

Sun Safety Programs for Small Employers

Staying on top of occupational health and safety (OHS) can be difficult for smaller employers. However, no matter how big your workplace is, there are minimum OHS requirements for employers. These will often depend on the number of employees your workplace has. They generally include having a health and safety policy and program.

A **health and safety policy** is the basis of all OHS in a workplace. This policy is a written commitment from the employer that outlines how health and safety will be approached.

Depending on the number of employees, you may be required to have a **health and safety program**. This is a version of an **occupational health and safety management system** that is more manageable for smaller workplaces. Your health and safety program will depend on the **hazards** found in your workplace. If you are a small employer with outdoor workers, you should recognize the **sun as a workplace hazard**. You will need to develop measures to keep workers safe as part of their health and safety activities.

Basic Sun Safety Measures

- **Scheduling:** given the weather (humidex, UV index), should some jobs be scheduled for other times?
- **Employee selection:** who should be acclimatized to the hot work? Especially consider this for any new workers or workers who have been away
- **Information:** for employees potentially exposed to the sun, have they received general information about UV radiation, skin cancer, and heat stress?
- **Job planning:** based on the forecast temperature/humidex and the work to be done each day, can the supervisor: assess the site and the work to determine the level of physical activity needed for the tasks, identify if there are heat sources other than the sun, and then determine whether certain tasks may place workers at-risk of heat stress?
- **Pre-work safety talks:** can supervisors reiterate sun safety information and to add specific precautions coming from job planning to these talks?
- **Sun safety control measures:** is there shading? Work rest scheduling? Task rotation? Cool break areas? Water supplies? Head protection? Clothing? Sunglasses? Sunscreen?
- **Coaching:** will the supervisor discuss sun safety with workers during the day?
- **Know the sign and symptoms:** can the supervisor and workers detect early symptoms of sunburn and heat stress? Do they know what to do if early symptoms appear?
- **Early detection:** will the supervisor suggest to workers exposed to the sun that they discuss early detection of skin cancer with their family doctor?
- **Off-the-job sun safety:** will the supervisor suggest to workers that they consider off-the-job sun safety for the whole family?



Visit sunsafetyatwork.ca for more information.

Production of this resource has been made possible through financial support from Health Canada through the Canadian Partnership Against Cancer.

Sun Safety Programs

Across jurisdictions, there are some elements which are similar to all health and safety programs. Elements of our Model Sun Safety Program align to these common elements. Smaller workplaces will be able to implement a manageable version of a sun safety program by using this table as a guide. Visit sunsafetyatwork.ca for resources on how to build your own sun safety program, based on these Model Sun Safety Program Elements.

Common Elements of a Health & Safety Program ¹	Model Sun Safety Program Elements
OHS Policy/Policy Statement	Policy
Assign responsibilities, accountabilities and authorities for OHS matters and the program	Responsibility, Accountability & Authority
Responsibilities of and support for the health and safety representative/officer or committee	Role of the health and safety committee Legal and other requirements
Identification and assessment of workplace hazards	Risk assessment
Control measures to eliminate or reduce the risks from the hazards identified	Do-Control Measures Do-Support
Inspection program	Workplace Inspections
Worker training and education	Administrative Controls (including training & education)
Emergency preparedness, including first aid requirements	First Aid and Incident Notification
Incident reporting and investigation	Incident reporting and investigation

Relevant Resources

- [Occupational Health and Safety Toolkit for Small Business](#) (Worksafe Alberta)
- [Closing the Loop: Setting up a Health & Safety System in Your Small Business](#) (Workplace Safety and Prevention Services)
- [Small Business Health and Safety Programs](#) (Public Services Health and Safety Association)
- [Small Business Resources](#) (Public Services Health and Safety Association)
- [Small Business Log Book](#) (Worksafe Saskatchewan)
- [7 Steps to Improving Health and Safety](#) (Small Business BC)

1. Ontario Safety Association for Community & Healthcare, 2008.