

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE (JHSC) CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

REPORT – RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION

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Prevention Division

Workplace Safety & Insurance Board



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1. INTRODUCTION

The WSIB envisions a future where workplace injuries and illness are eliminated in Ontario. One of its mandates is: “To promote health and safety in workplaces and to prevent and reduce the occurrence of workplace injuries and occupational diseases.” The WSIB fulfills this purpose by educating workers and others about health and safety, and by fostering a commitment to health and safety among employers, workers and others.

The WSIB oversees the certification of Joint Health and Safety Committee members according to a process outlined in the WSIB Certification Standards. These standards, in place since 1996, need renewal to ensure certified members continue to receive the highest quality training and knowledge.

In March 2009, the WSIB set up a Certification Review Committee composed of representatives from labour, employers, Ministry of Labour, Certification Training Providers, Health and Safety Associations and an adult learning specialist to provide advice to the WSIB regarding the review and implementation of improvements to the Certification Standards and Program. The discussions contributed to the creation of the “Joint Health and Safety Committee Consultation Paper” (hereafter called the consultation paper). The consultation paper was released in November 2009 and the public was invited to provide written comments until February 5, 2010. The consultation paper was posted on the WSIB website and e-mailed to over 200 stakeholders.

The WSIB received 80 written submissions from stakeholders and individuals encompassing a wide variety of workplace sectors. Many stakeholders, including certified members, employers, employer associations, labour representatives, training providers, health and safety consultants and Health and Safety Associations, provided responses. Some of the submissions were on behalf of groups, associations, and unions.

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2. CERTIFICATION CONSULTATION THEMES

Issues outlined in the consultation paper were divided into three sections – certification structure, program delivery standards and general questions. Feedback was compiled for each of these sections and the results are highlighted later in this document. In cases where the majority of respondents agreed on an issue, it is noted. General themes were identified and general comments from respondents are included.

2.1 CERTIFICATION STRUCTURE – PART ONE - BASIC CERTIFICATION TRAINING - STRUCTURE

BACKGROUND

The current Certification Program has been in place since the Certification Standards (the Standards) were developed in 1996. The Standards require training programs to adhere to adult learning principles and to fulfill the specified learning objectives. Concerns were raised that application of adult learning principles in the training delivery was weakening. An example was that some training courses were compressed into as little as two days, and that this may not have been sufficient to ensure that depth of content and interactive activities were suitably integrated. Currently, the Standards do not specify the degree of comprehensiveness or the extent of activities to ensure learning objectives are adequately addressed.

The WSIB sought input from stakeholders on how to ensure adult learning principles and interactivity were part of training courses.

In addition, the WSIB recognized that the world of work has changed since 1996. Ontario industry sectors are changing, as are workplace demands; these changes require the application of new skills and technologies as well as changes in legislation. The WSIB was interested in stakeholders' opinion on the need for changes to the certification training learning objectives to ensure that certified members are provided with the appropriate skills and knowledge to fulfill their duties.

CONSULTATION RESULTS

Course Duration

Most respondents supported instituting a minimum duration for Part One classroom training to help ensure adequate interactive activities and suitable depth of content. However, the submissions did not provide direction as to what the minimum duration should be.

Respondents' comments supporting minimum course duration included:

- Helps to ensure consistent minimum standard of training, regardless of sector or trainer
- Helps to ensure courses are of sufficient duration resulting in adequate interactive activities, suitable depth of content, quality of training delivery, and successful transfer of knowledge.
- Similar concept already in other programs such as First Aid.
- The Standards should be updated to specify the degree of comprehensiveness for each learning objective as part of the minimum course duration.

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Respondents' comments not supporting minimum course duration included:

- Increased course duration does not ensure improvement in the quality or consistency of training.
- One set timeframe will not be appropriate for all workplaces. Required course length is dependent on many variables such as sector, comprehension levels, and prior training.
- Focus on minimum content not minimum time.
- Permit flexibility in course delivery. As long as the program covers the core content and can demonstrate the successful transfer of knowledge, the duration of the course is not as important.
- Focus on quality, participant interaction and knowledge transfer, not course duration.

Suggested minimum course duration ranged from 2 to 10 days, with most respondents recommending a range of 3 to 5 days. Course needs to be long enough to effectively cover the material, regardless of participants' previous knowledge. A few suggested that a maximum duration should also be included in the Standards; factors need to be considered such as class size, participant knowledge, literacy skills, learning style, as well as the complexity of the sector.

Other comments included:

- Minimum and maximum class size should be stipulated in order to ensure classes are large enough to generate good discussion and not too large that all material cannot be covered.
- WSIB should institute a single standard course; with fixed duration.
- Minimum duration must be long enough to cover the material effectively without rushing those who take longer to understand it while not disrespecting those participants who pick up the material more quickly.

Course Interactivity

Most respondents supported modifying learning objectives to identify areas where interactive activities are required so that students can adequately practise skills or demonstrate knowledge.

