



# Building A SAFE WORKPLACE COMMUNITY

A New Canadian's Guide to How Culture Impacts Health and Safety





# **Building a Safe Workplace Community**

## **Author**

Melenie Olfert  
Diversity and Intercultural Training

## **Project Manager**

Carol Hawkins

## **Funders**

Manitoba Immigrant Integration Program

Safety Services Manitoba

Manitoba Hydro

Manitoba Liquor Control Commission

Manitoba Lotteries Corporation

## **Special Acknowledgement**

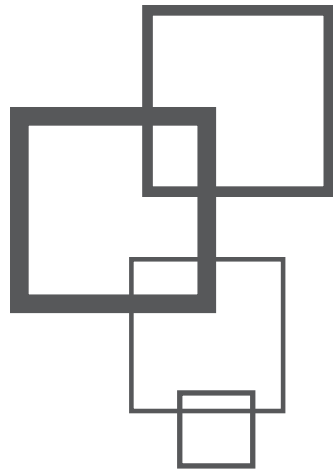
Thanks to Paul Urish and the staff of Palliser Furniture Ltd for their input and support in the development of this manual

First Edition July 2009



# Acknowledgements

We thank and acknowledge the employers, employees, and other organizations and individuals who contributed to the development of this manual. We are especially grateful to the new Canadians who shared their stories and insights. This manual reflects the cultural differences and challenges they have experienced.



Lisa Allard  
Rob Beal  
Janice Bean  
Julie Bell  
Eddie Calisto-Tavares  
Lynn Campbell  
Elizabeth Challis  
Linda Dojack  
Greg Dueck  
Joan Embleton  
Judith Fraser  
Mary-Ann Gibson  
Shaun Haas  
Karen Hamilton  
Carol Hawkins  
Judith Hayes  
Debbie Houston  
Linda Lalande  
Rhonda Lane  
Richard Nordrum  
Ken Pearson  
Lisa Petit  
Nicole Pringle  
Atlanta Sloane-Seale  
George Sclavounos  
Navdeep Sekhon  
Joanne Shay  
Carol Thiessen  
Robert Tetreault  
Paul Urish  
Maria Vokey  
Mike Waite  
Pete Walker  
Dale Watts  
Nuo Yang

WorkStart  
New Flyer Industries  
Loewen Windows  
E.A.L. Link  
Options for Success, Inc.  
Manitoba Labour and Immigration  
University of Winnipeg International Office  
Manitoba Liquor Control Commission  
Safety Services Manitoba  
Victor Mager Adult Education & Training Centre 24/7  
Manitoba Labour and Immigration  
Manitoba Trucking Association  
Deer Lodge Centre  
Occupational Health Centre  
MISI Project Assistant  
Manitoba Lotteries Corporation  
Manitoba Public Insurance Corporation  
International Centre of Winnipeg  
City of Winnipeg  
MISI Project Manager  
Kenteriors

Taking Charge  
University of Manitoba Distance Education  
FWS Group  
Health Sciences Red River College  
Red River Continuing Education  
Manitoba Hydro  
Standard Aero  
Palliser Furniture Ltd.  
Granny's Poultry Cooperative  
Safety Services Manitoba  
Manitoba Federation of Labour  
Red River College  
Manitoba Labour and Immigration

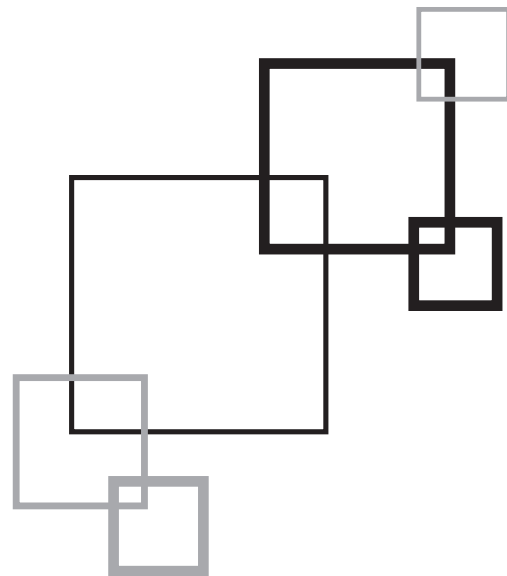
# Who Can Use This Manual

The goal of this manual is to help new Canadians be safe in the workplace.

Most injuries on the job happen to new employees.

This manual can help if:

- You are a new Canadian working or preparing to get a job. This information will help you be safe at work. It will also help you understand Canadian laws about workplace safety.
- You are an E.A.L. teacher of adults or teenagers. The guide was written to about a benchmark 7 or 8, but some of it can be used for lower benchmarks.
- Your industry uses a safety orientation that is difficult for new Canadians to understand. This manual can be used alongside your safety orientation, or as a manual to help put your orientation into plain language.
- Your industry has a mentor or buddy system for hiring new Canadians. This manual will give the mentor helpful tips.



# Introduction

## The purpose of this manual is to...

- Help you understand of why Canada values and tries to maintain a safe workplace community
- Explain employer, supervisor and worker responsibilities in terms of safety
- Explain a worker's rights in a safe and healthy workplace
- Provide ideas on what you can expect when entering the Canadian workplace
- Provide ideas on what you should know to help keep everyone at the workplace safe

## How to use this manual...

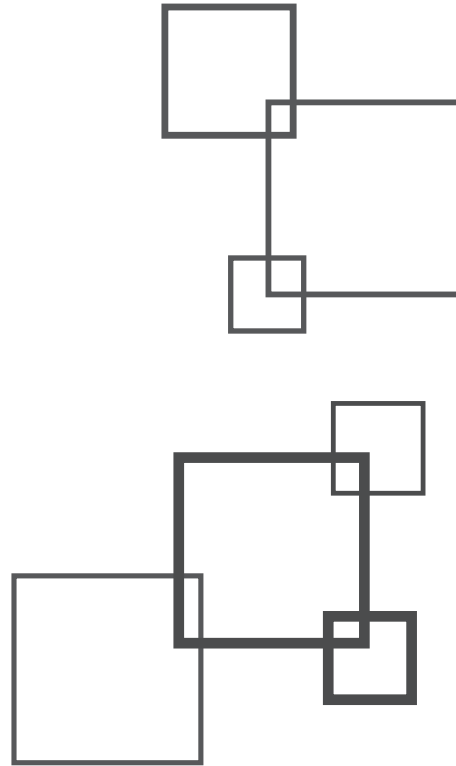
The terms below identify different kinds of information and learning you will find in each unit.

Vocabulary – words and definitions

Questions – to introduce each unit

Stories – about new Canadians

Important points – to remember



# Table of Contents

|                                                                  |           |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Unit 1 - Working Safe in Canada .....</b>                     | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Why Canada is concerned with safety .....</b>                 | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>Laws and Regulations .....</b>                                | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>Employer Responsibilities .....</b>                           | <b>7</b>  |
| <b>Supervisor Responsibilities .....</b>                         | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Worker Responsibilities .....</b>                             | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>Public Expectations .....</b>                                 | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Important Points to Remember .....</b>                        | <b>9</b>  |
| <b>Unit 2 - Workplace Culture - what to expect .....</b>         | <b>10</b> |
| <b>Rules of the Workplace .....</b>                              | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Workplace Etiquette .....</b>                                 | <b>12</b> |
| <b>Canadian Values .....</b>                                     | <b>14</b> |
| <b>Communication in the Workplace .....</b>                      | <b>15</b> |
| <b>Working as a Team .....</b>                                   | <b>17</b> |
| <b>A Canadian Boss .....</b>                                     | <b>18</b> |
| <b>Important Points to Remember .....</b>                        | <b>18</b> |
| <b>Unit 3 - Being Safe at Work - what you need to know .....</b> | <b>20</b> |
| <b>Worker Rights .....</b>                                       | <b>23</b> |
| <b>General Safety Rules .....</b>                                | <b>24</b> |
| <b>Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) .....</b>                 | <b>26</b> |
| <b>Reporting an Injury .....</b>                                 | <b>33</b> |
| <b>Right to Refuse Unsafe Work .....</b>                         | <b>35</b> |
| <b>Common Warnings Signs .....</b>                               | <b>36</b> |
| <b>Common Workplace Safety Devices .....</b>                     | <b>38</b> |
| <b>Need More Information? .....</b>                              | <b>41</b> |
| <b>Sources and Resources .....</b>                               | <b>42</b> |

# Unit 1

## Unit 1 – Working Safe in Canada

In this unit you will learn about...

