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EVERY DAY

No. 271

Hiring New Workers: Resources to Assist You

Many workplaces hire new workers throughout the year. Some companies consider hiring new workers over the spring and summer months. As an employer, you can offer your new workers a good work experience while also protecting them from injury on the job.

Employers must ensure that every **new worker** is provided with a safety and health orientation and is trained to protect themselves from hazards that they may encounter in the course of their duties.

“**new worker**” is defined as:

- Workers that are new to the workplace
 - (e.g. workers starting employment, including young people, temporary or seasonal workers, new immigrants, etc.)
- Workers that have moved from one area of the workplace to another area of the workplace that has different facilities, procedures or hazards
 - (e.g. workers who are reassigned or transferred to a new job)
- Workers that are being relocated to a different workplace with different facilities, procedures or hazards
 - (e.g. workers who are transferred to a different office location)
- Workers returning to the same workplace, but the processes or hazards in the workplace changed while the worker was away
 - (e.g. workers returning from a leave of absence)

Did you know that:

- New workers are an asset to your workplace – with fresh eyes, new ideas and good questions?
- New workers have 5 to 7 times the risk of injury in the first 4 weeks of a new job?
- Most injuries happen in the absence of a supervisor?
- New workers tend not to ask questions because they are eager to do a good job, want to make a good impression and are afraid of losing their job?

Often new workers are injured when they:

- Take on jobs for which they're not trained because they are eager to please and “fit in”
- Don't have appropriate supervision
- Work with dangerous equipment with which they are not familiar, or
- Do not understand instructions and are afraid to say so

Here's What to Do:

- Train managers and supervisors on how to provide a safety and health orientation for new workers at your workplace. For the required topics of a safety and health orientation, see SAFE Work Bulletin 255 – Safety and Health Orientation.
- Spend more time explaining the job (ex. task specific, process, procedures etc.).
- Use the “tell me, show me, practice” method of teaching – **always have new workers demonstrate** that they can do the work safely before leaving them to perform the work alone.
- Keep in mind that new workers need a different kind of supervision, and that supervisors must be competent. Supervisors need to spend more time in the first few weeks making sure new employees understand why a task is performed in a certain way.
- Be clear about the expectations – people are more likely to follow the rules if they know what they are!
- Check back frequently to ensure there is follow-up with new staff.

Workplace Safety and Health Contact Information:

Winnipeg: (204) 957-SAFE (7233)
Toll-Free: 1-855-957-SAFE (7233)

Publications/resources available at: www.safemanitoba.com

(See over)



Here's What to Do (Continued):

- Supervisors need to be available and open to answering questions and providing advice. Remember, many new workers will not ask questions unless encouraged to do so.
- Explain the importance of prompt reporting of unsafe conditions and concerns. Ensure new workers know it is a priority for you and tell them **how and to whom** to report a hazard or concern. It is important to act on those concerns or workers quickly learn that the company isn't really interested in creating a safe and healthy work environment.
- Supervisors and senior workers are role models. New workers will take note of "how things are really done around the workplace" as they are eager to fit in. They will very quickly adopt the attitudes and behaviours of co-workers and supervisors.

Consider language abilities prior to planning your training. This does not only mean workers with English as an additional language but those who are challenged with their level of literacy as well. Assessing the workers' level of English communication skills helps you deliver safety and health messages that are understood. A customized Workplace Communication Assessment Kit can be developed specifically for your workplace.

If your business employs immigrant workers whose English skills need improvement, the Manitoba government's English at Work program can help. For more information, and to request assistance in this area, call 204-945-6016 or visit the following websites:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/immigration/programs/employers.html>

http://www.immigratemanitoba.com/asset_library/en/eal/pdf/english_at_work1108.pdf

Consider literacy levels of your workforce and adapt training programs accordingly. In Manitoba it is reported that approximately 40 percent of working age adults had prose literacy scores below the level considered the minimum for full participation in a knowledge-based economy and society. This represents approximately 285,000 Manitobans between the ages of 16 and 65. While a high percentage of this group is employed, their literacy skills limit their employment opportunities. Lower literacy levels may mean inability to understand written instructions and to adapt to change in the workplace, all important factors for a productive and safe workforce. For further information and assistance, visit the Workplace Education Manitoba website, at <http://www.wem.mb.ca/>. It is a good source for Essential Skills consultation, assessment and co-funded workplace training partnerships.

Consider culture – It is projected that up to 20,000 new Canadians per year will arrive in Manitoba over the next five years. This may impact your workforce. When people move to another country they move into another culture. Different values and behaviours may affect worker safety and health on the job. For example, appropriate business (work) clothing to a Canadian employer might be different than a South American employer. Personal protective equipment that seems "standard" to you may have never been seen before by someone new to the country. It is important to understand those differences and provide training that is clear and specific. Many resources for safety and health in this area have been developed and can be found at:

<http://safemanitoba.com/RWIP-manitoba-immigrant-safety-initiative>

To help all Manitobans – new and existing – understand their basic rights and responsibilities when it comes to workplace safety and health, resources outlining this fundamental information have been produced in seven languages. For copies of posters and wallet cards call Safety Services Manitoba, at: 204-949-1085.

Implement a Safety and Health Orientation for All New Workers at Your Workplace

You must ensure your new workers receive all the necessary information to prevent workplace injuries. Following a step-by-step approach to conducting an orientation will help you to reduce the risk of worker injury and help you to fulfill your legal responsibility for training new workers. A two-page resource (SAFE Work Bulletin 255, *Safety and Health Orientation*) can be found on the SAFE Manitoba website, at: <http://safemanitoba.com/bulletin-255>

Reference to legal requirements under workplace safety and health legislation:

- Duties of Employers: Workplace Safety and Health Act W210 – Part 4
- Duties of Supervisors: Workplace Safety and Health Act W210 – Part 4.1
- Orientation for New Workers: Workplace Safety and Health Regulation 217/2006 – Part 2.2.1

Additional workplace safety and health information available at www.safemanitoba.com

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