Laws help workers stay safe

Alberta has laws (rules) about health and safety at work. Most employers and workers must follow the laws. For example:

✔ Employers must have safe workplaces for their workers.

✔ Employers must tell workers about hazards at work.

A hazard is something that can be a danger to workers.

✔ Employers must make sure that workers have the training and skills to do their jobs safely.

✔ Workers must use safety equipment (tools or clothing) needed for their jobs. For example, construction workers must wear hardhats.

✔ Workers must work safely.

Note: Alberta laws may NOT apply to some workers. For example:

- nannies
- housekeepers
- bank workers
- federal government workers

Federal and other laws protect these workers.

Ask these questions at work

1. What are the hazards of my job?
2. Are there any other health and safety hazards at my workplace?
3. Is there job safety training? When?
4. Do we have safety meetings?
5. Is there safety equipment? When is training?
6. Is there emergency training? When?
7. Where are the fire extinguishers, first aid kits and emergency equipment?
8. Who is the first aid person?
9. What are my health and safety duties?
10. Who do I ask if I have a health and safety question?

Ann works alone

Ann works alone at a gas station at night. How can Ann’s employer make her job safer? Here are some tips.

✔ Buy a small safe for Ann to use often during the night.

✔ Put the cash register near the front windows. Then people can see what is happening inside.

✔ Use a security system.

✔ Send Ann to a training course. She can learn what to do if there is a robbery.

✔ Use security glass between Ann and the customers.

Note: Workers must have a way to contact people if there is an emergency. For example, they may use a phone or a 2-way radio to call for help.

An emergency is a sudden danger that needs fast action. For example, a fire or a heart attack.
Jung-ho is a kitchen helper

Jung-ho works in a restaurant. He keeps the kitchen clean. He prepares some food. Jung-ho watches out for hazards at work. For example:

✔ He makes sure there are no water or grease spills. He cleans up spills right away so no one slips. He puts up a sign to warn people when the floor is wet.

✔ He wears special gloves when he cleans up hot grease. He also wears gloves when he uses chemicals to clean.

✔ He is careful when he uses knives and the slicing machine. They are sharp.

Doris is a factory worker

Doris works in a factory. She stands all day on a hard floor. She does the same tasks again and again. Doris didn’t have problems with her wrists and feet at first. Now they hurt most of the time.

Workers get repetitive strain when they do the same tasks again and again. What do employers need to do? Employers need to improve work areas. They need to improve how workers do their tasks. For example:

✔ Provide stools so workers can sit some of the time.

✔ Put special mats on the floor.
Ardo is a janitor

Ardo cleans in a small office building. She works at night.

Hazards at her workplace

Ardo’s employer told her about hazards at work. For example:
- working alone
- using chemicals
- emptying garbage

They looked for hazards together. They found a vacuum with a bad cord. Ardo’s employer fixed it right away.

Safety information

Ardo’s employer must have a binder that workers can look at. The binder must have safety information about hazardous products.

The sheets in the binder are called Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS).

Training

Ardo had training at work. For example, Ardo learned how to use cleaning products safely. She took a WHMIS course.

WHMIS (say: wim-mis)

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System

Canada has a system for labels on hazardous materials (products). It is called WHMIS.

The labels are on cleaning products, paints, glues and other things. Employers must label products correctly.

The labels have different symbols. For example:

This symbol means this product can catch fire if there is a spark or open flame.

Be safe!

✔ Read labels.
✔ Make sure you have training before you use hazardous products.
✔ Ask questions.

Tom is a construction worker

Tom works for a construction company. He works indoors and outdoors.

Tom cleans up work areas. He lifts things. He helps to take apart old buildings. He uses tools.

Tom watches out for hazards at work. For example:
- broken tools
- uneven areas on the ground
- open holes at the work site
- cold temperatures
- long shifts (many hours at work)

Tom must wear safety equipment to help protect himself. For example: safety glasses.

You can say no

Ben works in a warehouse. He unpacks boxes and puts things on shelves.

One day, Ben’s supervisor tells him to use a forklift. Ben has never used a forklift before. What can he do?

Ben has no forklift training. He can hurt himself or another worker.

Ben must stay calm and say no politely. He can ask to take forklift training.

Under the law, workers must say no if they think a task is dangerous.

I don’t know how to drive a forklift. I need to take forklift training.

Safety clothing and equipment

mask

safety harness (fall harness)

safety vest

steel-toed boots

non-slip shoes

arm guards

safety coveralls

earmuffs

hardhat

saw blade guard

safety glasses

steel-toed boots

lifeline

knee pads

respirator

first aid sign

Material Safety Data Sheet

Class B

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Workers’ Compensation Board (WCB)

Many employers have insurance through the WCB (say: W-C-B). The WCB covers injuries or diseases that you get at work.

The WCB helps you get better and return to work. For example, it may pay you wages. It may pay for medical costs and training.

How to contact the WCB
Phone: 1-866-922-9221
Fax: 1-800-661-1993
Mail: WCB - Alberta
P.O. Box 2415
Edmonton AB T5J 2S5
Website: wcb.ab.ca

What to do if you are injured at work

If you are injured and you are covered by the WCB

1. Get medical help.
2. Tell your employer. Your employer must report your injury to WCB.
3. Tell your doctor. Your doctor must also tell the WCB.
4. Tell WCB. It is your right.

Fill out a Report of Injury form. You can get a form from your employer or on the WCB website. Send the form to the WCB right away. You can send it online, by mail or by fax.

If you are injured and you are NOT covered by the WCB

1. Get medical help.
2. Tell your employer. Your employer must fill out a first aid report.

How to order this publication

✔ To order one copy, call or email the Career Information Hotline.

Edmonton: 780-422-4266
Outside Edmonton (free): 1-800-661-3753
Email: hotline@alis.gov.ab.ca

✔ To order 2 or more copies, go to this website: alis.alberta.ca/publications

You can also order other Easy Reading publications on this website. For example:

- Work Laws and Your Pay Stub
- Easy Reading Career Planning Series
  - Job Profiles
  - Work and You

For more information

✔ Talk to your supervisor.

✔ Phone the Occupational Health and Safety Contact Centre. You don’t have to give your name or your employer’s name. Your call is confidential (secret).

You can ask about workplace health and safety laws. You can also complain about an unsafe workplace.

Edmonton: 780-415-8690
Outside Edmonton (free): 1-866-415-8690

✔ Are you a temporary foreign worker? Call the Temporary Foreign Worker Helpline. You can ask about health and safety laws.

Edmonton: 780-644-9955
Outside Edmonton (free): 1-877-944-9955

✔ Are you an immigrant or a refugee? Ask for help from an agency for immigrants. You can find a list of agencies at this website: aaisa.ca

Note: The people in the photos are volunteers. They portray fictional people.

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