- why Canada cares about safety
- laws and regulations
- employer responsibilities
- supervisor responsibilities
- worker responsibilities
- public expectations

### Vocabulary

**Laws:** the rules of government that everyone must follow

**Regulations:** rules, orders or standards put in place for a specific reason

**Legislation:** the laws made to protect all citizens

**Responsibilities:** legal duties employers and workers have

**Employee:** the worker hired by a company to do a specific job

**Employer:** the company that hired the worker

**Supervisor:** a supervisor is an employee who is in charge of (has authority over) others

**Workplace Health and Safety Committee:** a committee made up of management and worker representatives selected by workers. Their purpose is to identify and recommend solutions to safety and health problems.



### Why Canada Cares About Safety

- Have you heard of the term “workplace health and safety” before?
- Were you surprised to learn how important safety is in Canada?
- Did your employer back home encourage you to work safely?

Employers are very concerned about safety in Canada. This may be very different from or very similar to your home country. The following government statistics might help you understand why safety is so important in Canada:

- New workers have five to seven times the risk of injury in the first four weeks of a new job
- One in every 15 workers is injured every year in Canada
- Three workers are killed each day in Canada
- 40% of all injuries happen in the first six months on the job



These injuries cost the Canadian economy at least \$10 billion dollars a year. Companies know injuries cost them money and nobody wants them to happen.

6

Too many people have been hurt because they didn't understand the safety rules. That is why it is important for people to understand safety rules, how they could get hurt on the job and how to prevent being hurt themselves.

In this manual, you will learn what to expect in a Canadian workplace and how to be a safe worker.

### A Story –

*A new Canadian told a story about a splinter of metal he once got in his hand. Although he filled in the appropriate Worker's Compensation Board form to report the injury, he thought the whole process wasn't necessary and laughed about it. He certainly didn't mention it to his co-workers out of embarrassment. He wouldn't need to report this type of injury in his home country. But in Canada, a formal report had to be completed in case the splinter resulted in an infection. If he hadn't reported the injury and his hand became seriously infected, he may have lost paid sick time at work.*

---

### Laws and Regulations

---

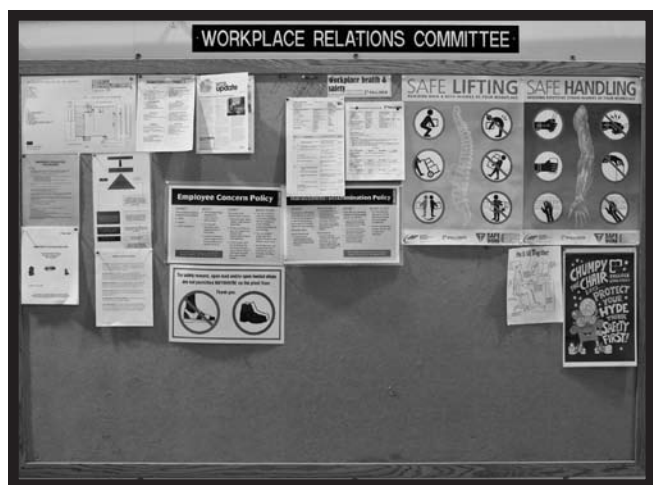
The Workplace Safety and Health Act tells you the minimum requirements for safety and health in most workplaces in Manitoba (with the exception of federal workplaces). The purpose of the Act is to protect workers from safety and health hazards on the job. As a new worker in the Canadian workplace, you should be aware of any regulation that applies to the work you do. The act has regulations for particular types of work, such as manufacturing, construction and mining.

For more information, visit [www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety](http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety).



The other important law that affects occupational safety and health is the Workers Compensation Act. This act promotes healthy and safe workplaces and provides insured benefits (money) to injured workers who cannot work because they were injured on the job.

For more information, visit [www.wcb.mb.ca](http://www.wcb.mb.ca).



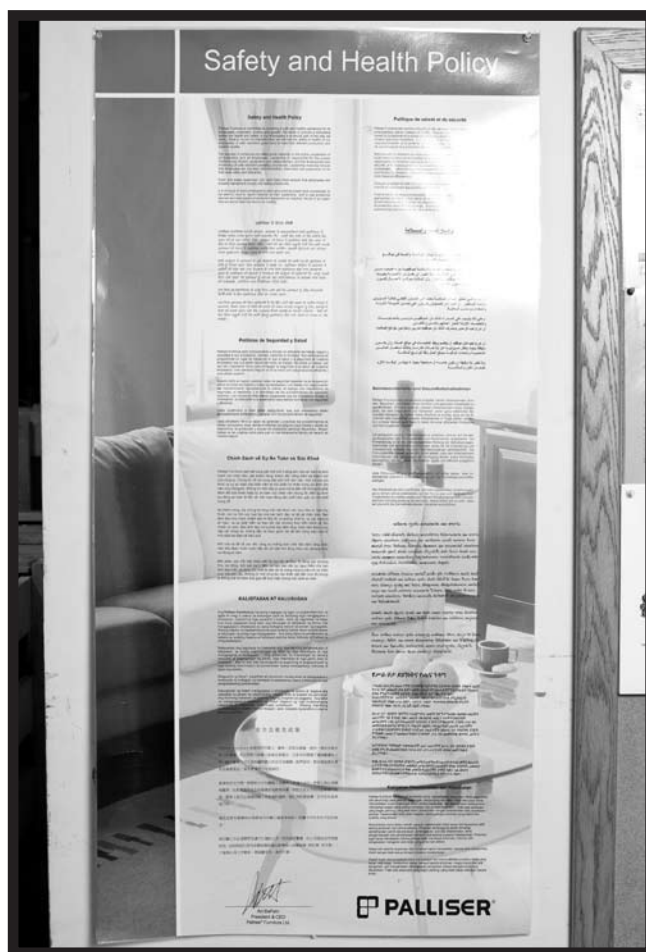
It is everyone's responsibility to follow both the legal rules and the rules of the workplace. This includes the company's owner, the employer, supervisors and workers.

## Employer Responsibilities

Along with safety and health laws, every workplace should have its own safety policy, procedures and safe operating practices. These are in place for workers' safety.

Your employer's legal duties include:

- Maintaining an employer safety and health policy, safety and health committee meeting minutes, names of the safety and health committee members and workplace safety and health reports or orders, if any have been issued.



