

## **LESSON 2:**

Rights, Responsibilities, and a  
Safer Workplace

### **Student Handout 3:**

Rights and Responsibilities T-Chart

**Worker Rights**

**Worker Responsibilities**

**Employer Rights**

**Employer Responsibilities**

**Workers have the right to:**

- Information, instruction, and training about safe work procedures and how to recognize hazards on the job
- Supervision to make sure they work without undue risk
- Equipment and safety gear required to do the job safely (workers are responsible for providing their own clothing to protect themselves against the natural elements, general purpose work gloves, safety footwear, and safety headgear)
- Refuse to do tasks and to work in conditions they think are unsafe, without being fired or disciplined for refusing
- Participate in workplace health and safety committees and activities

**As a worker, you are responsible** for working without undue risk to yourself or others. To keep safe on the job:

- Don't assume you can do something you've never done before. Ask your supervisor to show you how to do it safely before you begin work. Ask your employer for job safety training.
- Use all safety gear and protective clothing when and where required.
- Always follow safe work procedures and encourage your co-workers to do the same.
- Immediately correct unsafe conditions or report them right away to your supervisor.
- Know how to handle any hazardous materials or chemicals you use on the job.
- If you have any doubts about your safety, talk to your supervisor.
- Tell your supervisor of any physical or mental conditions that may make you unable to work safely.

One of the most important responsibilities of the employer is to ensure that workers are adequately trained in safe work procedures and properly supervised when carrying out their duties. Under the *Workers Compensation Act*, the employer has the legal responsibility to ensure that every worker receives adequate training. The employer must also follow-up to see that the supervisor is carrying out all required training.

Employers are responsible for ensuring that all workers can do their jobs without unnecessary risk. Young and new workers in particular are often inexperienced and unable to recognize hazards. Many won't ask questions about workplace safety for fear of looking incompetent or simply because they don't know what to ask. The procedures employers have in place for workplace health and safety should take account of these and other facts about young and new workers.

**Employers should:**

- Know and comply with workplace health and safety regulations that apply to their workplace.
- Create a workplace culture that encourages young and new workers to ask questions about any health and safety concerns they may have.
- Involve supervisors and experienced workers in identifying potential health and safety problems and in developing prevention programs to eliminate these hazards.
- Give supervisors and young and new workers all the training they need to do their jobs and to recognize hazards.
- Provide the required safety gear and protective clothing (workers are responsible for providing their own clothing to protect them against the natural elements, general purpose work gloves, safety footwear and safety headgear).
- Evaluate equipment that young workers might be required to operate to ensure that it is safe for their use. Make sure they know how to use any equipment safely.
- Make sure that young workers are appropriately supervised to prevent injuries and exposure to hazardous materials. Create an environment where "safe" behaviour is rewarded and recognized in the workplace.
- Provide managers and supervisors with knowledge of how to train new and young workers. Check back with them frequently to ensure they are following up with new staff to ensure that questions are being answered and to observe if the work is being done safely.

Specific requirements for new and young workers state that employers should provide orientation and training that includes:

- The name and contact information for the young or new worker's supervisor
- The employer's and young or new worker's rights and responsibilities under the *Workers Compensation Act*
- Workplace health and safety rules
- Specific hazards to which the young or new worker may be exposed, including risks from robbery, assault, or confrontation
- Working alone or in isolation
- Violence in the workplace
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Location of first aid facilities
- Emergency procedures, including how to access first aid and to report injuries
- Instruction and demonstration of the young or new worker's work tasks
- The employer's health and safety program, where applicable
- WHMIS information requirements, where applicable
- Contact information for the occupational health and safety committee or the worker health and safety representative, where applicable to the workplace

According to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation:

1. *A person must not carry out or cause to be carried out any work process or operate or cause to be operated any tool, appliance or equipment if that person has reasonable cause to believe that to do so would create an undue hazard to the health and safety of any person.*
2. *A worker who refuses to carry out a work process or operate a tool, appliance or equipment pursuant to subsection (1) must immediately report the circumstances of the unsafe condition to his or her supervisor or employer.*
3. *A supervisor or employer receiving a report made under subsection (2) must immediately investigate the matter and*
  - *Ensure that any unsafe condition is remedied without delay, or*
  - *If in his or her opinion the report is not valid, must so inform the person who made the report.*
4. *If the procedure under the Regulation does not resolve the matter and the worker continues to refuse to carry out the work process or operate the tool, appliance or equipment, the supervisor or employer must investigate the matter in the presence of the worker who made the report and in the presence of:*
  - *A worker member of the occupational health and safety committee,*
  - *A worker who is selected by a trade union representing the worker, or*
  - *If there is no occupational health and safety committee or the worker is not represented by a trade union, any other reasonably available worker selected by the worker.*
5. *If the investigator under the Regulation does not resolve the matter and the worker continues to refuse to carry out the work process or operate the tool, appliance or equipment, both the supervisor or the employer, and the worker must immediately notify an officer, who must investigate the matter without undue delay and issue whatever orders are deemed necessary.*

You have the right to refuse work if you (a) have reasonable cause and (b) follow all procedures in the Regulation. If you refuse to do work you consider unsafe, you must follow the steps below:

1. You must discuss the situation with your supervisor or employer.
2. If the matter is not resolved, then a worker representative must be involved.
3. If the matter is still unresolved, a WorkSafeBC field officer is called in by both worker and management representatives.
4. While the matter is being resolved, you will be temporarily reassigned to another job.

If you feel you must refuse work, be sure to follow the procedures in the regulations and any other policies that the employer may have. **Don't just stop work and go home!** If you don't follow the procedures, you may be subject to disciplinary action by your employer.