

# Health and safety programs

## OHS information for employers

This resource describes health and safety program requirements in the Alberta *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act*.

### KEY INFORMATION

- Employers who regularly employ 20 or more workers must establish a health and safety program.
- Employers can customize the program elements to suit their workplace.

## Introduction

A health and safety program is a way for employers to:

- Integrate health and safety into everyday practice.
- Promote health and safety.
- Reduce the risk of injury and illness.

Health and safety programs help make people aware of their roles and responsibilities, and require them to work together toward a strong health and safety culture.

A health and safety program helps build an [internal responsibility system](#). A health and safety program is a good tool for every organization to have and to follow.

## Program requirements

### Requirement to establish and implement

Section 16 of the OHS Act states that an employer who regularly employs 20 or more workers (including volunteers) must establish and implement a health and safety program.

“Health and safety program” means a co-ordinated system of procedures, processes and other measures that is designed to be implemented by organizations in order to promote continuous improvement in occupational health and safety.



- Section 1(s), OHS Act

### No mandatory elements

Alberta occupational health and safety laws do not require mandatory health and safety program elements. Employers have the flexibility to develop programs that best suit their workplace.

## Program guidelines

Standard health and safety program elements include:

- Leadership and commitment.
- Hazard assessment and control.
- Emergency response planning.
- Work site inspections.
- Competency and training.
- Worker participation (including health and safety committees or representatives, if applicable).
- Incident reporting and investigation.
- Obligations to others on site.
- Program administration.

Other standard elements address topics such as harassment and violence prevention, and work refusals. First aid may be an element on its own, or addressed within emergency response planning.

Depending on your work and work site, you may want to include additional elements, such as workplace hazardous materials information system (WHMIS) or working alone.

### LEGAL REQUIREMENTS

Requirements from the OHS Act and OHS Code (such as hazard assessment, emergency response planning, health and safety committees or representatives, and worker training) should be part of a health and safety program.

Your organization must comply with all applicable legal requirements, even if they aren't part of your formal health and safety program.

For more information, see the [Occupational health and safety starter kit](#).

## Certificate of Recognition

Alberta's voluntary Certificate of Recognition (COR) is awarded to participating employers with health and safety management systems that meet provincial standards. Employers can choose to develop their health and safety program into a health and safety management system by working with a Certifying Partner and earning a COR.

For more information, please visit the [Get a Certificate of Recognition](#) web page.

## Contact us

### OHS Contact Centre

Anywhere in Alberta

- 1-866-415-8690

Edmonton and surrounding area

- 780-415-8690

Deaf or hard of hearing (TTY)

- 1-800-232-7215 (Alberta)

- 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)

### Notify OHS of health and safety concerns

[alberta.ca/file-complaint-online.aspx](https://alberta.ca/file-complaint-online.aspx)

Call the OHS Contact Centre if you have concerns that involve immediate danger to a person on a work site.

### Report a workplace incident to OHS

[alberta.ca/ohs-complaints-incidents.aspx](https://alberta.ca/ohs-complaints-incidents.aspx)

### Website

[alberta.ca/ohs](https://alberta.ca/ohs)

## Get copies of the OHS Act, Regulation and Code

### Alberta King's Printer

[alberta.ca/alberta-kings-printer.aspx](https://alberta.ca/alberta-kings-printer.aspx)

### OHS

[alberta.ca/ohs-act-regulation-code.aspx](https://alberta.ca/ohs-act-regulation-code.aspx)

## For more information

Get a Certificate of Recognition

[alberta.ca/get-certificate-recognition.aspx](https://alberta.ca/get-certificate-recognition.aspx)

Occupational health and safety and the internal responsibility system (LI051)

[ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li051](https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/li051)

Occupational health and safety starter kit (BP035)

[ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bp035](https://ohs-pubstore.labour.alberta.ca/bp035)

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