- Developing a training program to carry out the safety and health policy
- Providing and maintaining a safe workplace, including equipment and protective devices
- Training employees how to use equipment properly and making sure they use it safely
- Protecting employees from dangerous situations
- Telling employees about any known hazard and providing training on how to work safely to eliminate the risk of injury
- Understanding and complying with all applicable acts and regulations

---

### **Supervisor Responsibilities**

---

- Making sure workers follow the Act and regulations
- Training employees to work safely and properly use protective equipment



- Training employees on how to work safely and ensuring they work safely

---

### **Worker Responsibilities**

---

- Following the Act and regulations
- Using required protective equipment the way you were trained to use it and as it was provided to you.
- Reporting any hazard or dangerous situation to your supervisor
- Using all equipment safely, the way you have been trained



---

### **Public Expectations**

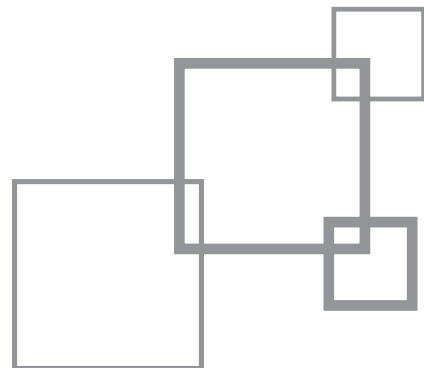
---

In Canada, workers in different companies naturally will expect certain things to be in place for them in terms of safety, well-being and quality of life. Here are some examples of things you may expect:

- Paid vacation time
- Paid time off for illness
- Medical expenses paid through Workers Compensation Board if you are injured on the job
- To work in a safe, healthy and clean environment
- Not to be expected to take unusual risks that may result in injury
- To be provided with training on how to do your job safely and how to protect yourself from getting hurt or sick
- Not to be discriminated against because of your ethnic background, colour, gender, religion, age, disability or sexual orientation

The public expects employers to provide a healthy and safe workplace for their employees. And it is the law! Companies can be fined for not doing this.

- You can bring safety and health concerns to your worker safety and health representative or committee. They will take it to management without saying which worker brought the issue up.
- Employers must take every responsible precaution to protect workers.
- Supervisors must take every precaution to protect workers.
- Employees must follow all safety rules within the workplace.
- Both employers and employees will have certain expectations in the workplace.
- Everyone must contribute to building a safe workplace community.



---

### **Important Points to Remember**

---

# Unit 2

## Unit 2 – Workplace Culture - What to Expect

In this unit you will learn about...

- rules of the workplace
- workplace etiquette
- Canadian values
- communication in the workplace
- working as a team
- a Canadian boss

### Vocabulary

**Adaptable:** being open to change

**Workplace etiquette:** how someone is expected to act or behave at the workplace

**Initiative:** carrying out responsibilities without having to be asked and identifying what needs to be done without a supervisor telling you

**Buddy:** an experienced co-worker who helps a new worker learn the job

**Hierarchy:** the different levels of managers in a company

**Workplace culture:** the values and attitudes generally demonstrated in the workplace and promoted by the leaders

### Quiz - What would you do?

Read each question and circle your response:

- 1. If you work in a company where there are many safety rules:**
  - a. I think of them more as recommendations. Production is more important to the company than safety.
  - b. I try to follow safety rules because they are for my own benefit.
  - c. I think working safely is more important than good productivity.
- 2. If you are working in a department in a company where safety glasses are required, but your safety glasses just broke:**
  - a. I would keep working. I want to have good production and don't have time to leave my work station to get more safety glasses.
  - b. I would stop working and go and ask someone for more safety glasses. I do not want to risk hurting my eyes.
  - c. I would put my sunglasses on until my break time.

3. If you are working in a department where closed shoes are required and you see someone walking through the department with sandals:

- a. I would do nothing. It is none of my business.
- b. I would tell that person they need to change into closed shoes.
- c. I would tell my supervisor at the company barbecue.



4. If you are working and you injure your thumb:

- a. I would keep on working. I don't want to disappoint my department by leaving and slowing down production.
- b. I would go to my supervisor and report the injury.
- c. I would wait until the end of my shift to report the injury.

5. If your supervisor asks you to do a job that looks dangerous:

- a. I would do it because he is the boss.
- b. I would tell the supervisor or the union representative that I think that the job is too dangerous.
- c. I would ask my co-worker what they would do.

■ **Were your answers “right or wrong”?** It depends on the culture of the country you are working in. Also, every company has its own culture.

■ **How do you come up with your answers?** Everyone is different. They make decisions based on many different factors, such as:

- the culture you were raised in
- the family you were raised in
- previous workplaces

In the Canadian workplace, the correct response to ensure safety is “b” for all the questions.

---

## Rules of the Workplace

---

Both the Manitoba government and Federal government have laws that must be obeyed by companies. In some countries there are fewer safety rules and regulations. Sometimes rules are seen more as recommendations. In Canada, safety laws are very important. This is why there are many safety rules in the workplace. Here are some examples:

- Companies must provide safety training to employees.
- Safety equipment should be worn when needed for protection.
- Hazardous materials or chemicals must be labelled with information on how to work with the chemical safely.



As a new Canadian, there are also other kinds of rules you should know about. They are:

- *Written Rules* – these are often policies and procedures written on paper by a company. You will receive these rules from your employer when you start a new job. Each company will have their own list of rules depending on the type of business you are working in.

For example, your employer will provide you with a dress code. This will tell you what you are allowed to wear at work and what is not accepted.

- *Unwritten Rules* – these rules are not written on paper, but are also important. You can learn these rules by watching other people and by asking questions.

For example, some people keep the elevator door open for other people coming in.

---

## Workplace Etiquette

---

Workplace etiquette is the expected behaviour in a workplace. Sometimes these rules are not written down.

Each workplace has its own set of workplace etiquette. It is important to watch what people do and ask lots of questions to find out what these rules are. As an example, it is not workplace etiquette to talk to someone while they are operating a dangerous machine. It is okay, however, to talk to a co-worker while walking together to get more supplies.

Here are some other examples of workplace etiquette:

*Use of cell phones* – it is not proper workplace etiquette to use your cell phone during work hours. Your employer expects your cell phone to be turned off. You may check for messages during break times or use the staff phone. Calls are usually limited to 2-3 minutes per call.

*Proper hygiene* – it is proper workplace etiquette to come to work clean. In Canada, people bathe daily and wear deodorant. It is important to change your clothes and/or uniform daily as well. In most workplaces, the use of perfume is not allowed because of allergies and other sensitivities. This may be different than in your native country.

*Social Conversations* – it is not proper workplace etiquette to talk too much with co-workers during work time. Casual conversation is kept to lunchtime and breaks. Remember to speak English in group settings to prevent others from feeling excluded. It is always polite to translate if someone nearby doesn't speak your language.



#### **A Princess Story –**

*A number of newcomers from the same country were employed by a local employer. The group was all friendly and socialized outside of work. Their employer was unaware that one female in the group held the title of Princess in their homeland. While the title was mainly honorary, members of the group felt it was necessary to protect the dignity of the title by doing any heavy lifting and other tasks that were a part of this person's expected duties.*

*While their devotion and concern for a fellow employee is admirable, this situation posed a risk to all involved. Since their attention was on helping their co-worker, their safety was compromised because they were not paying close attention to some of the jobs they were supposed to do. Once the employer was made aware of the situation, a meeting with the group was called to explain the risk of these actions and clarify the duties of all employees including the Princess.*

**- A food processing company in Manitoba**

---

## Canadian Values

---

Most people want to achieve personal success. There are behaviours or values that employers expect from their workers. Canadians value working hard to be able to enjoy a good quality of life and the activities they want to participate in. Canadians want to achieve work and personal goals. They want to do well at their job to be recognized independently for their contribution.

