



**WESTERN UNIVERSITY**

**SUPERVISORS HANDBOOK**

**TO**

**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY**

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## **1. Introduction**

Supervisors have a legal obligation under the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act (the Act) with respect to workplace safety. This guide is written specifically for roles with supervisor accountability at Western to aid them in meeting these obligations. It will provide supervisors within the University, with an overview of their responsibilities related to occupational health and safety. It will also familiarize supervisors with the resources available to them at the University.

Specific responsibilities of individual supervisors will depend to a large extent on the type of work being performed and nature of the work within the unit. Therefore, this guide does not provide a complete outline of the specific duties and responsibilities of every supervisory position. In general, workers look toward the supervisor for guidance and support in completing jobs and tasks in a safe manner.

## **2. Health and Safety Legislation**

The Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act is the primary legislation governing workplace health and safety and its purpose is to protect workers against health and safety hazards in the workplace.

The Act sets out the rights and duties of all parties in the workplace and is based on the internal responsibility system that strives to have everyone work together to identify and develop solutions to workplace health and safety problems. The Act and Regulations apply to the University and the Health Safety and Well Being team is available as a resource to supervisors on campus.

In addition to the Act, there are a variety of other specific provincial and federal legislation, regulations and municipal by-laws of which supervisors may need to be aware of, depending upon their particular job functions and the types of hazards with which they deal.

## **3. Supervisors and Workers – Roles**

### Supervisor

A supervisor is anyone who is either in charge of a workplace or has authority over a worker. This broad definition given in the Act applies to both the academic and administrative divisions of the University. In academic departments, individual faculty members or principal investigators may have charge of a workplace (e.g. a laboratory) or have authority over graduate students, teaching assistants, administrative staff, and other University employees. In such cases they are supervisors as defined in the Act. Among the administrative staff of the University the supervisory role is generally more clearly defined and outlined in position descriptions.

A supervisor shall ensure that a worker:

- works in the manner and with the protective devices, measures and procedures required by the Act and the regulations
- uses or wears the equipment, protective devices or clothing that the worker's employer requires to be used and worn
- advise a worker of the existence of any potential or actual danger to the health or safety of the worker of which the supervisor is aware
- where so prescribed, provide a worker with written instructions as to the measures and procedures to be taken for protection of the worker; and
- take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker

In addition to the responsibilities outlined in the Act a supervisor must ensure that:

- they are knowledgeable about potential or actual health and safety hazards in the workplace and advise workers about these hazards
- equipment, materials and protective devices required by regulation are provided to workers and maintained in good condition
- workers follow workplace procedures and use protective equipment required by the University and by any applicable regulations
- workers are provided with information, instruction on safe work practices
- all hazardous materials present in the workplace are identified and labelled in the manner prescribed by regulations such as the WHMIS Regulation and that an up-to-date inventory of these materials is kept in the workplace

### Worker

Under the Act, workers are defined as (1) persons who perform work or supply services for monetary compensation or (2) who perform work or supply services for no monetary compensation or (3) perform work under an approved program of a post-secondary institution. All workers under the Act and are afforded the same protections regardless of employment or training relationship with the University

A worker shall:

- work in compliance with the provisions of the Act and the regulations
- use or wear the equipment, protective devices or clothing that the worker's employer requires to be used or worn
- report to his or her employer or supervisor the absence of or defect in any equipment or protective device of which the worker is aware and which may endanger themselves or another worker; and
- report to the employer or supervisor any contravention of this Act or the regulations or the existence of any hazard of which they know

## 4. Accident Reporting

All full-time, part-time, temporary, and training participant employees of the University are covered under the Workplace Safety Insurance Board Act for injuries and illnesses resulting from their employment. Coverage includes payment of health care costs and loss of earnings due to time lost from work.

Under the Act, the University is obligated to report to the Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) every accident to a worker which results in lost time from work past the day of the accident, or which necessitates health care from a medical facility or medical practitioner such as a physician, hospital, dentist, chiropractor or specialist within 3 days of it happening. If a supervisor fails to report the incident to Health, Safety and Well-Being within the required timeframe the WSIB may levy a fine which the business unit becomes responsible to pay.

All accidents, incidents, and near misses must be reported on an official [Accident Incident Reporting Form](#) in accordance with the [Accident Incident Investigation Procedure](#). Please note that these reports are to be completed and submitted by the supervisor within 24 hours of the occurrence. This allows sufficient time for final reporting by the University to the WSIB.

The University also requires that all accidents to students or visitors be reported on the same accident/incident form to Health Safety and Well-Being.

### Reporting of Critical Injuries

A critical injury is one of a serious nature which either:

- places life in jeopardy
- produces unconsciousness
- results in substantial loss of blood
- involves the fracture of a leg or an arm
- involves the amputation of a leg, arm, hand or foot
- consists of burns to a major portion of the body
- causes the loss of sight in an eye

Any critical injury must be immediately reported and the scene to be held.

