

Reporting Workplace Hazards: An Overview

This slideshow is intended to support safe and healthy workplaces in Nova Scotia.

It is an information and awareness resource that links to the Nova Scotia Occupational Health and Safety Division, the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia, and the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety websites. Hyperlinks to these sites are in blue and underlined.

This slideshow may be downloaded and used to help begin the conversation about workplace health, safety and injury prevention.

Welcome!

Knowing how to report health and safety hazards in workplaces helps us to keep ourselves and others safer at work. This includes:

- Understanding hazard reporting and why we do it
- Applying flexibility to how hazards are reported
- Learning about reporting measures and tools
- Supporting managers, supervisors and co-workers to improve hazard reporting, and
- Knowing our reporting rights and responsibilities

What is hazard reporting?

Health hazards and safety hazards can be chemical, physical, ergonomic, biological, or be caused by energy machinery, material handling, or work practices.

Hazard reporting is when we communicate with our supervisor after we've seen, heard or experienced something that could hurt us or someone else at the workplace. Hazard reports are often immediate but also come from inspections or even investigations.

Hazard reporting is one of the main safety rights and responsibilities that all workers have.

Why do we report hazards?

- To work together with the employer on safety issues
- To meet safety responsibilities for self and others
- To exercise safety rights for safety of self and others
- To meet obligations under the Nova Scotia OHS Act.

At work we have a duty of care for our health and safety and that of others.

Flexible reporting measures can help:

- Improve levels of reporting at workplaces
- Decrease non-reporting or under-reporting
- Lessen the impact of factors such as:
 - Literacy
 - Workplace climate
 - Gender
 - Age
 - Experience
 - Work status
- Understanding that how reports are responded to can impact whether hazard reports are made at all.

Reporting hazards can be:

Verbal: including spoken to the supervisor in person, on the phone, voicemail, by radio.

In writing: including forms, notes and diagrams on paper, copies of verbal and electronic reports; reporting can even be anonymous.

Electronic: including email, text, audio messaging.

In-person: including reporting face to face; either one on one, or together with co-workers.

Collaborative: employers and employees working together for proper reporting that meets workforce needs.

We can help improve hazard reporting by:

Supporting people → to report hazards at work

Applying duty of care → we have to ourselves and co-workers

Working together → to set up good reporting methods that everyone understands

Responding properly → when a hazard is reported:

- listen and read carefully, don't make assumptions
- don't belittle or brush off, take it seriously
- follow up, "walk the talk"

Reporting hazards is an IRS right we all have!

- Workplace training helps us understand reporting.
- Applying flexible thinking supports better measures.
- Working together supports more effective reporting.
- Hazard reporting is better when we support each other to exercise safety rights and responsibilities.

Good awareness and understanding of hazard reporting needs us to be:

- Understanding the why and how of hazard reporting
- Adaptable to the ways that hazards can be reported
- *Using* hazard reporting measures and tools
- Supporting all of our co-workers to improve reporting,
- Exercising our reporting rights and responsibilities

To learn more about reporting hazards and workplace health and safety law please visit:

[Nova Scotia LAE Safety Branch and OHS Division](#)

[NS OHS Act and Regulations](#)

[Government of Canada](#)
Employment & Social Development (ESDC)

What's next?

What changes could be made in your workplace with this information?

If you'd like more information about workplace health and safety, please view our other injury prevention resources or email info@wcb.gov.ns.ca.

References and Resources:

WCB Nova Scotia : www.worksafeforlife.ca

WCB Nova Scotia: www.wcb.ns.ca

Call toll-free Halifax 1-800-870-3331 and Sydney 1-800-880-0003

[Small Business Safety Toolkit](#)

[Small Business Safety Toolkit Cost Calculator](#)

NS LAE - Safety Branch: OHS Division:
www.novascotia.ca/lae/healthandsafety

View OHS News: www.gov.ns.ca/lae/healthandsafety/ohsnews.asp

Email: ohsdivision@gov.ns.ca

Call toll-free: Nova Scotia 1-800-952-2687 and 902-424-5400

Canadian Centre Occupational Health & Safety: Nova Scotia E-Learning:
http://www.ccohs.ca/catalog/courses_list_nova.php