Canadian employers also have their own set of values. They have expectations of their employees. Here are some examples of what your employer may expect from you:

- To be on time
- To complete tasks independently or with little supervision once trained
- To make decisions and follow procedures based on company policy
- To be adaptable
- To take initiative
- To cooperate with others and work together in a team environment
- To have a positive attitude
- To take questions or concerns to the right person based on their level of authority
- To offer ideas and suggestions for improvement
- To tell your supervisor if you have been hurt on the job

### TO COOPERATE AND WORK TOGETHER IN A TEAM ENVIRONMENT



### TO TELL YOUR SUPERVISOR IF YOU HAVE BEEN HURT ON THE JOB



- To report an injury immediately
- To report when someone else is not working safely
- To think of your workplace as a community and yourself as a contributing member



### A Story –

*Juan’s first job in Canada was at a food processing company as a shipper/receiver. During his interview, Juan’s supervisor told him that his hours would be 6:30 am – 2:30 pm. Juan was very excited when he got the call that he could start on Wednesday morning. His supervisor ended the call by saying “see you at 6:30 in the morning!” When Wednesday morning came, Juan came to work at 6:30 but by the time he found his department and took off his jacket, it was 6:45 am. His supervisor was angry and told him that all employees must be on time. Juan was upset and confused because he thought he was on time.*

In the Canadian workplace, being on time means showing up for work **10-15 minutes early**. If your boss says you start at 6:30 am, then you should be there at 6:15 am and in your workstation ready to work by 6:30 am. This will give you enough time to get to your work area and put on your uniform and safety equipment.

---

## Communication in the Workplace

---

Employers value and encourage communication in the workplace. There are two different ways of communicating – verbal and non-verbal.

Depending on your cultural background, experiences, gender and other aspects of culture, you will communicate in different ways.

Even your body language and gestures will impact the communication process and send different messages depending on your cultural background.

In Canada, employers want workers who are good communicators. This means your supervisor expects his/her employees to:

- Learn and use the workplace acronyms and expressions
- Listen to others and ask questions when you don’t understand
- Build rapport with your buddy, co-workers and supervisors by practising speaking English
- Use appropriate body language and gestures
- Ask your supervisor or safety trainer to show you if you have difficulty understanding instructions
- Share your ideas and safety concerns at meetings



### A Story –

*Geeta worked in the housekeeping department in a hospital. Every time her co-workers started talking in their native language, she thought they were talking about her. She started to feel very alone and worried she might lose her job.*

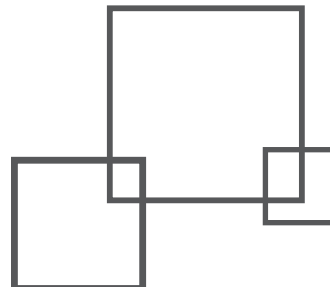
At work, many employers encourage everyone to speak English and interact with other workers outside their own cultural group. This helps people make friends at work and helps everyone feel like a part of the team.

### Communication Checklist

Check the boxes that best describe your communication skills at work:

- I clearly explain or show safety concerns to my supervisor.
  - I say “yes” or nod my head when I understand and/or agree.
  - I repeat back instructions to my supervisor to show that I understand.
  - I tell supervisors and employees when I don’t understand and ask them to.
  - Re-phrase instructions.
  - I keep social conversations with my co-workers for break time.
  - I share my ideas and suggestions in meetings.
- I calmly handle problems and conflict by speaking respectfully.
  - I understand and follow Canadian expectations on eye contact and personal space.
  - I ask the right questions to get the information I need to work safely.

These are some examples of communication skills that will be expected from you in the Canadian workplace.



---

## Working as a Team

---

Teamwork is important in many cultures. The success of the team is the success of the individual. Canadian workplaces are becoming more and more teamwork focused. How does this affect safety?

Productivity is highly valued in many workplaces. When employees are injured, they may not tell their supervisor because they do not want to disappoint their team and stop working. In the Canadian workplace, however, it is better to think about long-term productivity. How much productivity will you contribute in the next year or two? The sooner an employee reports an injury, the sooner the injury can be treated and the employee can get better. Healthy employees usually have better productivity.



If a worker sees a co-worker doing something dangerous, is it good teamwork to just let them keep working or to tell someone?

In some situations, it may be best to start with talking to the employee. In other situations, it is better to talk to the supervisor. When employees are working unsafely, they are at greater risk of injury or death. By talking to someone, you are preventing injury, keeping productivity up and being a good team member. This is hard for many employees, including native-born Canadians.



---

## A Canadian Boss

---

In some cultures, workplaces have a well defined workplace hierarchy. Leaders have well defined authority and are responsible for most of the decision making. In Canada, every company is different but some companies have a flat structure. This means many decisions are made by the whole team and not just the leader.

In cultures where companies are flat, communication with supervisors is more frequent. But in other cultures, employees are less likely to ask supervisors questions. They may choose instead to go to a co-worker they trust.

In Canadian workplaces, it is very important to ask questions about safety and express concerns. Often, this communication is with the supervisor, but may be with a “buddy” in some companies.

Another cultural difference you might notice is what supervisors wear. In some cultures, bosses always dress in formal clothes such as business suits. In Canada, some supervisors dress the same as the workers. They will say hello to all employees and ask for their opinions. This may be different than how your boss acted in your native country.

## A Story –

*When I came to work in Canada, I noticed Canadian supervisors didn't yell out orders to their workers. Instead, they were more respectful when they spoke to us. Supervisors here, ask for their employees' input on how to make improvements. Only in Canada have I seen supervisors treat their workers this way.*

*- A new Canadian from Latin America*

---

## Important Points to Remember

---

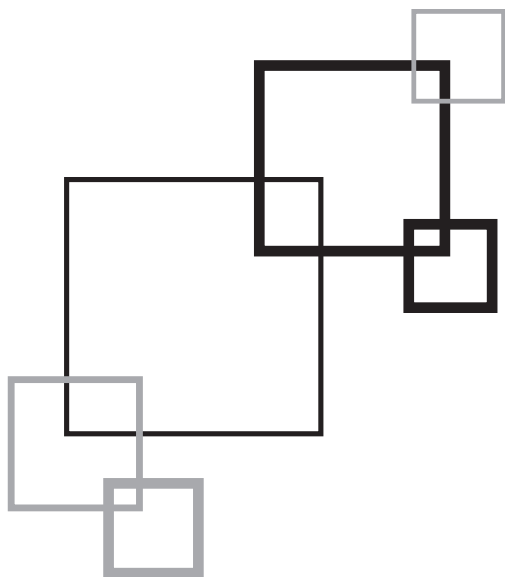
- Observe people around you to learn behaviours and rules of the workplace.
- Even if English is not your first language, you can still be a good communicator.
- Do not assume that people from different cultures think the way that you do. What you think is normal behaviour maybe wrong in another culture. For example, body language can have different meanings in different cultures.
- Cultures may differ in communication styles. For example, Canadians may be direct in giving instructions but more indirect and tactful in social situations.
- If you do not understand an instruction, you may have missed some important information that could affect your safety or a co-worker's safety.

- If you see a co-worker doing something incorrectly, tell them how to do it “the safe way.”
- Employers value hearing other people’s ideas. You will be expected to offer ideas and suggestions for improvement. If you do make a suggestion, remember making changes at the workplace takes time.
- Talk to the right person within your company.
- The success of the team also means success for the individual.
- Workers are more productive when they are healthy and feel safe.

### **A Story –**

*I like living in Canada. My wife and I are raising our kids here. But one thing that has always bothered me is that Canadians will not tell you what they think. I don’t know if they are trying to be nice, trying to be politically correct, or trying to avoid conflict, but they have a hard time dealing with open and honest comments. Quite often, managers at my company tell me that I’m too blunt and that I need to be more diplomatic in the way I speak. Well, I am not a diplomat. I am an engineer and this is who I am. I’m not going to start diluting my message just because of some oversensitive Canadians. I have come to accept that I may not get promoted because of my communication style.*

**- A new Canadian from Holland**



## Unit 3 – Being Safe at Work - What You Need to Know

In this unit you will learn about...

