Section VII  Managing Workplace Injuries and Workers Compensation Claims
1. Completion of Injury Report Forms ......................... 86
2. Return to Work Process .................................... 87

Section VIII  Program Evaluation and Audit .................. 90

Section IX  Health and Safety Legislation
1. Canadian OH&S Legislation ................................ 92
2. Workplace Hazardous Materials Information ............. 96
   Systems (WHIMS)
3. US OH&S Legislation ..................................... 102
Sources for Further Information

Appendices

Appendix A. Selecting a Consultant
Appendix B. Sample New Employee Safety Orientation Checklist
Appendix C. Health and Safety Committee Training Requirements
Appendix D. Sample Health and Safety Committee Checklist
Appendix E. Sample Training Requirement Matrix
Appendix F. Sample Fire Emergency Procedures
Appendix G. Sample Bomb Threat Action Plan
Appendix H. Emergency Evacuation Procedures
Appendix I. Sample Due Diligence Checklist
Appendix J. Sample Return to Work Policy and Procedures
Appendix K. Health and Safety Program Checklist
Appendix L. Commonly Used Abbreviations
## Health Safety and Environmental Responsibilities Related to Human Resources Management

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Examples of human resources activities</th>
<th>Relevance to workplace health and safety</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Compliance with various regulations regarding personnel and management practices</td>
<td>Health and safety of employees with special needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinating health and safety activities</td>
<td>Supervision of health and safety personnel, coordination of health and safety committee activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing employee benefits and compensation</td>
<td>Modified work assignment, “Early Return to Work policy”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining employee records</td>
<td>Special needs of:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Pregnant and nursing employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Employees with illness or injury</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Employees with disabilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring that employees are aware of new and existing human resources policies</td>
<td>Orientation, training and ongoing communication with:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- New employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Transferred employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Promoted employees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Entire workforce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Volunteers and students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career development, training, and organizational development</td>
<td>Training needs arising out of changing work practices, equipment and relocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting leadership in management and supervision</td>
<td>Health, safety and environmental responsibility of employees at all levels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting safety culture</td>
<td>Recognizing safe behaviour</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The following table summarizes symptoms of some common injury types.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Injury</th>
<th>Example of Disorder</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Muscle</td>
<td>Sprains</td>
<td>Pain; difficulty in turning, bending and moving the muscle.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nerve</td>
<td>Carpal tunnel</td>
<td>Compression of the median nerve as it enters the palm of the hand through the “carpal tunnel”. The symptoms are pain and numbness in the index and middle fingers and weakness of the abductor muscles of the thumb (difficulty in gripping things).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nerve</td>
<td>Syndrome (CTS)</td>
<td>Thoracic Outlet Syndrome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tendon</td>
<td>Tendonitis</td>
<td>Pain mainly in the hands and wrist due to inflammation of the tendon as a result of overuse. Tendons are fibre bundles that attach muscles to bones.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tendon</td>
<td>Tenosynovitis</td>
<td>Pain due to inflammation of the tendon sheath, producing pain and swelling. It may result from loss of lubricating system of the bone joints as a result of repetitive and excessive hand movement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tendon</td>
<td>Ganglion Cyst</td>
<td>An inflamed tendon sheath may swell with lubricating fluid. This swelling causes a bump under the skin called a ganglion cyst.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tendon</td>
<td>Bursitis</td>
<td>Restriction and pain in joint movement as a result of deficient lubrication at a bone joint, for example at the shoulder.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Employee Health and Safety Records

Employment health & safety records are useful in determining:

- Employment history and occupational exposure records;
- Injuries and illnesses on the job; and
- Workers’ compensation records.

Many occupational illnesses (cancers) can occur decades after the employee retires. Employment records help in assessing the work relatedness of such illnesses.

Records must be maintained with accuracy, relevance, timeliness, and completeness. Appropriate and reasonable safeguards must be established to ensure security and confidentiality of the records. Useful summary and trend information should be provided to health and safety committees in order to assist in making recommendations.
3. Guidelines for Forming a Health And Safety Committee

Selection of committee members

The employer appoints management members of the committee. In a unionized workplace, the union selects employee members. If not specified in the legislation, selection is to be made according to the terms of reference established by your workplace.

The health and safety legislation generally states that a health and safety committee must:

• Consist of at least one-half worker (employee) representatives who have been elected or selected by the employees or their union;
• Meet regularly - consult your legislation about the frequency of meetings. Some jurisdictions require committee meetings at least once every three months while others require monthly meetings;
• Two co-chairpersons- a management chairperson and a employee chairperson.

In practice, most Health and Safety Committees have equal numbers of management and worker members.
3. Health and Safety Program

A Health & Safety Program consists of clearly defined actions to implement the health and safety policy. The numbers of elements depend on organizational needs. Following are common elements of a health and safety program:

- Leadership and administration
- Management training
- Workplace inspections
- Task analysis and procedures
- Accident/incident investigation
- Task observation
- Emergency preparedness
- Organizational rules
- Accident/incident analysis
- Employee training
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Program evaluation system
- Engineering controls
- Personal communications
- Group meetings
- General promotion
- Hiring and placement
- Purchasing controls
- Off-the-job safety
- Evaluation and continuous improvement