Respondents' comments supporting interactive activities included:

- Practicing the required skills with the instructor and others before returning to the workplace is critical to successfully carrying out certified role.
- Learning objectives should always contain an element of practical application where a procedure may be practiced in the workplace by the respective certified members.
- Basic certification training should include learning objectives related to identifying and applying the tools and behaviours necessary to plan and chair effective JHSC meetings
- May help to overcome any language or cultural barriers that may be present.

Respondents' comments not supporting interactive activities included:

- Too time-consuming.
- Learning objectives should be more clearly defined to ensure every interactive activity has value and weight.
- Focus on content and knowledge, regardless of activities.
- Runs the risk of being overly prescriptive and removing the training provider's flexibility to design the program. WSIB should leave the designing of the best delivery and teaching methods to the developers of the training.

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Course Content – Inclusion of Interpersonal Skills

There was no clear theme on including interpersonal skills in the course content or on other topics that should be included in the learning objectives.

Many respondents indicated that certified members may be involved in dealing with workplace issues and conflicts so training in these topics would be of benefit. Skills such as conflict resolution, negotiation, written communication, verbal communication and leadership were suggested. However, respondents mostly thought that this training should be obtained outside of Certification training.

Respondents' comments supporting interpersonal skills in Certification training included:

- Certified members need both the knowledge base to help resolve concerns and the skills to negotiate the best solution.
- Interpersonal skills, in many cases, are more important than technical safety knowledge. Both worker and management representatives have a huge role to play and poor interpersonal relations can cloud issues and be counterproductive to a safe and healthy workplace.

Respondents' comments not supporting interpersonal skills in Certification training included:

- The priority for basic certification must be health and safety training.
- Interpersonal skills may be important but should be taught outside of certification.
- It is the role of the employer to ensure members have skills for the job.
- Adding further training topics would result in longer training as there is not enough time in the present courses to include new objectives.
- Instructors/training providers may not have the expertise to teach interpersonal skills
- The present learning objectives are sufficient.

Respondents provided many suggestions for topics that should be added to Certification training:

- Knowledge on conducting risk assessments, tools and resources to be used in hazard assessment, hazard recognition and control.
- Skills and knowledge related to functioning of the JHSC such as preparing agenda/minutes, conducting and structure of meetings, preparing reports etc.
- Practical training in conducting investigations and inspections.
- Specific hazards such as WHMIS, musculoskeletal disorders, psychosocial hazards.
- Legislation, such as how to read legislation, what to expect from Ministry of Labour and information on legislation in the Criminal Code.
- Effective communication, active listening, conflict resolution, negotiation skills, consensus building.

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2.2A CERTIFICATION STRUCTURE - PART TWO - WORKPLACE-SPECIFIC HAZARD TRAINING— HAZARD ASSESSMENT PROCESS

BACKGROUND

Challenges to Certification training have arisen since the introduction of the Part Two-Workplace-Specific Hazard training in January 2001. Although the WSIB provides guidelines, there are inconsistencies from employer to employer regarding training achieved. The present process provides flexibility for employers to identify training needs applicable to their workplace and train certified members based on those needs. Due to this self-reliant approach to Part 2 Workplace Specific Hazard training, there is variation from employer to employer regarding training selection. The process is complicated, unclear and often misunderstood and the WSIB does not have the mechanisms to validate the training selected.

The WSIB was interested in stakeholders' opinion on the value of a hazard assessment template or tool to guide the employer through the hazard assessment process and on the value of a preset sector list of hazards to guide the employer in determining its significant hazards. The hazard assessment template/tool would help employers who are unsure of how to complete a hazard assessment. The preset sector list of hazards would help ensure consistency as all employers in a particular sector would select from the same list of hazards.

The WSIB was also interested in stakeholders' suggestions on how to ensure that hazard assessments were fully completed and how the results could be validated.

CONSULTATION RESULTS

Hazard assessment template/tool

Most respondents agreed that a hazard assessment template or tool would assist participants in completing the hazard assessment requirement for Part Two.

Respondents' comments supporting hazard assessment template/tool included:

- It would help with consistency in workplace assessments.
- It would help workplaces understand the process for hazard assessments and would provide direction and focus.
- Some suggestions for the template/tool:
 - Should be simply designed and easy to apply.
 - Should not be prescriptive, only be used as a guide.
 - Should allow for customization for different sectors and workplaces.
 - Ultimately the employer is responsible for assessing the hazards in their workplace and employers should be given the flexibility to create their own tool.

Some of the stakeholder comments against the use of a standard hazard assessment template/tool included:

- Workplace hazards are very workplace-specific and it is not possible for any template/tool to cover all potential hazards.
- Risk that the workplace will focus only on those hazards identified in the template/tool and not conduct a proper hazard assessment of the hazards in their workplace such as using information from inspections, investigations, injury reports etc.