- worker rights
- general safety rules
- personal protective equipment (PPE)
- common workplace hazards
- reporting an injury
- right to refuse unsafe work
- common warning signs
- common workplace safety devices

### Vocabulary

**Hazard:** anything that can cause harm

**Risk:** how great the chance is that someone will be harmed by the hazard

**Rights:** something that is due to anyone through a legal guarantee

**Workers Compensation Board (WCB):** the organization that provides accident insurance for all workers when injured in the workplace.

**Personal protective equipment (PPE):** any equipment used by a worker to allow the worker to work safely and help prevent an injury

**Claim:** the application to the WCB reporting an injury, disability or death and asking for compensation and assistance in getting back to work

**Accident:** an unexpected event that leads to damage or harm

**Dangerous work:** danger that is not normal for the job; a danger that would normally stop work or a situation for which the worker is not properly trained, equipped or experienced

**Refusal to work:** saying no to work that is felt to be dangerous

**Safety precaution:** an action taken to protect from danger or injury

**WHMIS:** stands for Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System. WHMIS is a regulation under the Workplace Safety and Health Act. It is a Canada-wide communication system for sharing information about hazardous materials at job sites.

**MSDS:** Material Safety Data Sheets provide detailed information on the proper handling, use, storage and disposal of chemical products

**Complacency:** performing daily tasks without paying full attention

**Culture shock:** the changes that a person experiences when moving into a new country or workplace

**Fatigue:** the feeling of being physically or mentally exhausted

**Frustration:** feeling upset or not satisfied

**Warning label:** a label attached to containers to show what class of hazardous product is in it and how to use it safely

**Worker education program:** a training program in which workers learn how to read and understand warning labels and MSDS

**Psycho-social hazard:** workplace conditions that can lead to excess stress

**Ergonomic hazard:** conditions of a job, process or operation that contribute to the risk of developing physical and repetitive strain injuries

**Biological hazard:** a natural substance that can be harmful to workers

**Lockout:** the process of shutting off a machine and locking the control in place so the machine cannot be accidentally turned on

**Zero energy state:** the point at which a machine has no power running through it



### What would you do?

Think about what you would do in the following scenarios:

1. My utility knife broke but I can probably fix it myself.

**Answer:** Tell the supervisor and he/she will get you a new knife. Never try to repair tools or machinery yourself.

2. I noticed not all my co-workers keep their hard hats on when they're supposed to.

**Answer:** Keep yours on! Tell your supervisor this is happening. Leave an anonymous note if you are worried about being a tattler. It is your responsibility.



3. The supervisor gave me a new task but I'm not sure what to do.

**Answer:** Do not let the supervisor leave until you are confident you know what to do. Suggest someone works with you until you are trained or ask him/her to show you.

4. My supervisor gave me safety glasses to wear but I don't like them because they are uncomfortable.

**Answer:** Most companies have standard safety glasses they give to all new employees. If you wear eye glasses you may not need to wear safety glasses, but you can't wear sunglasses or any glasses that obscure your pupils. Some prescription glasses will not be sufficient to protect your eyes in certain workplaces. Check with your supervisor.





5. I think I have the flu and even feel a little weak and dizzy, but my supervisor told our assembly unit that we are on a tight deadline so I feel I should stay.

**Answer:** Tell your supervisor that you are sick and feel dizzy. Ask to go home and come back to work when you are no longer ill.

6. The patient/resident requires a mechanical lift to move them from the bed to the wheelchair but I know that I'm strong enough to transfer them without the machine.

**Answer:** Always follow the patient/resident care plan or communication tool indicating the type of transfer/equipment for your own safety and the patient/resident.

■ **What is one safety-related legal right you have as an employee?**

2. The right to participate in safety and health activities at the workplace including involvement in the joint workplace safety and health committee or as a worker representative

3. The right to refuse any task the worker believes is dangerous to his/her safety and health or the safety and health of other persons



---

## Worker's Rights

---

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, your rights are protected to ensure a safe and healthy workplace. Every worker has three basic rights:

1. The right to know about hazards in the workplace and what actions must be taken to prevent injuries or illness from these hazards

---

## General Safety Rules

---

### ■ What kind of safety rules are there in your workplace?

In Canada, if a worker gets hurt there is an investigation. If investigators discover the worker did not obey a safety rule, he may lose his job.

It is very important for you to understand general safety rules. When you get a job, ask for the safety rules. Here are some safety rules that you will probably find in your workplace:

1. Tell your supervisor immediately if you get sick or hurt.
2. Obey all safety signs.



3. Do not wear loose clothing or jewellery around machinery.

4. You must use the safety equipment that the company says is needed for your job.
5. Keep aisles and hallways clear. Do not block doorways or building exits.
6. Keep your work area clean.
7. Never smoke inside your workplace. Find out where smoking is allowed.
8. Turn off a machine and lock it out before cleaning, fixing, or repairing it.
9. Do not leave an unattended machine running or energized.
10. Do not run or do horseplay at work.
11. Do not use or work on any machines or equipment until you are properly trained and your supervisor says it is okay.
12. Tell your supervisor about anything you see that is unsafe.
13. Lift properly—use your leg muscles, not your back muscles. For heavier loads, ask for help.
14. Never throw anything.

15. Clean up any spills immediately. If you don't know what is spilled, talk to your supervisor before cleaning it up.

16. Do not wear sandals if you work in a factory.



17. Do not put garbage and paper in cans provided for cigarette butts.

18. Never use equipment with a frayed electrical cord.

19. Know where all safety equipment is kept.

20. Know where the fire exits are.

21. Replace old or broken tools immediately or tell your supervisor.

22. Replace worn-out safety equipment immediately or tell your supervisor.



■ **What are some questions you may want to ask your new employer about their safety rules?**

### **1. What are the hazards of my job?**

Your new employer is required by law to tell you about any workplace hazards. This includes exposure to chemicals, potentially dangerous equipment, excess noise, dust and situations where you may have to work at a height. Once you know the hazards, you can take steps to protect yourself.



## 2. When will I receive training in job safety?

Manitoba's health and safety laws require your new employer to make sure you have all the information and skills you need to safely do the work you're assigned. You must be supervised by someone who knows how to do the job safely until you can do the job safely alone.

A lot of safety training is done in large groups. It is important to talk to your supervisor or work buddy if you have any questions.

## 3. Who do I ask if I have a health or safety question?

The first person to ask should always be your supervisor since they know your workplace best. You can also talk to someone on the safety and health committee or the worker safety representative.



## Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- What safety equipment are you familiar with?
- Why is wearing personal protective equipment important?

Below are some common safety equipment or PPE's that are used in Canadian industries:

### *Manufacturing:*

- Safety footwear
- Protective gloves
- Safety glasses
- Ear plugs
- Ear muffs
- Respirator

### *Food Processing:*

- Protective gloves
- Hair nets
- Aprons

**Health Care:**

- Protective gloves
- Uniforms
- Non-slip footwear
- Masks

**Trucking / Transportation:**

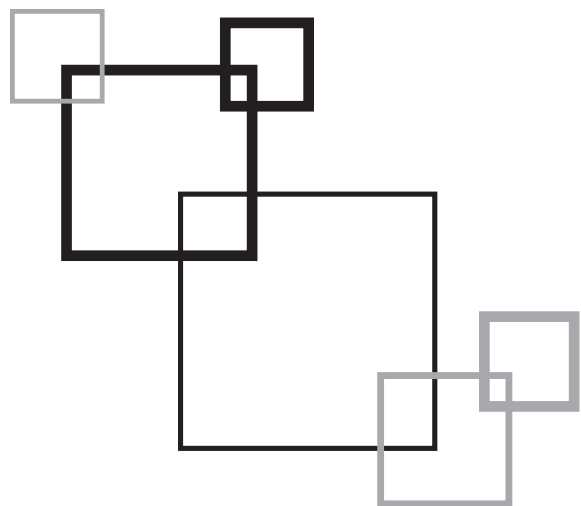
- Reflective vests
- Safety boots
- Hard hats
- Ear plugs
- Safety glasses