Supervisors are responsible for:

1. Procuring immediate medical attention for person(s) involved in the accident;
2. Notifying the appropriate emergency services by calling 911
3. Ensuring that the site of the accident is secured.
4. Notifying Health Safety and Well-Being immediately of the critical injury. (Further reporting of the injury by HSW is required to the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) and the University's Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee; this will be performed by the HSW representative as per *the Act, O. Reg 420/21.*)

5. Preparing a written report of the circumstances of the accident on an [Accident Incident Reporting Form](#)

Note: The scene is to remain undisturbed and isolated, until all investigations by the MLITSD and HSW are complete.

### Injuries While Outside of Ontario

Staff members injured while performing their job outside of the Province of Ontario may be covered for benefits under the Workplace Safety Insurance Board Act. Ontario residents are automatically covered for up to six months while temporarily working outside of Ontario. If a staff member will be working outside of Ontario for longer than six months, an extension of coverage must be approved by the Workplace Safety Insurance Board.

Supervisors must notify the Western Wellness Information Coordinator with the names of all staff who are working outside Ontario for longer than 6 months. Include details of the destination, reason for going, and length of stay. The Wellness Information Coordinator will seek approval for the extension of coverage from the WSIB and notify the department of approval. Accidents occurring outside of Ontario must be immediately reported to the home department, which must then notify the Wellness Information Coordinator.

## **5. Transitional Accommodation**

The health and well-being of faculty and staff members is a priority at Western. The University is committed to supporting employees who are experiencing occupational and non-occupational illness, injury and disabilities. The Transitional Accommodation Program (TAP) utilizes a collaborative, proactive approach to assist employees to remain at work or to return to work in a timely manner. The University will make an effort to collaboratively develop a TAP as soon as possible when the employee shows willingness to participate in the program so they can continually progress toward full hours and/or duties.

### Roles and Responsibilities

#### Supervisor

- Provides a supportive environment for employee and his/her coworkers
- Provides input regarding employee's position and potential modified duties
- Participates fully in the development, implementation and evaluation of the TAP
- Attends TAP meetings as required

#### Employee

- Promptly reports illness/injury to identify accommodation needs
- Provides consent for Employee Well-being to communicate with treating practitioners regarding capabilities and precautions
- Participates fully in the development, implementation and evaluation of the TAP, including regular follow up with Rehabilitation Services

- Promptly communicates to supervisor that there has been a change in status and provides follow up to Employee Well-being
- Promptly seeks medical attention as indicated and follows the treatment plan recommended by his/her treating practitioner
- Works within recommended capabilities and precautions

Further information on [Employee Well-Being](#) and any of their programs can be found on their website.

## **6. Joint Health and Safety Committee**

Western University as an employer is responsible under the Occupational Health and Safety Act for establishing and maintaining a Joint Health and Safety Committee. This committee is an advisory body composed of [representatives](#) of workers and management; their main function is to identify hazards and to make recommendations to management with respect to workplace health and safety. In order to carry out these duties they perform regular inspections of the workplace.

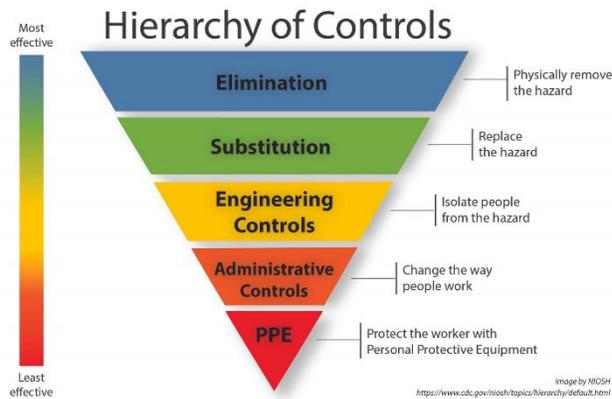
Supervisors have the following responsibilities with respect to the Joint Health and Safety Committee:

- be aware of the committee structure and the names of the management and worker co-chairs of the committee
- if one of their staff is a member of the committee, to provide that individual with paid time off work to carry out his/her duties as a committee member; these include time off to prepare for and attend meetings, and to perform inspections of the workplace
- provide information and assistance to members of the committee who are inspecting the supervisor's work area
- make or support corrective action health and safety deficiencies in the workplace identified through committee inspections
- if a written recommendation is received from the committee, provide a written reply to that recommendation within 21 calendar days

## **7. Hazards in the Workplace**

Supervisors are ideally positioned to be aware of hazards that are present or potentially could arise in the workplace. Materials, procedures and work activities that are used in research or support activities on campus may have hazards that need to be accounted for in planning for safe work.

Western applies measures to reduce the risk that a person may encounter a hazard. Supervisors must be knowledgeable about potential or actual health and safety hazards in the workplace and advise workers about these hazards and if there are control measures that are applied.