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- Current tools used are satisfactory and therefore new tools are not needed.
- Some respondents suggested that since the hazard assessment component is the greatest source of confusion, it should be removed from Part Two completely and the training should be sector specific with a focus on proper risk management process.

Pre-set sector list of hazards

Most respondents agreed that a pre-set list of hazards by sector would assist in completing the hazard assessment requirement for Part Two.

Respondents' comments supporting the preset list of significant hazards by sector included:

- It would help newly trained candidates and employers that seem confused about what is required for hazard assessments. Helpful for smaller businesses.
- Recommend to be used as a guide only.
- In addition to considering the list, the JHSC must use workplace information such as inspection reports, investigation reports etc to determine the significant hazards.
- The list should be broad enough to include an extensive range of hazards.

Some of the stakeholder comments against the preset list of significant hazards by sector:

- Workplace hazards are very workplace specific and such a list is impossible. One list for a specific sector would not work since many companies are diversified.
- It runs the risk of workplaces not really understanding the process. The hazard assessment is the responsibility of the employer.
- Some will consider these to be the only hazards in their workplace. With checklists there is a tendency to not look beyond what is on the list.
- If a list exists why conduct a hazard assessment?

Both those who agreed or disagreed with the template/tool/preset lists raised concerns that some workplaces would not go beyond these tools/list for determining their significant hazards. Guidelines for the tools need to make it clear that a workplace hazard assessment would still need to be completed in order to identify all the hazards of the particular workplace. The list needs to be comprehensive and flexible.

Hazard Assessments – Completeness and Validation

There was no clear theme on how to ensure completeness of hazard assessments or who should validate the hazard assessments.

The current process for hazard assessments and Part Two - Workplace Specific Hazard training does not provide any mechanism for validating that the training selected by an employer is an appropriate response to the significant hazards in their workplace or that the training provided is adequate. The quality of some of this training comes into question. In cases where there are disagreements between the prospective certified member and the employer on the selection of significant hazards, there may be little recourse for settlement of the disagreement.

The WSIB sought suggestions from stakeholders for ways to ensure that hazard assessments were thorough and complete and identified the significant hazards within the workplace.

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Presumably this would improve the Part Two – Workplace Specific Hazard training component of Certification.

Suggestions were varied and included:

- It's not the mandate of the WSIB, nor administratively possible for the WSIB to ensure hazard assessments are complete.
- The employer is responsible for hazard identification as per the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and they are in the best position to identify hazards and controls.
- Hazard assessments should be done in consultation with the JHSC.
- Training Providers and/or Health and Safety Associations could assist the employer.
- WSIB to review and approve hazard assessments or WSIB to conduct random audits.
- WSIB to create policies that introduce checks and balances to strongly encourage completeness and appropriateness and guidelines for workplaces to follow and Ministry of Labour to enforce.
- WSIB to improve "Form 3189 Workplace-Specific Hazard Training Confirmation To WSIB" and have it submitted to WSIB and Training Provider prior to training. It would include signatures of JHSC co-chairs and be completed within six months of Part One Basic training.
- Ministry of Labour monitors the hazard selection.

2.2B CERTIFICATION STRUCTURE - PART TWO - WORKPLACE-SPECIFIC HAZARD TRAINING— ALTERNATIVES TO CURRENT PART TWO WORKPLACE-SPECIFIC HAZARD TRAINING

BACKGROUND

In order to address the issues with the Part Two Workplace-Specific Hazard Training model, two alternative options were proposed:

- All Part Two Workplace-Specific training to be achieved through sector-specific programs. Every employer in the same sector would take the same course and therefore hazard topics. This is a clear process for employers as it ensures a foundation of quality training for certified members and consistent training in the sector.
- Combine Part One and Part Two training into one certification training program. The confusion surrounding the requirements for achieving certification status would be minimized as the student would only attend one course.

CONSULTATION RESULTS

Sector Specific Approach

There were no clear themes regarding whether a sector-specific program would be a better approach for Part Two – Workplace Specific Hazard training.

Respondents' comments supporting the sector-specific approach included:

- Works best for the sector.
- Improvement because there is confusion and sometimes disagreement on the selection of training with the present system of hazard assessment.
- It helps to ensure that committee members receive the appropriate training.

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- It would be less confusing and would create consistency across workplaces in a sector.
- Would be good as a minimum requirement so that all workplaces in a sector obtain same training. However, employer is responsible to ensure additional training for hazards not included in the sector program.

Support for the sector specific approach was tempered with the caution to ensure that employers still complete hazard assessments so that certified members are trained on all relevant hazards in their workplace should there be workplace specific hazards that were not covered by the sector specific programs. For some respondents, this concern was their rationale for opposing sector specific programs. It was felt that once a certified member took the sector specific course, no further action would be taken to ensure that the certified member had training in any other hazards specific to their workplace – they won't go beyond the sector program and the hazards included in the sector program. Some respondents felt that the present two part system is fine but needed clearer instruction on the requirements for certification. Questions were also raised as to the capability and capacity to develop sector specific programs for all sectors.