**Hospitality:**

- Protective gloves
- Non-slip footwear
- Hair nets

**Construction:**

- Safety boots
- Reflective vests
- Ear plugs
- Safety glasses
- Hard hats
- Respirators
- Gloves
- Fall prevention harness



### A Story –

*I hired an immigrant woman to work the night shift cleaning offices. Her English was not very good but she was always smiling. I showed her which cleaning products to use and told her to always use her protective latex gloves when using the chemicals. I showed her exactly how much cleaner to use. She caught on quickly and soon she was working independently. A few weeks later, I dropped in to say hello and see how things were going. I noticed she was not wearing the safety gloves I gave her, rather rubber ones she had brought from home. She told me that she didn't know that she was supposed to ask for new gloves when they wore out. I just assumed that she would have asked me for another pair. I gave her a new pair and told her to phone me next time and say: "I need more gloves".*

**- Owner of a small cleaning company**

### Common Workplace Hazards

- **Back home, what did you do to make sure you didn't get hurt?**
- **Did you ask yourself "what if" questions?**

A workplace hazard is anything that can hurt a person under certain conditions. Unfortunately, almost all workplaces have hazards.

A good practice is to ask yourself "what if" questions...

- What if I don't use the proper size safe guard?
- What if the forklift tips over on my co-worker in a fast turn?
- What if I inhale the toxic fumes from the toilet cleaning chemicals?



The first step to staying safe is learning to see a hazard before an incident happens.

Every job will have different hazards. Wherever you work, there are five main types of hazards. Here are some examples:

| Workplace Hazard | Example of Hazard                                                                                                                                     | The Harm it could Cause                                                                                                                         |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Physical         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Utility knife</li> <li>- Wet floor</li> <li>- Cold/hot temperatures</li> </ul>                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cuts</li> <li>- Falling or slipping</li> <li>- Aching muscles/fatigue</li> </ul>                       |
| Biological       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unclean restrooms</li> <li>- Insect stings</li> <li>- Needle sticks (in garbage, beds or toilets)</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Illness from bacteria or viruses</li> <li>- Allergic reaction</li> <li>- Illness or disease</li> </ul> |
| Chemical         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Using toxic cleaning products regularly</li> <li>- Welding</li> </ul>                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Illness or disease</li> <li>- Metal fume fever</li> </ul>                                              |
| Psycho-social    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lack of support or isolation</li> <li>- Harassment</li> </ul>                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Depression, anxiety, fatigue</li> <li>- Absenteeism</li> </ul>                                         |
| Ergonomic        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shift work</li> <li>- Repetitive movements</li> </ul>                                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fatigue, difficulty sleeping</li> <li>- Back, wrist injury</li> </ul>                                  |



For some newcomers, there may be emotional factors that can put them at risk.

Examples:

- Rushing to get your work done because you want to make a good impression on your supervisor and co-workers
- Frustration due to something not going right or because you don't understand how to do the task
- Fatigue due to a heavy workload, personal issues or working more than one job
- Complacency because you feel over-qualified for the job and assume it is easy to perform
- Culture shock of adapting to a new, strange environment may be an emotional drain on you and your family members

If you find it difficult to understand how things are done in Canada, you may want to talk with other people who have immigrated. Ask your supervisor to help you organize a support group with other newcomers, both recent and experienced in the organization. Spend time talking about overcoming these emotional factors and ask them for tips on adjusting to a new workplace culture.

To an employer, the health and safety of all employees is a number one priority. No other single factor determines an individual's safety in the workplace more than a personal commitment to work safely. The decision to work safely impacts not only you, but also the safety and security of co-workers.

#### **A Story –**

*Hang, a hard worker from Asia, was hurt on the job and was given several weeks of paid sick leave to get better. He was enrolled in a workplace training program at the time and wanted to finish the course, so he came to the workplace to attend the classes. His injury, in his hand, did not prevent him from reading, listening and participating in the class.*

*He was shocked when he was taken to the Human Resources office and sternly told he was not to be at work for any reason while on sick leave. He was very upset that he had obviously done something wrong and that his supervisors were “angry” with him. He was only trying to do the right thing in finishing the course the workplace had offered him.*

*His EAL instructor tried to explain the legal situation to Hang, but he still did not understand what he did wrong and why he was not allowed to finish his course. He didn't understand the Canadian safety laws. Hang should have called the Human Resources department to ask if it was okay for him to go to class on the worksite.*

**- An EAL Instructor**

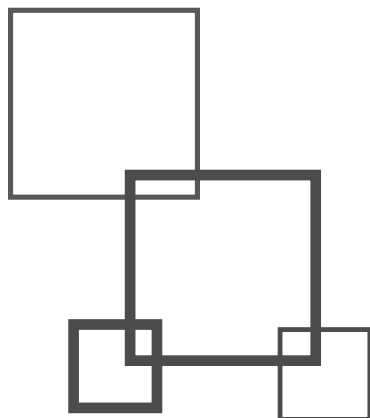


### Keeping the Work Site Safe

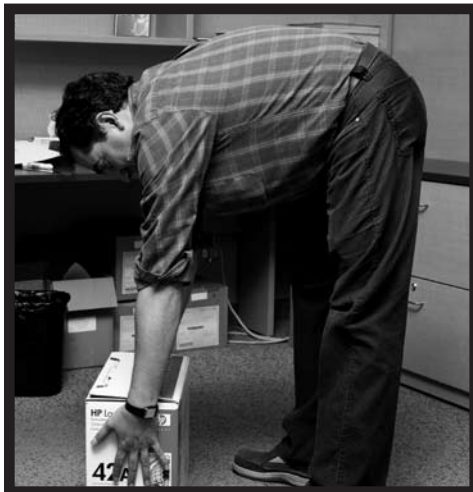
Name a substance or piece of equipment that you use at work and then describe a safety precaution you take when using or operating it. Three responses have been provided as examples. Check with your supervisor to confirm and discuss your examples.



| Equipment         | Safety Precaution                                                                                               |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Coffee machine | Do not touch hot element, ensure element is off or the machine is unplugged before leaving work or cleaning it. |
| 2. Paints         | Use safety mask to avoid inhaling fumes; close paint cans when not in use                                       |
| 3. Drill          | Do not wear loose clothing while operating                                                                      |



These are pictures of safe practices and unsafe practices. Circle the picture that shows the “safe way” to do each task.





Need more information? Go to Safe Manitoba website:

[http://www.safemanitoba.com/safework\\_main.html](http://www.safemanitoba.com/safework_main.html)

#### A Quote -

*“We believe it is important to accommodate the cultural needs of our immigrant workforce without compromising safety standards. For example, we have amended our safety policy to allow new Canadian women to wear traditional dresses at work in some job positions.”*

**- A Workplace Health and Safety Coordinator**

---

## Reporting an Injury

---

- Why do you think new Canadians may not tell their supervisor that they were hurt?
- What do you do if you get hurt at work?

Reasons why new Canadians may not report an injury:

- They might believe the injury is not important
- They are in fear of losing their job
- They do not want to “complain” or deal with confrontation
- They believe their supervisor will think they can’t do the job or are not macho enough

- They may feel they do not know the employer or supervisor well enough to confide in them
- They do not want to stop working. They want to have good productivity.
- They do not want to be poor team members and stop working

If you get hurt while on the job **you must tell your supervisor, lead hand or safety representative right away.** As an employee, you need to report the injury even if you think it is not serious or it doesn't hurt. Sometimes an injury may not seem serious at the time but can cause you trouble later.

