

Safe Work Practices

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Safe Work Practices

Overview

Wherever possible, safe work practices must be put into place to minimize accidents and prevent injuries. The three categories of safe work practices that the Division has implemented to identify and control work hazards include:

- Task Hazard Analysis
- Safe Work Procedures
- Codes of Practice

The Division has an ongoing process for analyzing tasks, identifying hazards and controls (**Task Hazard Analysis**), and developing **Safe Work Procedures** to promote workplace safety. In addition, **Codes of Practice** have been developed to address specific legislation requirements for some hazards with a higher probability of injury, illness or environmental impact. Some hazards may require the development of more than one category of safe work practice.

Legislative Requirements

Under provincial legislation, employers must, where practicable, ensure the health and safety of their employees and ensure that employees are aware of their responsibilities and duties related to health and safety issues. Employees must take reasonable care to protect themselves and others in the workplace and are expected to cooperate with the employer to create a safe work environment.

The Hazard Assessment, Elimination and Control Section of the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code provides requirements to reduce or eliminate hazards in the workplace. These requirements include hazard assessment, worker participation, hazard elimination and control, emergency control of hazards and health and safety plans.

The development of *Safe Work Practices* must involve input from employees. An employer must ensure that employees affected by the hazards identified are informed of the hazards and the methods used to control or eliminate the hazards. *Safe Work Practices* are required to be reviewed on an ongoing basis and amended as conditions change.

Safe Work Practices Compliance

Standard safe work practices are judged for compliance from a *prevention of serious accident and costly errors* standard. If an incident should occur at the workplace the questions a government inspector would ask are:

- Are safe work practices in place for hazardous tasks, so that the job is completed safely, productively and efficiently?

- Are employees fully aware of the practices and the consequences of not following them?
- Does the employee have the competence (knowledge, skill and ability) to do the work properly?

Principals and non-school based department heads have the responsibility to ensure that employees:

- Understand the hazards involved in the work that they are performing and the necessity of the controls required to ensure safety.
- Have input into the development of any safe work practices that are intended to maximize safety of the tasks they perform or supervise.

Employees must know:

- How to effectively participate in the development of safe work practices.
- Their responsibility to be active participants not only in the development, but in the implementation, use and review of these safe work practices.
- The consequences of not following safe work practices in relation to employee performance evaluations.

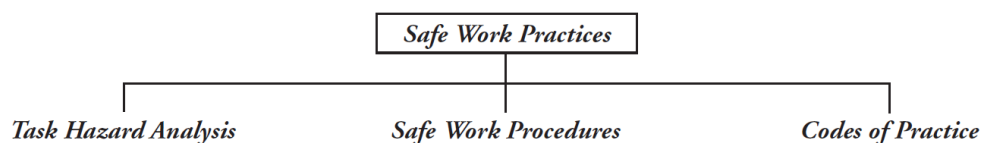
Guidelines for Meeting Legislative Requirements

The three categories of safe work practices that the Division has implemented to identify and control work hazards are detailed below.

Hazardous tasks require the completion of a Task Hazard Analysis. This primary process identifies all the hazards involved in the task, details the controls that must be put in place and articulates the specific practices to be followed to minimize the possibility of accidents and injury.

There are some high hazard tasks that require a detailed step-by-step procedure that the employee should follow in completing the task. **Safe Work Procedures** address the required systematic approach for these high hazard tasks.

Finally, there are some hazards that by legislation require the development of a **Code of Practice** (e.g., confined space entry). These are detailed documents which outline the Division's approach to meeting all regulated requirements related to the hazard.



The Division has conducted an initial systematic review of tasks performed by employees and has identified those tasks that have a higher degree of risk. The following Risk Level Determination Matrix is a guideline used by the Division to assist in determining appropriate risk levels.

Risk Level Determination Matrix					
	High Risk	A task which requires the completion of a safe work practice			
	Medium Risk	A task which may require the completion of a safe work practice			
	Low Risk	A task which does not require the completion of a safe work practice			
Probability →	Frequent	Probable	Occasional	Remote	Improbable
Severity ↓					
Catastrophic					
Critical					
Serious					
Minor					

Definitions of terms used in the above matrix:

Probability of Occurrence in the Division

Frequent – likely to occur repeatedly during a school year

Probable – likely to occur several times in a school year

Occasional – likely to occur sometime in a school year

Remote – not likely to occur in a school year

Improbable – probability of occurrence close to zero

Severity Levels and Potential Consequences

Catastrophic – death

Critical – permanent impairment or long term disability

Serious – injury or illness requiring medical aid or resulting in restricted work

Minor - Injury or illness requiring minimal attention or first aid

A safe work practice has been developed for all of those tasks that were identified as high or medium risk level (black or grey area on the Risk Level Determination Matrix). This process involved employee participation. All of the safe work practices developed have been categorized and published in a Division Safe Work Practice Manual. This manual has been distributed to all principals and non-school based department heads.

The Division Safe Work Practices Manual is a dynamic document which will be modified and revised as feedback is received from employees or as legislation or work site conditions change.

Training Requirements

All Division principals and non-school based department heads are aware of the Safe Work Practices Manual and the process followed in identifying and developing safe work practices. Each principal and non-school based department head is expected to review the Safe Work Practices Manual and identify those tasks which are performed by members of their staff. They must then review the relevant safe work practices with appropriate employees and provide them with a copy of the document. A record should be maintained regarding the distribution of safe work practices. The principal or non-school based department head must also ensure that any employees who will perform a task which requires prior Division training or certification, has received such training or certification.

This process should occur annually and in conjunction with Position Hazard Assessment reviews (see Sec. 3 – Hazard Assessment and Control). Many of the tasks for which a safe work practice has been developed are associated with positions where a Position Hazard Assessment has been completed.

Implementation

Getting Started

The principal or non-school based department head must:

1. Review the contents of the Safe Work Practices Manual and identify those tasks which are performed by members of their staff.
2. Review and provide copies of safe work practices to relevant employees. This should be done in conjunction with the review and distribution of Position Hazard Assessments. Any recommended changes to those documents should be brought to the attention of the Division Health and Safety Officers.
3. Maintain a record of which safe work practices employees receive. This information should be kept in the Document Binder.
4. Ensure that any employees who will perform a task which requires prior Division training or certification, has received such training or certification.

Ongoing

The principal or non-school based department head must:

1. Annually review and distribute Safe Work Practices to relevant employees.
2. With input from employees, identify any tasks which are of a high or medium risk level that are not addressed, or need revision, in the Safe Work Practices Manual. These tasks should be brought to the attention of the Division health and safety officers, who will facilitate the development of a new or modified safe work practice.
3. Ensure that their copy of the Safe Work Practices Manual is kept current.
4. Conduct periodic inspections to ensure that safe work practices are being followed. Documentation of these inspections should be maintained.
5. Encourage participation of employees in Division based training or in-service programs related to occupational health and safety.