Some respondent comments against a sector specific program approach include:

- A cookie cutter approach wouldn't work as the sector program may not be relevant to all workplaces or it may result in hazards being taught that are not relevant to a particular workplace, especially in the case of smaller businesses.
- May lead to removal of risk evaluation process and participant looks no further for their specific workplace hazards.
- May result in workplaces not understanding hazard assessment process as it would no longer be required.

Combine into one program

There were no clear themes regarding whether Part One - Basic Certification Training and Part Two - Workplace-Specific Hazard Training should be combined into one "Certification Training" program.

Respondents' comments supporting the combined program model included:

- It would reduce confusion and enhance consistency of training among training providers
- It may increase compliance as currently many certified members do not proceed to Part Two training and therefore, having one course would result in more certified members completing the requirements for certification.
- There would be no loss in momentum between Part One and Part Two training as there is only one part. Students would not need to remember what they learned in a course that might have been taken months before.
- It would simplify administration for employers and for WSIB.
- The hazard assessment could still be required by having it completed before the course and then utilized in an activity in the course.

Respondents' comments against the combined program model included:

- The two part program structure does not need to be changed. What needs to be improved is the language in the program materials describing the certification process such as the letter to participants who complete Part One training explaining that there is

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a second stage to the certification process. Also the training providers and instructors should be required to clearly explain the certification process to their students.

- Having a two part process with a break allows participants to put into practice what they learned and to have a period for absorption of what they learned in Part One before starting Part Two.
- One program would be too long of a session and would be too much information for a student to absorb in one sitting.
- It would increase the time that an employee was away from work and it may be difficult to schedule time away from work. Having two parts allows this to be broken up into different sessions.
- Current process is flexible as certified members who may move to another sector would only need to take the Workplace Specific training in order to maintain their certification.
- In order to have a one course program, the content would need to be generic in order to apply to all sectors.

Some respondents suggested that a person should be considered certified upon completion of Part One Basic Training and then training continues to Part Two.

2.2C CERTIFICATION STRUCTURE - PART TWO - WORKPLACE-SPECIFIC HAZARD TRAINING— IMPROVEMENTS TO CURRENT PART TWO WORKPLACE-SPECIFIC HAZARD TRAINING

BACKGROUND

The WSIB sought stakeholders views on ways to improve Part Two Workplace Specific Hazard Training. One suggestion was to incorporate training on the top 4 Ontario hazards (priorities). Rationale: ensures all participants receive training on the prevalent hazards that result in the most workplace injuries and costs. Stakeholders were also asked to comment on these suggestions made by the Certification Review Committee:

- Enhance the Standards to include specific requirements for Part Two-Workplace Specific program delivery such as the number of topics or minimum class duration.
- Designate mandatory training topics such as Hazard Recognition and Control or Common Hazards.
- Accredit training providers for Part Two training.

CONSULTATION RESULTS

Training on top 4 hazards

Feedback was evenly divided between those in agreement and those that were against including the top 4 hazards.

Respondents' comments supporting mandating training content on the top 4 hazards included:

- Ensure the hazards are customized to the sector. For example, information on ergonomics in office sector would not be the same as ergonomics in mining sector.
- Mandate more than 4 hazards such as 6 or 10 as the minimum number.

Respondents' comments against mandating training on the top 4 hazards included:

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- It would include more content in the training program which may lead to course overload and make training too long.
- Top 4 hazards may not be relevant to all workplaces so it is important to ensure that the selection of top 4 hazards are those that apply to all workplaces.
- Workplaces may not look any further into hazard assessment of their workplace and accept only the mandatory 4 hazards for training regardless of whether this covered all the hazards in their workplace.
- The hazard assessment should be the process for selecting topics for workplace specific training.
- It is more important to understand the hazard identification and assessment process than knowing the specific hazards. These top 4 hazards are subject to change and training should be fundamental training on process of recognizing general classes of hazards such as ergonomics, chemical, biological etc.

Of those that agreed with the inclusion of the top 4 Ontario hazards into certification training, many thought it should be included in the Part Two Workplace-Specific Hazard Training component.

Certification Review Committee suggestions for improving Part Two Workplace Specific Training

There were no clear themes regarding the Certification Review Committee suggestions.

Suggestion #1

Enhance the Standards to include specific requirements for Part Two-Workplace Specific Hazard training program delivery such as the number of topics or minimum class duration.

Respondents comments:

- Having minimum duration for topics will help eliminate the short hazard training options which do not meet the WSIB learning objectives.
- Standards would help ensure training complies with adult learning principles and includes practice/demonstration skills. The standards need to ensure that the number of topics/class duration reflect the needs of the particular sector.
- One suggestion was to have participants bring their hazard assessment to the course so it can be discussed in class.
- Difficult to set meaningful durations and minimum topics for Part Two training because there are many hazards in workplaces and each workplace hazard is variable.
- Topics and class duration should be determined by the workplace JHSC.