If you tell your supervisor, lead hand or safety representative, he or she will fill out a WCB form. You may be able to go right back to work or you may need to see a doctor. Your injury may not hurt you right away and this is why it is important to tell someone when you are hurt.

If you are hurt so badly that you cannot work, WCB may pay a portion of your salary and medical bills.



You must report an injury immediately to be able to claim an injury with the WCB.

If you get hurt at work, you must:

1. Get medical attention.
2. Tell your employer.
3. Call WCB at 954-4100 or 1-800-362-3340 (between 8 am - 7 pm. Mon-Fri).
4. Follow your doctor's treatment plan.
5. Let your employer know of your doctor's treatment plan.

## Right to Refuse Unsafe Work

- Have you ever done something at work you believed was unsafe?

Remember:

- You do not have to do any work you think is unsafe.
- Report any dangerous or unsafe situation to your supervisor.
- It is important to prevent an accident before it happens.

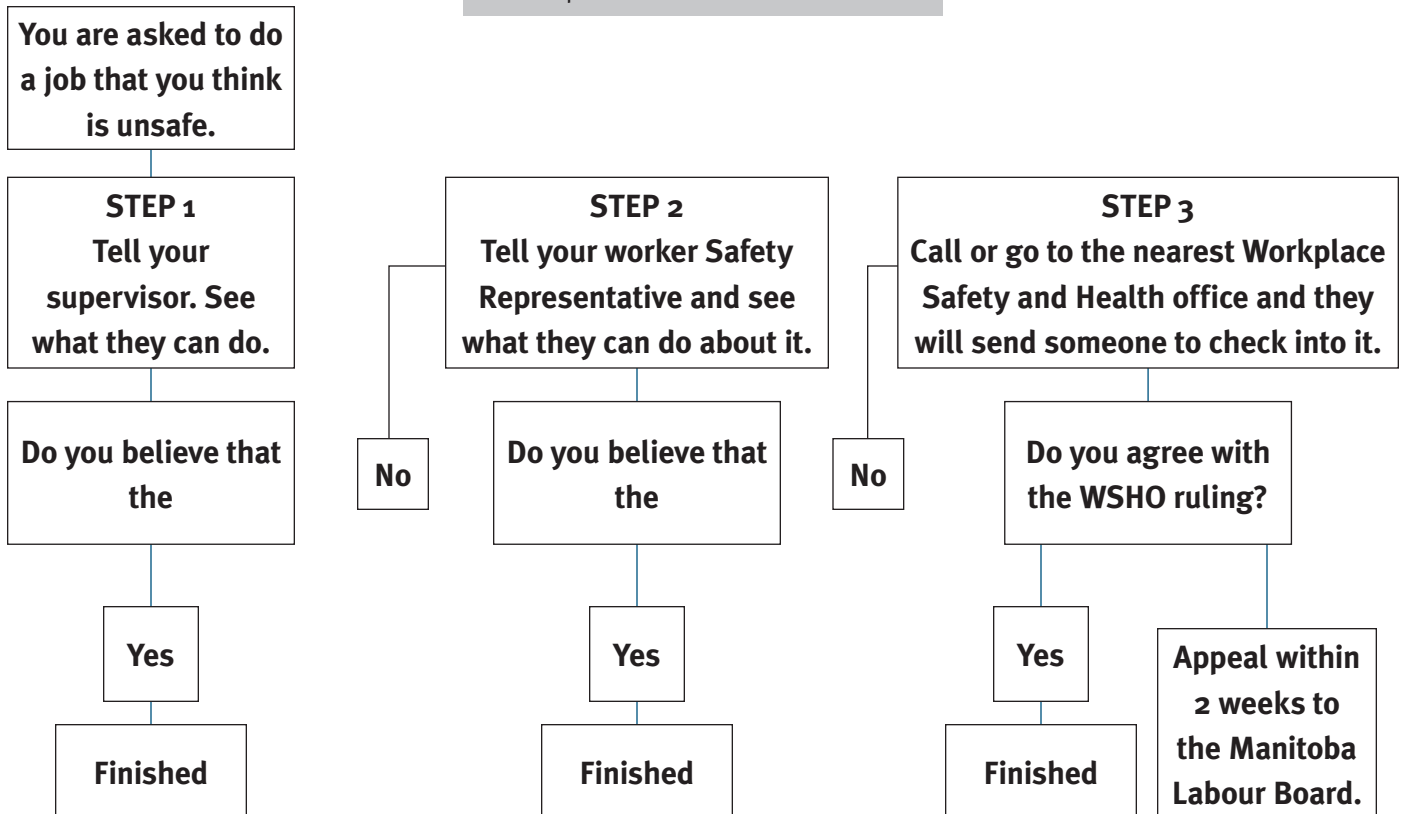
In most cases, unsafe conditions are resolved by removing a hazard. If the situation is not resolved, you have the right to stop working.

You always have the right to refuse unsafe or dangerous work.

This chart shows you how to refuse unsafe work.

### How to Refuse Unsafe Work

Adapted from Safe Work Manitoba



### A Story - Refusing Work

*Pang is a worker at a food processing plant. In her home country, she was a university educated school teacher. Her job in Manitoba was to run a packaging machine on a cooking oil bottling line. The work was hard and tedious, but she was able to send money from overtime back to her family each month.*

*One day, Pang got the sleeve of her smock caught on a piece of the moving machinery. Because of an awkward reach across the bottling line, she had to go dangerously close to the bottling machine. Over the next few days, she caught the sleeve several more times, and at one point had to rip her sleeve loose to prevent her arm from being pulled into the machine.*

*Pang had heard that the law in Canada gave employees the right to refuse unsafe work. She was nervous to tell her supervisor that she could not work at her assigned job until something was done to protect her from the danger of the moving equipment.*

*Pang told her supervisor of the situation and showed him her torn smock. She was surprised when he thanked her for bringing this to his attention. The company immediately installed guard shields on the machine and designed a special tool to eliminate the awkward reach across the packaging line, which made Pang's job much easier.*

**- A Workplace Health and Safety Coordinator**

### Common Warnings Signs

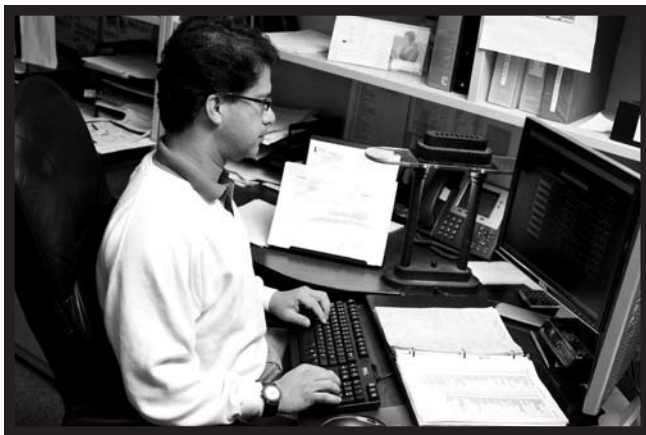
There are common workplace safety signs that different industries use. It is important that certain signs and symbols are explained by your employer and that you understand the warnings of danger for each sign. Depending on the type of work you do, the hazards and risks vary.

Here are some examples of what you might see in the workplace:





Some hazards have an immediate effect or injury. There are some other dangers in the workplace, however, that might not cause problems until later. For example, repetitive strain or working with chemicals.



In Canada, employers are very concerned with safety. Employers take many safety precautions to keep workers safe. It is the law.

For example:

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) is one important part of your

right to know. Some substances or chemicals may make you sick. If you need information about the chemical you are working with, WHMIS gives you this information.

