DUTIES OF THE EMPLOYER

All employers must meet the minimum requirements for health and safety standards as required by law. An Employer must:
- Provide a safe and healthy workplace;
- Establish and maintain an effective health and safety program and obtain input from the occupational health committee (OHC);
- Make sure that managers and supervisors are trained, supported, and held accountable for fulfilling their workplace health and safety requirements;
- Oversee the health and safety performance of their managers and supervisors;
- Make sure workers have the information, training, certification, supervision, and experience to do their jobs safely;
- Make sure medical/first aid facilities are provided as needed;
- Set-up effective occupational health committees;
- Cooperate with the OHC, occupational health and safety (OHS) representative and other parties to resolve health and safety issues in a timely fashion;
- Keep OHC/OHS representative meeting minutes on file and readily available;
- Ensure workers are not exposed to harassment in the workplace; and
- Ensure that legal health and safety requirements are met.

Employers are also required to have a copy of The Saskatchewan Employment Act and regulations readily available to workers and management.

It is the employer’s responsibility to ensure that the sub-trades on-site are following health and safety regulations. They should receive a site orientation before starting work, have the appropriate training certification readily available and be included in the documentation, for example, daily toolbox/safety meetings.

Supervisors are also required to ensure that sub-trades are following the OHS Regulations, the company safety program and as well being part of the daily paperwork and ongoing documentation.

SUPERVISOR RESPONSIBILITIES

Anyone on site who is responsible for directing workers or overseeing work with sub-trades is considered a supervisor under the occupational health and safety regulations. This is important for employers to know and understand. An employee does not have to have the word “supervisor” in their title to be considered a supervisor under legislation. It is the employer’s responsibility to make sure that whomever is directed to supervise has the appropriate training to do so. Supervisors must:
- Understand and ensure compliance with workplace health and safety requirements;
- Cooperate with the occupational health committee, ensure that it functions properly, and ensure all workers support committee members in their health and safety activities;
- Make sure hazards are identified and proper steps are taken to eliminate the hazards or control the risks;
- Inspect work areas and correct unsafe acts and conditions;
- Instruct and coach workers to follow safe work procedures;
- Ensure only authorized, competent workers operate equipment;
- Ensure equipment is properly maintained;
- Ensure the necessary personal protective equipment is provided to workers and used properly;
- Know how to safely handle, store, produce, and dispose of chemical and biological substances at the workplace;
- Understand and implement emergency procedures;
- Report and investigate incidents (meaning accidents and dangerous occurrences);
- Promote health and safety awareness;
- Cooperate with other parties in dealing with health and safety issues;
- Ensure that workers under their direct supervision are sufficiently supervised; and
- Ensure that workers under their direct supervision are not exposed to harassment at their workplace.

For more information on employer duties, refer to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, Part 3 General Duties.

For the supervisor, refer to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, Supervision of Work 17 (1)(b), 17(1)(c) & 17(2)
When accidents and incidents happen on the jobsite, we are always quick to point the finger at lack of training, not following practices or procedures, or even improper supervision. The idea that the hazards and dangers associated with the job were not properly communicated to all of the workers is often missed.

Tool Box Talks can go by many names, and although formats may vary, these meetings all serve one purpose: to inform employees and contract workers. Tool Box Talks are short, informal, meetings between management and the workers on a jobsite. The goal of these meetings is to reinforce current safe job procedures, inform workers of new and/or relevant procedures, review recent safety violations/incidents, and ensure workers are up-to-date on the information required to complete their work safely.

Always use a Tool Box Talk form to record the meeting topic, date, who was in attendance, and any follow-up actions to be taken. Not only do these forms help with consistency of record keeping, but they also ensure that nothing is missed. At the end of the meeting have management sign off on the form.

One of the most important aspects of a Tool Box Talk is giving workers an opportunity to voice their concerns and ask questions. All employees have a right to participate in health and safety as it relates to their work and it is the supervisor or manager’s responsibility to create an environment for them to do so. Once the meeting is over, and the form is filled out, it should be filed with other documented Tool Box Talks. Remember that Tool Box Talks are short and informal, they are not meant to be intimidating. Use the opportunity to have fun and stay on top of what is necessary to keep safety culture a strong part of the business.

For a full listing of Tool Box Talk topics, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/resources/tool-box-talks

For a copy of the Tool Box Talk form, visit: www.scsaonline.ca/pdf/Tool_Box_Meeting.pdf

The Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association (SCSA) is an industry-funded, membership-based, non-profit organization that provides cost-effective, accessible safety training and advice to employers and employees in the construction industry throughout the province to reduce the human and financial losses associated with injuries. Registered March 20, 1995, the SCSA is, and has been since inception, committed to injury prevention. Serving almost 10,000 member companies with business offices in both Regina and Saskatoon, the major business units of the association are Advisory Services, Business Development, Corporate Services, Program Services and Training. The mission of the SCSA is constructing safety leadership in Saskatchewan and the vision is to create the safest construction environment in Canada.