Suggestion #2

Designate mandatory training topics such as Hazard Recognition and Control or Common Hazards

Respondents comments:

- Curriculum topics were suggested such as: methods for hazard identification and assessment, effects of hazards, methods of measurement, methods for hazard control; workplace violence; WSIB priority hazards; broad concepts of health & safety management such as how to assess and control hazards; musculoskeletal disorders or slips/trips/falls.

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- Hazard recognition and control is already covered in Part One and requirements should not be too prescriptive.

Suggestion#3

Accredit training providers for Part Two- Workplace Specific Hazard training

Respondents comments:

- Yes, training providers must meet a standard in order to be approved.
- Allow employer led in-house training to continue as long as the employer is approved. approved as a training provider.
- No, there are qualified instructors so training providers do not need to be accredited.
- Responsibility of employers to ensure adequacy of training and selecting appropriate trainers.
- No, process of accrediting training providers for Part Two training would be very onerous.

Stakeholders were also asked for suggestions for improving Part Two Workplace Specific Hazard training. No themes stood out. Some of the respondents suggestions include:

- Training providers should submit course outline/descriptions/evaluation process
- WSIB should audit workplaces that have submitted hazard assessments to ensure appropriate hazards have been identified.
- Training providers should facilitate on-site workplace hazard assessment with the certified member.
- WSIB to annually audit accredited training providers.
- WSIB to prepare a simplified standard program to be delivered by health and safety association or through e-learning.
- Participants should be given assignments.
- Action plans to be signed off by management and worker members.
- Have a tracking system to record certified member movement from workplace to workplace.
- Hazard assessment activity during Part Two to test for understanding and application of hazard / risk assessment.
- Program materials need to be evaluated that they indeed meet the program criteria and should include alternate learning exercises (industry specific videos, case studies).
- Develop case studies with legislation questions; industry specific videos, scenario type questions in the test.
- Instructor issues a temporary validation card for Part One with a maximum of twelve months to complete Part Two.

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2.3 CERTIFICATION STRUCTURE - EXPIRY AND RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATION STATUS

BACKGROUND

The WSIB was interested in stakeholder views on implementing an expiration period for certification status. The WSIB believes that it is important for certified members to be knowledgeable and aware of current legislation and hazards. Presently, once a person is a certified member, there are no limitations to how long they can remain on the JHSC. The length of time can vary widely from workplace to workplace with some individuals choosing to remain for many years and others who may spend a term on the JHSC and return to the committee several years later. A certified member who changes employer may become the designated certified member for the JHSC of the new workplace; yet, the specific workplace hazards for the new employer may be different than those in the certified member's original workplace. The certified member needs to update their hazard training; however, without the requirement for certification status renewal, the certified member could potentially remain the designated certified member without undergoing the required hazard training.

Over time, hazards, legislation, work processes, types of work, and labour supply change. In today's workplace these changes can come about rapidly placing demands on certified members to be informed and responsive to the new realities. A certified member trained years ago may not be up-to-date with the hazards of the workplace, committee responsibilities or changes in legislation. A potential knowledge gap exists.

In addition to WSIB interest in stakeholder views on implementing an expiration period, the WSIB was interested in finding out stakeholder opinions on renewal mechanism to be instituted such as: refresher courses, upgrade skills and knowledge, credential maintenance system etc.

CONSULTATION RESULTS

Expiry Consultation

Most respondents were in favour of implementing an expiration period for Certification status.

Most respondents agreed that it was important for certified members to maintain currency about legislation, standards and workplace specific hazards.

A few respondents were not in agreement with having Certification expire particularly if the individual has been continually sitting on a JHSC. Instead the certified member should obtain regular training and legislation updates. A few respondents felt it should only expire if the member left the JHSC for more than 2 years and the individual could not demonstrate currency. Some felt that it was an employer responsibility to educate JHSC members.

One respondent expressed that where companies have good WSIB claims experience, the expiry should be limited to a refresher every 3 years. Companies with higher risk should be required to take it more often.

Stakeholders who agreed with recertification were asked to specify the ***timeframe for renewal***. The two ***most popular time frames were every 3 years and every 5 years***. Next in popularity was to renew annually. Other suggested time frames were 2 years, 10 years and 3-5 years.

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Requirements for Renewal

Most respondents felt that some form of refresher training would be the best approach.

Respondents' suggestions for refresher training content include:

- Internal Responsibility System, Joint Health and Safety activities.
- Updates on new/changed legislation, research, health and safety hazards, technology
- Review of roles and responsibilities e.g. work refusal and work stoppage processes and an overview of hazard identification assessment and control.
- Brief overview of Part One Basic.

Many felt that the refresher training should be flexible and have some form of online training as an option and it should not be too onerous to complete. It should be between one half and one full day, with one day being the most common suggestion.