Three parts of WHMIS:

1. **A warning label** – posted on containers that have chemicals in them. This label tells you what class a hazardous product is and how to use it safely.
2. **Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS)** – there should be a MSDS for every chemical in your workplace. If you don't understand, ask your buddy or supervisor to explain the information on the sheet to you before you use it.



3. **Worker Education Program** – workers should receive training that teaches how to read and understand the labels and the MSDS (often called a WHMIS class).



## Common Workplace Safety Devices

### ■ What safety devices are you familiar with?

There are different kinds of safety devices in the workplace. In Canada, it is the law to have specific safety equipment in public buildings and workplaces. Some of the equipment may be new or different to new Canadians.

For example, Canadian employees must lockout a machine that they repair. This involves:

- shutting off a machine with the control
- locking the control in place to make sure it cannot be turned on accidentally
- making certain the machine is in a “zero energy state” before changing the blade or making repairs

This may be seen as overly cautious but it is the law.



Below are some pictures of safety equipment you might see in your workplace.

First Aid Kit



A Machine Guard



A Lockout Padlock

Eyewash Station



Fire Extinguisher

Smoke Alarm

Fire Hose

Alarm Pull Station

### Important Points to Remember

- Things may be done differently in Canada than back home. You may look at things differently than your co-workers or your supervisor.
- Employers value safety in the workplace. Workers can lose their job if they do not follow a safety rule or if they are careless.
- Always tell the supervisor when you don't understand instructions. This will make you a more valuable worker and keep you safe and healthy.
- Always ask for a copy of your company's safety rules and have someone translate if you can't read it on your own.
- If you see a dangerous situation, tell your supervisor or the worker safety and health Representative immediately.
- Report all injuries immediately. Sometimes new workers are afraid to do this for fear that they might get in trouble. In Canada, reporting injuries is the law.
- If injured at work, don't wait. Tell your supervisor as soon as you are hurt.
- Make sure you know how to properly wear your personal protective equipment for the job you do.
- Don't use a product if it doesn't have a warning label and you don't know what it is.

- If you need new protective equipment, you have to get it! Ask your supervisor or your work buddy.
- The first step to staying safe is learning to spot a hazard before an incident happens and then taking steps to protect yourself.

### Workplace Culture – Workplace Safety....

#### A Final Word

Canadian workplace culture is based on the idea that no job is important enough to risk the health and safety of employees. Working safely is as important as being productive and performing well.

In the Canadian workplace, supervisors and employees share responsibility.

- Supervisors must make sure employees are trained and understand safety procedures.
- Employees must practise proper work procedures, report hazards and wear personal protective equipment.

By working together to identify and correct unsafe work practices, supervisors and employees can help to build a safe workplace community.

---

## Need More Information?

---

- If you have questions about refusing a dangerous situation and you want help, contact:

Manitoba Labour Board  
258 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg  
Phone: (204) 945-3783  
[www.gov.mb.ca/labour/labbrd/index.html](http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/labbrd/index.html)

- If you have questions about your hours of work, pay, vacation or want to be sure that your employer is following the law, contact:

Employment Standards Branch  
24 hour Inquiry Lines  
Telephone: 204-945-3352 or  
Toll free in Manitoba 1-800-821-4307  
Fax: 204-948-3046  
Email: [employmentstandards@gov.mb.ca](mailto:employmentstandards@gov.mb.ca)

- If you have questions about Workers Compensation, contact:

Worker Advisor Office  
Telephone: (204) 945-5787

The Worker Advisor Office will help you in filing a claim and get information about how to do it.

## Claim Information Centre

Telephone: (204) 954-4100

This is the direct line to report a claim between 8:00 am and 7:00 pm

Monday to Friday. Visit the Workers

Compensation Board website at

[www.wcb.mb.ca](http://www.wcb.mb.ca)

- If you have questions about human rights and discrimination contact:

Manitoba Human Rights Commission

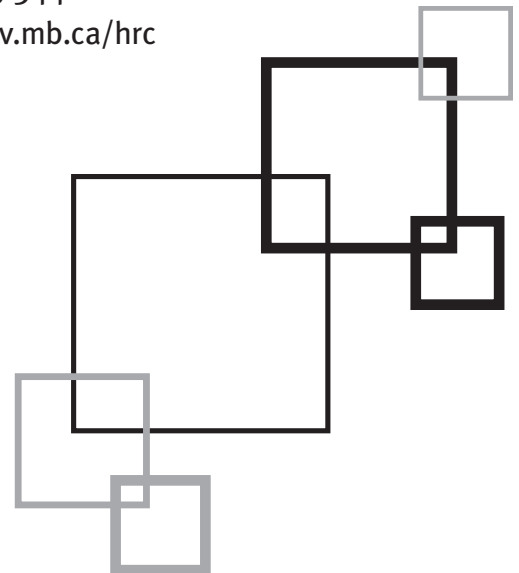
7th Floor -175 Hargrave Street

Winnipeg, MB R3C 3R8

Phone: (204) 945-3007 or (888) 884-8681

TTY: 945-3442

[www.gov.mb.ca/hrc](http://www.gov.mb.ca/hrc)



# Sources and Resources

## **Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba**

333 Broadway Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 4W3  
Tel: (204) 954-4321 (English)  
Toll-free: 1-800-362-3340  
[www.wcb.mb.ca](http://www.wcb.mb.ca)

## **Manitoba Federation of Labour**

503-275 Broadway Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 4M6  
Tel: (204) 947-1400  
[www.mfl.mb.ca](http://www.mfl.mb.ca)

## **Manitoba Labour Employment Standards Branch**

604-401 York Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R3C 0P8  
Tel: (204) 945-3352  
Toll-free: 1-800-821-4307  
[www.gov.mb.ca/labour/standards](http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/standards)

## **SAFE Workers of Tomorrow**

Unit 3 – 1680 Notre Dame Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R3H 1H6  
Tel: (204) 992-2988  
[www.workersoftomorrow.com](http://www.workersoftomorrow.com)

Work Start. *Working Culture in Canada*

Work Start. *Safety in the Workplace*

WIN - New Canadian's Guide to the Canadian Workplace

Axtell RE, Fornwald M. *Gestures: The Do's and Taboos of Body Language Around the World*. New York, John Wiley & Sons, 1997.

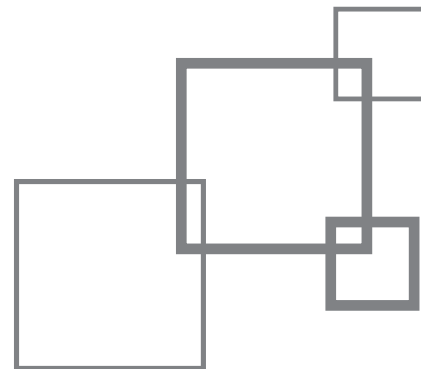
Gardenswartz, Lee and Anita Rowe; *The Management Diversity Survival Guide*, Richard D. Irwin, Inc. 1994.

Hall ET. *Beyond Culture*. Anchor, New York, 1977.

Harris PR, Moran RT. *Managing Cultural Differences – Leadership Strategies for a New World of Business*, 6th Ed. Woburn, MA, Butterworth-Heinemann, 2004.

Hofstede, Gert Jan, Paul B. Pedersen and Geert Hofstede; *Exploring Culture - Exercises, Stories, and Synthetic Cultures*, Intercultural Press, Inc. 2002.

Laroche, Lionel, Ph.D. and Rutherford, Don; *Recruiting, Retaining, and Promoting Culturally Different Employees*, 2007.



|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |





|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |





# **Building A SAFE WORKPLACE COMMUNITY**

**A New Canadian's Guide to How Culture Impacts Health and Safety**

**Canadian Language Benchmark 7 (CLB 7 Guide)**