

10 Elements that you should have as part of your New Employee Health & Safety Orientation

Hello, as we enter into the late summer early fall, some business will be hiring on new staff as we start to get back to normal from the recent pandemic. When we ask business or workers what kind of health and safety orientation they have received, you would be surprised by the answers we get! For the most part, worker don't really remember what they received as part of their new employee orientation. Which is scary when you ask your self, what would the workers say to a MOL Safety Inspector if they asked them about the training they have received. This is why it is so important to be able to document the training that you have provided.

With that said, lets review some of the ways that company's orientation new workers. They may:

- Give the worker a tour of the facility, telling them about the work and some rules they may need to follow.
- Give the workers a hand book to read and sign off on the last page indicating they have read and will follow the policies and procedures found within it. Then maybe a tour of the workplace
- Give the workers the hand book, review it with them one on one and expand on certain important procedures or rules and then provide additional training such as Violence & Harassment, WHMIS or any job or department safety procedures all in the same day.
- All of the above, but broken up over a period of several days
- Have the workers sit down in front of a computer and watch training videos assigned to them as part of their training needs. This may include an orientation of the company and health and safety.
- Remember that all workers in Ontario have to have taken the MLTSD mandatory worker and supervisor training.

Not sure where you would fit into the above training scenarios, but at the end of the day, your training has to be effective. Don't get fooled into thinking that "as long as they reviewed it, and signed off on it, it's good enough for me!

Regardless of how you provide orientation to your new workers, your program should include the following elements.

1. Health & Safety Policy Statement
2. Violence & Harassment Policy statement

3. Procedures for reporting violence and harassment to the employer, including training on how to recognize harassment in the workplace.
4. 3 Basic rights of workers – Right to Participate, Know and Refuse unsafe work
5. Who is your H&S reps, and what is it they can do for you?
6. About the kinds of safety hazards that you can expect to find in the workplace
7. How to refuse unsafe work and how to report a safety hazard
8. What to do in the event of an emergency (fire, weather, gas leak, violent persons or medical emergency)
9. The safety rules that must be followed including elements like the use of PPE or specific safe work instructions that must be followed.
10. What happens if you don't follow the rules, your disciplinary policy and procedure.

The above list would be some of the basic elements that you should consider when evaluating your new employee safety orientation.

Some other questions that we are asked include:

Do we have to give them all the training on the first day of employment?

Answer- No you don't but make sure that what you do give them on the first day is something they need. As an example, if they are to start work on a production line, they should receive any training that would apply to that work area and job first. If they are not going to use any chemicals or be exposed to any chemicals, you can maybe put off the WHMIS training to another day.

Keep in mind that the more information that you provide to them at once, the more they are going to lose because it may be information overload. We have seen some companies that will do an overview on the first day, and a more intensive training after they have been there a few days to let the new worker become more comfortable in the environment. They are more likely to retain the information.

How do you verify that knowledge was acquired, is having them sign off that they took the training good enough?

Answer – in the past, we would see companies have workers sign off on all kinds of policies and procedures, but that doesn't mean they understood or even read the policies or procedures. Today we are seeing more and more companies that will have the new worker take a test or quiz on the elements of training that they have taken. Something specific to the company.

How often to I need to provide training on the elements of our H&S program?

Answer - there are no rules that identify how often you have to provide this training. Under the due diligence laws, you should review some of your procedures as often as needed. For elements such as Violence & Harassment and emergency procedures as an example, I would recommend that you pull these elements out and put them into a sort of 'Safety Talk' and review that with your staff at least once a year. If you had a policy that supervisors were to provide regular safety talks with their workers, using some of the elements in your new employee H&S training would provide you with a few safety talk ideas.

Lastly,

The training that you should be providing to your new workers must be comprehensive and specific to the kind of work that the worker may be exposed to or working with. If you have questions about your employee H&S orientation, feel free to contact our office and we would be pleased to arrange for a no cost consult to discuss what elements should be included in your new employee on-boarding. Contact hello@istcanada.ca to arrange for a time we can talk with you.

Best regards

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