Some respondents suggested that refresher training is completed when the individual demonstrates a lack of understanding and that training needs should be determined by the certified member and their employer.

More hazard training on topics not previously taken as well as a maintenance system were supported by some respondents as the requirement for recertification. The benefit of hazard training is that the certified member would obtain training based upon their individual needs. A maintenance system was seen as valuable as it promotes continuous learning and is already in place for many certification systems. Some suggested drawbacks for maintenance system was that it is difficult to implement and administer. A few felt all of Part One Basic Training should be repeated especially if more than 4 or 5 years had passed since obtaining certification status.

In summary, continuous improvement and continuous learning were common themes in the responses regarding Certification expiration.

Transfers to a new employer – Some respondents commented on process when certified member changes employers. When a Certified member transfers to new employer or a new workplace with the same employer, training of the certified member must align with the significant hazards of the new workplace. In addition to renewal training, to maintain certification, the transferring certified member should complete an additional sector program or hazard specific training if the previous training did not cover the significant hazards of the new workplace.

Most respondents were in agreement that hazard specific training for the new workplace should be completed where there are gaps in identified hazards.

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2.4 PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS - PROGRAM DELIVERY– STANDARD FOR NON-CLASSROOM DELIVERY METHODS

BACKGROUND

Although the WSIB Certification Standards are predominantly designed for a classroom mode of delivery, the WSIB recognizes that there are advantages and disadvantages to non-classroom modes of training delivery. Adherence to adult learning principles, especially the need for interactivity and ability for students to be able to ask questions and receive immediate feedback, is very important to the WSIB regardless of training delivery method. In order to ensure successful non-classroom training, various strategies or techniques were suggested in the Consultation Paper. The WSIB was also interested in hearing from stakeholder views regarding any other requirements for non-classroom training that the WSIB should implement.

CONSULTATION RESULTS

Program Delivery Standard for Non-classroom delivery methods

There were no clear themes regarding non-classroom training requirements. Although additional suggestions for non-classroom training requirements were provided, no common themes stood out.

Many respondents commented that the important issue is ensuring successful training regardless of the training delivery method utilized. Training obtained in non-classroom delivery should be equal to the learning obtained in classroom based training. Program delivery channels should be as broad and varied as possible and must achieve the learning objectives. The success of the delivery method should be determined through testing and evaluation that demonstrates that the participant has the skills and knowledge to complete the legislated duties. E-learning is an acceptable method for knowledge transfer, is cost effective, and allows for flexibility especially with the younger generation who are technologically savvy.

Some respondents felt that flexibility and choice in training delivery was necessary for employers and to meet the needs of participants. Participants have preferences for different formats and they should be available – e-learning, traditional correspondence, computer based etc. Non-classroom learning should be user-friendly. Whichever delivery method used, consideration must be given to those with literacy or language issues.

Suggestions for other criteria included:

- Online testing.
- Real-time tutor or 'Ask an expert'.
- Customizable for corporate/larger clients.
- Ongoing access to written course information after course is completed.
- Access to the instructor/provider for advice and coaching.
- Performance measures such as written exams.
- Include assignment or project in the workplace and peer group interaction or group work to solve assigned problems such as with their whole JHSC.
- Require time frames similar to classroom to be spent on e-learning. Employer should set aside a block of time set for training just like there would be for classroom training.
- Institute time limit for course completion.

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Although the consultation did not ask stakeholders their views on whether e-learning is a viable method for delivery of certification training, many respondents commented on the issue. Two distinct views stood out – one that is against any method of online or e-learning and the other that sees it as the way forward to make Certification accessible and meaningful especially for young workers.

Respondents' comments against e-learning included:

- It is too important a subject to be delivered online.
- Participants need the opportunity to ask questions and work through workplace scenarios and get feedback/suggestions from other participants.
- E-learning is not participant centred and e-learning or distance learning does not meet adult learning principles and does not allow for participation, discussion, interactivity and understanding.
- Non-classroom training does not adequately prepare participants for their roles on JHSC and does not have learning activities that allow participants to practice and demonstrate required skills and knowledge.

Some felt that e-learning could be used in remote areas where access to the classroom is an issue or that it was suitable for refresher courses.

Respondents' comments supporting e-learning included:

- It is a viable cost effective option.
- Certification training needs to be available in many formats to ensure accessibility to training.
- WSIB needs to recognize that electronic learning and interactive methods are more commonly used today and are valuable tools.
- Blended learning with part e-learning and part classroom should be offered.

One respondent suggested that the WSIB should develop a standard e-learning course that can be delivered free of charge and then would be a resource for certified members to regularly access information.

2.5 PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS - PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

BACKGROUND

The Standards require participant evaluation – ongoing and final. For ongoing evaluation, the Standards are general and do not provide criteria as to what constitutes “ongoing evaluation”. The final evaluation for Part One Basic Training is prescribed as participants must complete the WSIB Standard multiple choice test. Participants must attain a minimum score to pass. The WSIB test is administered by the training providers and then submitted to WSIB for scoring. Participants do not receive feedback on how they did until a later date.