The hierarchy of controls is a method that is used when determining how to control against a hazard. Depending on the hazards you are working with, multiple types of controls may need to be used to provide effective worker protection. The hierarchy of controls can be applied to any type of hazard in the workplace.

The Health Safety and Well-Being is available to assist supervisors with reviewing control measures or suggestions

on how to keep people safe.

## 8. Training

Western is a complex work environment, and it is the duty of the supervisor to ensure workers who they supervise have the proper training that is required to perform their job safely. The [Training Requirements Matrix](#) gives an outline of the training needs for each role and should be used as a guide to select appropriate training sessions. Supervisors should be aware of the hazards in their work area and should know what training is best suited to their workers.

Training can be accessed at [Required Training](#), and certificates of completion must be made available to the supervisor to keep a record of all training. All employees must complete required training based their role in the University, this includes specific training based on area of work and study or role specific duties.

Supervisors also train workers on [task or site-specific duties](#) related to equipment or procedures for the area. Upon completion, the supervisor must document the training provided to the worker.

## 9. Workplace Inspections

As part of the accountability of supervisors at Western is to inspect their area of accountability to verify that control measures for hazards are working as intended and the no unexpected hazards have evolved due to updates in work processes, new procedures. Workplaces inspections are required under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and should be completed on a monthly basis.

To provide additional support the work in your area the Joint Committee (JOHSC) completes an annual inspection of campus areas on a rotational basis and the members of Health Safety and Well-Being (HSW) routinely inspect research areas as per hazard control program requirements. Any assigned actions that result from a workplace inspection by the JOHSC or HSW will be documented and managed within the [Worksafe@Western](#) administrative platform.

A resource page for [inspection information](#) is available and has details on the inspection procedure and supporting materials.

## 10. Work Refusals

The Act gives a worker the right to refuse work that they believe is unsafe. The right to refuse may be exercised if the worker has reason to believe that:

1. any equipment, machine, device or thing he/she is to use or operate is likely to endanger themselves or another worker; or
2. the physical condition of the workplace is likely to endanger themselves; or
3. any equipment, machine, device or thing they are to use or operate or the physical condition of the workplace is in contravention of the Act or regulations and such contravention is likely to endanger himself, herself or another worker

Supervisors should follow the [Work Refusal Procedure](#) and direct any questions to Health Safety and Well-Being.

## 11. Additional Resources

### Emergency Planning:

Building [fire safety plans](#) are available for supervisors to review with workers. It is recommended that emergency procedures for the area are refreshed on a regular basis.

### Health Screening:

All Western employees with identified potential workplace hazards are screened for health. Occupational health surveillance programs are designed to monitor for health effects of potentially hazardous exposures and provide education about protection and prevention within the work environment.

The supervisor must complete a [position hazard communication form](#) for the worker when:

- 1- a new employee is hired
- 2- the hazards change
- 3- the duties of the job change
- 4- an employee is reclassified

### Health and Safety Topics:

Health Safety and Well-Being has resources on many [topics](#) related to safety programs and hazards in the workplace.

## 12. Policies, Procedures, Safety Programs

The following list provides a brief description of the policies and the links to the details of the policies which should be referred to for further information. As this is only a guide for supervisors it may not cover all policies that are relevant to all work areas. Supervisors are advised to familiarize themselves with policies specific to their area and their type of work.

### [Health and Safety Policy](#)

The policy states the University's commitment to maintaining a safe and healthy environment in which to work and to study.

### [Non-Discrimination / Harassment Policy](#)

The purpose of this policy is to confirm the University's commitment to providing a learning and working environment free of Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct.

### [Smoking Vaping & Tobacco Use Policy](#)

This policy provides members of the campus community and visitors to our campus on how the University strives to provide a smoke and vape free environment to work and study.

### [Emergency Response and Preparedness](#)

This policy identifies the procedure to follow in cases of fire, accident, release of dangerous or hazardous materials to the air, and theft for all individuals. Supervisors are responsible for adhering to the policy and ensuring their staff are familiar with and also adhere to the policy.

### [Eye Protection Program](#)

The purpose of this program is to minimize the potential for eye injury, by the provision and use of the correct type of eye protection, in compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Supervisors of areas where potential eye hazards exist are responsible for ensuring that persons wear suitable eye protection in areas designated as such.

### [Respiratory Protective Equipment Program](#)

The purpose of this program is to ensure that the correct respiratory protection is provided and properly used by personnel at the University as dictated by the use situation.

### [Hazardous Chemical Waste Policy](#)

The purpose of the Hazardous Chemical Waste Policy is to ensure that hazardous chemical waste is handled and disposed of safely and properly.

### [Roof Maintenance Procedures Safety Policy](#)

This policy is designated to ensure that maintenance procedures performed on roofs of University buildings have fume cabinet exhausts, are performed such that employees in the vicinity of the outlets are protected from exposure to toxic materials or emissions.

### [Employee Assistance Program](#)

This program recognizes that many human problems which may affect work performance can be resolved if they are identified in the early stages and assistance is sought from an appropriate resource.