

Questions & Answers

Certification for Joint Health and Safety Committee members

Certification Training educates worker and management members of a joint health and safety committee (JHSC) in the fundamentals of occupational health and safety. JHSCs are required in Ontario workplaces covered by the Occupational Health and Safety Act where 20 or more workers are employed. The Act also requires that one worker and one management member from each JHSC be certified.

Note: Please visit www.labour.gov.on.ca for special rules for construction projects and farming operations.

Under the Act, Certified Members have additional rights beyond other JHSC members. These rights include the right to investigate “dangerous circumstances”.

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board is responsible for setting standards for certification and certifying JHSC members against those standards.

1. How do I become certified?

Certification is a two-part training process: Basic Certification (Part 1) and Workplace-Specific Hazard Training (Part 2). In order for the selected worker or management member of the joint health and safety committee to be certified, both parts are required.

2. What is Basic Certification (Part 1)?

Basic Certification training is the fundamental training that covers the law, hazard recognition, hazard control and community health and safety resources.

3. How do I get Basic Certification (Part 1) training?

You can obtain Basic Certification (Part 1) training from any approved provider. For an up-to-date list of approved providers for Basic Certification training please visit our Web site at www.wsib.on.ca.

4. Does Basic Certification (Part 1) training include a test?

Yes. Participants receive a written test administered by the WSIB. You will receive an acknowledgement letter from the WSIB when you successfully complete Basic Certification.

5. What is Workplace-Specific Hazard Training (Part 2)?

Workplace Specific Hazard Training focuses on significant hazards in your workplace. It covers how to assess those hazards and ways to control and/or eliminate them. Significant hazards are hazards that could result in injury or illness if not controlled.

6. How are significant hazards determined?

Employers determine their training needs based on the results of a hazard assessment. A hazard assessment is the systematic review of hazards in a workplace that may affect any worker’s health and safety.

It is conducted by examining the workplace and other sources of information. Sources may include: Material Safety Data Sheets, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) reports, incident/accident reports, general observations and input from workers.

Consider:

- Has the hazard contributed to a workplace injury or illness?
- What is its potential for future injury or illness?
- What severity of injury/illness could occur from exposure to the hazard?
- Has the hazard contributed to a “near miss”?
- How many workers are exposed to the hazard?
- Work flow or process-flow information.
- Accident, injury or illness records for workplace and industry, near miss reports.

Examples of significant hazards (not a complete list)

- Chemical Hazards
- Confined Space
- Vehicle Driving
- Heat and cold stress
- Explosives
- Material handling
- Solvents
- Biological Hazards
- Electrical Hazards
- Vibration
- Indoor air quality
- Lock out/Tag out
- Noise
- Propane Handling
- Compressed Gasses
- Ergonomics
- Hand Tools
- Ladders
- Machine Guarding
- Office hazards
- Fall arrest

7. Where can I receive assistance in determining significant hazards?

The Health and Safety Associations or other health and safety professionals may provide assistance in conducting the hazard assessment.

8. What must be covered in the Workplace-Specific Hazard training?

The training must meet all of the learning objectives, outlined in the Certification Training Program standards, for each significant hazard:

- Describe the hazard and how it may cause injury or illness
- Identify the relevant legislation, standards and guidelines for the hazard
- Describe how to identify and assess the hazard
- Describe ways of controlling the hazard
- Prepare an action plan to identify, assess and control the hazard based on an actual workplace situation

9. How do I get training on specific hazards?

As long as the training addresses the learning objectives outlined in the standards, training may be obtained from any source. Contact a health and safety training provider or a health and safety professional. You may also develop your own training program.

10. Can previous training be accepted as equivalent to Workplace Specific Hazard Training?

Yes. Workplaces can identify training previously taken by JHSC members that has met the required learning objectives for Workplace-Specific Hazard Training. However, consideration should be given to how long ago the training programs occurred and how relevant that training is to the present workplace.

11. What are sector-specific programs?

Sector-specific programs are an option for completing Workplace Specific Hazard Training. These programs address hazards common to the majority of workplaces within a sector. The training program must be approved by the WSIB. Hazard assessments are not necessary if this option is chosen. A sector program must have endorsement from a trade association or other sector representative group. For a list of approved sector specific programs please see our Web site at www.wsib.on.ca.

12. How should the WSIB be notified that certification training has been completed?

The employer should inform the WSIB by completing a Workplace-Specific Hazard Training Confirmation to WSIB form (3189A) for each of the members that complete training.

13. How do I know when I'm certified?

The WSIB will send you a Certified Member card. Please keep this card as proof of your certification. A congratulatory confirmation letter is also sent to the employer indicating that you have completed all requirements for certification.

14. Does the certification card expire?

No. Currently there is no expiration date of the certification card. Employers are encouraged to provide additional training to the JHSCs as appropriate.

15. What happens if I change employers after I'm certified?

If you move to another workplace, including within the same organization, the employer should ensure that you've received the appropriate hazard training based on the significant hazards for the new work environment. The employer will notify the WSIB that the appropriate training was completed using form 3189A, available on the WSIB Web site at www.wsib.on.ca.

For additional information or to update your training records, please contact the WSIB at 1-800-663-6639.

www.wsib.on.ca