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CONSULTATION RESULTS

Ongoing Evaluation

Most respondents supported including criteria for ongoing evaluation and validation of knowledge transfer to enhance participant learning.

Respondents' comments included:

- WSIB should not approve any program that does not evaluate and validate participant learning on an ongoing basis. Regardless of the criteria used, they must be consistent with adult learning principles.
- Criteria for ongoing evaluation were not necessary. Competent instructors would verify learning achieved on an ongoing basis and the method should be at the discretion of the instructor. An experienced instructor through general observation and through question and answer should have the ability to identify trainees who require assistance.
- Some respondents commented that the final test is the best method for evaluating successful knowledge acquisition.

No common themes stood out in the suggestions provided for ongoing evaluations. It was recommended that evaluation methods should be written into session plans. Other suggestions included:

- WSIB should require providers to indicate what types of ongoing evaluation techniques they are using in order to ensure appropriate knowledge transfer.
- There should be some form of post-course evaluation such as follow-up to see what impact the JHSC member is making on the committee etc.
- Submit Hazard Assessment for review by WSIB or Provider

Final Evaluation

Most respondents felt the current test or an improved version is the best way to evaluate successful knowledge transfer.

Respondents' suggestions for improving the final evaluation include:

- Test questions should link better to learning objectives
- Re-write some questions to be clearer
- Combine final evaluation and ongoing evaluation with role plays, quizzes, reports, assignments or other specific and tangible acts that demonstrate that the learning objectives have been achieved
- Include written portion with a case study;
- Follow-up and see if participants demonstrate skills at the workplace
- Have WSIB auditor ask specific questions of JHSC members regarding training.
- Include a mixture of multiple choice and short answer, true/false questions
- Include interactive element (interview style) where synthesis can be verified
- Write the exam in such a way to ensure knowledge transfer as opposed to 'failing' participants
- Set minimum passing grade with a combination of daily and final evaluations
- Offer an option for tests to be administered verbally by instructor to accommodate ESL and those with reading deficits
- Test before and after training

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- Keep it closed book to force participants to study; make it open book to show if students can find and interpret the information

Regardless of evaluation tool(s) used, language and literacy issues need to be considered.

Test Scoring and Participant Feedback

There were no clear trends regarding who should score the final evaluation. There were no clear trends regarding the importance of the instructor having the opportunity to review and provide immediate feedback to the students.

Respondents' comments included:

- The training provider or instructor should score the final evaluation. This would allow for immediate feedback to be given to participants and corrective action taken as needed. Incorrect answers are seen as an opportunity for the instructor to provide an explanation.
- The WSIB should continue to score the final evaluation. Even among those that said the WSIB should continue to do the scoring, the need for a more immediate feedback mechanism was suggested. The reason some wanted the WSIB to score the test is to protect against unethical scoring.
- Immediate feedback is not that important because the instructor should be providing ongoing feedback on participants' progress and not wait until the end of the course.
- Concern about instructors having sufficient time to provide immediate feedback on evaluation results.

Should there be a formal final evaluation? Who develops it?

Most respondents felt that there should be a formal evaluation at the completion of Part One – Basic Certification training and that the WSIB should develop it.

Most respondents felt that the formal evaluation is important for the certification process as it provides credibility to the process. Most respondents felt the WSIB should develop the final evaluation to ensure credibility and consistency.

Other respondents' comments include:

- Competent instructors to complete ongoing evaluation and confirm learning.
- Evaluation should be developed in consultation with stakeholders, instructors and training providers.
- Have the test computerized with immediate scoring to allow the instructor time to discuss in the class.
- Training Provider could develop the evaluations with oversight from the WSIB.

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2.6 PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS - INSTRUCTOR COMPETENCY

BACKGROUND

The Standards require training providers to ensure their instructors are qualified with a background in adult education and/or training and knowledge of occupational health and safety. In addition, they are required to assure instructor qualifications and performance and include provisions for instructor upgrading and updating. Currently the Standards do not include well defined specifications regarding instructor qualifications. The background, experience and qualifications of instructors vary from provider to provider.

CONSULTATION RESULTS

Most respondents supported the concept of requiring instructors to meet a training and/or competency standard in order to provide training.

Respondents supported instituting instructor standards to ensure instructors are qualified and there is consistency among instructors in training delivery. ***All suggestions for competency standards listed in the consultation paper were supported.*** These were:

- Work experience in occupational health and safety and in the particular sector.
- Work experience as an instructor/trainer.
- Education in adult education.
- Education in occupational health and safety.
- Continuous improvement.
- Experience in delivering Certification Training programs.
- Completion of a “train-the-trainer” course.

Other suggestions for competency standards included:

- Competent in the operation of/experience on JHSC.
- Have completed and are competent in the courses they are to instruct.
- Competent in the instructional techniques of the mode of delivery they are using
- Be health and safety professionals.
- Instruct a minimum amount of hours or to minimum number of people to maintain their qualification status.
- Have a continuous improvement requirement e.g. expiry/renewal process.
- Implement an instructor evaluation by providers and/or WSIB and WSIB use the results for quality control. Include monitoring of pass rates of final evaluation.
- Ensure instructors are strong communicators and have interpersonal skills training.
- WSIB audit programs and trainers.
- Review participant feedback and success rates.
- Written verification of qualifications (degrees, diplomas, certifications etc).
- Training tips, newsletter and legislation information should be provided to instructors.
- Quality assurance should allow the instructor some latitude to change approaches or add new material depending on the actual knowledge/experience levels of participants.
- WSIB Standardized test for instructors.

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2.7 PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS - TRAINING PROVIDER EXPECTATIONS

BACKGROUND

The Standards include criteria for approval of training providers and specify that the WSIB may monitor providers and revoke approval if it has reason to believe that criteria or standards are not being met. Currently there are a great variety of approved training providers. They range from private training organizations (one or more instructors) to health and safety associations (some with many instructors). Some training providers deliver training regularly with sessions throughout Ontario and some training providers may not deliver a session in a given year.

The Standards do not provide direction for training providers on development of instructor materials (for example: timetable, instructor notes, lesson plans) that when in place would ensure greater consistency of delivery, regardless of instructor. For training providers or instructors that deliver few courses, how do we ensure consistent, quality training is delivered?

The WSIB would like to ensure high standards for training providers and sought stakeholder input on methods to ensure quality assurance of training providers.

CONSULTATION RESULTS

There was no clear theme regarding suggestions for quality assurance of training providers.

Respondents' comments varied regarding the requirement for 2 minimum sessions and they included:

- There should be a requirement for minimum number of sessions offered.
- A requirement is not needed and monitoring the final evaluation is an adequate approach to quality assurance.
- There should be more than 2 sessions per year with the amount ranging from 3 to 25 sessions per year.
- Two sessions per year per provider is adequate so long as other training sessions are being delivered ensuring the instructor is utilizing instructional skills on a regular basis.
- The opportunity for WSIB to audit providers who only hold 2 sessions per year would be limited and not practical.

The Certification Review Committee suggested required instructor materials, course evaluations and monitoring instructor performance as ways of improving quality assurance for training providers. All of these ideas received support from the respondents. In addition, the idea of providers maintaining an accreditation with the WSIB was also highly supported. Other suggestions included:

- Provider training and update sessions.
- Mentoring for new instructors.
- Requiring an annual report from Providers submitted to the WSIB.
- Third party audits of training providers and instructors.
- Program developers have appropriate education in adult learning and health and safety
- Random surveying of trainees.
- WSIB should provide all training materials, written tests and course evaluations.

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2.8 GENERAL QUESTIONS

BACKGROUND

The certified member on a JHSC plays an important role in contributing to a safe and healthy workplace. Currently, there is no formal networking/support process for certified members.

An open-ended question was asked if respondents had any other comments to provide regarding the Certification Standards and Program.

Support Mechanisms and Access to Resources

Respondents were overwhelmingly in favour of on-going access to resources and other support mechanisms for Certified Members, post training.

Of the suggestions made by the CRC, **the most popular was having a dedicated website, forum or blog**. Some suggested the WSIB website have a tab for JHSC members.

One respondent suggested that forums and blogs not be made available to protect privacy and confidential information. One respondent also said that forum members and bloggers should be health and safety professionals.

Other Suggestions and Comments

Respondents provided many suggestions for improving the Certification Standards and Program.

Other suggestions:

- People who have a health and safety background should be given equivalency and not be required to take the training.
- Change JHSC requirements:
 - Increase the number of certified members
 - Allow independent choice of training courses and training providers
 - Train all members of JHSC
 - Train Health and Safety Representatives
- Strengthen compliance with certification requirements by having Ministry of Labour inspectors order certification training and set fines in every case in which certified representatives are not designated. Ministry of Labour inspectors should take the course in order to properly enforce the OHS.
- Update the Certification program manual.
- Encourage networking and sharing among providers by holding an annual or biannual update meeting.
- Better facilitate delivery to English as Second Language (ESL) and Low-literacy learners - create an ESL-oriented certification program or an ESL primer.
- WSIB should develop Code of Ethics for certified members.
- Hold regional conferences for certified members.
- Increase in-house training.

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3. SUMMARY

The WSIB embarked on a consultation process with its various stakeholders to validate the issues with the current Certification Training Program and process. We received many valuable suggestions for improvements to the program. We would like to thank everyone who submitted feedback for their passion and interest in ensuring that certified members in Ontario have the appropriate skills and knowledge to carry out their legislated duties under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

We are committed to creating Certification Standards that are relevant and ensure a high standard of training for certified members, and will continue to seek the guidance of the Certification Review Committee as the new standards are developed.