

# PREVENTING WORKPLACE INJURIES

## It Takes Leadership

**NOVA SCOTIANS  
SAFE AND  
SECURE  
FROM WORKPLACE INJURY**

**COMMITMENT  
TO SAFETY  
BEGINS AT THE  
TOP—WITH YOU**

# CREATE A COMPANY SAFETY POLICY

Senior management sets the tone and expectations of an organization. Without your commitment and support, safety and return-to-work programs will have a limited effect.

## Safety Leadership Means...

1. Implementing a policy and consistently communicating it to all employees and management.
2. Making safety fun by using different activities to raise awareness and motivate employees to work safely.
3. Providing an annual budget for safety.
4. Ensuring safety is on the agenda at every executive meeting.
5. Leading by example to demonstrate safety standards. For example, management use personal protective equipment when at the worksite.
6. Understanding that reducing workplace injuries and ensuring injured employees return to work in a timely manner can lower WCB premiums.

### PREVENTING WORKPLACE INJURIES: **Getting started**

## Online Workshop



This short online presentation covers the basics of getting an occupational health and safety program up and running in your workplace in eight easy-to-follow steps.

Some of it may sound familiar, some it may be new to you. Either way, you'll be ready to lead by example and influence positive change for a safer workplace.

Visit **wcb.ns.ca** to get started today.

**50% OF MANAGERS  
BELIEVE THERE  
IS NOTHING  
THEY CAN DO  
TO MAKE THEIR  
WORKPLACES  
SAFER**

# KNOW YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES

Everyone in your organization has a responsibility for workplace safety. Managers, supervisors and employees must understand their roles and responsibilities for creating a safe workplace.

## Safety Leadership Means...

1. Ensuring everyone in the organization accepts responsibility for health and safety, and understands the Internal Responsibility System (IRS), as explained in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.
2. Making sure managers and supervisors understand they are responsible and accountable for the health and safety of their employees.
3. Helping employees recognize their role in protecting their own safety and that of others.
4. Empowering managers and supervisors to ensure equipment, materials and the work environment do not pose undue hazards.
5. Identifying an individual safety leader to coordinate health and safety responsibilities. This safety leader has direct access to, and the support of, senior management.
6. Encouraging and expecting safe work practices from the top down.

# REDUCING THE FINANCIAL COST OF WORKPLACE INJURY STARTS WITH PREVENTION

# ESTABLISH A HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM

The cost of injuries goes beyond health care, equipment damage and wages, and includes lost productivity, employee morale, insurance costs and so on. Services offered through the WCB, like MyAccount and the Certificate of Recognition (COR), can have a positive impact on the cost of injuries to your business.

MyAccount gives you 24/7 online access to your WCB account. At a glance you can determine how changing your safety and return-to-work performance could impact your premiums.

The WCB acknowledges employers who have developed and implemented workplace health and safety systems by co-signing a Certificate of Recognition. Injury reduction under COR can mean lower premiums – a definite competitive advantage.

## Safety Leadership Means...

1. Ensuring management has a plan for implementing a comprehensive safety program.
2. Developing clear and measurable health and safety goals in consultation with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee or Safety Representative.
3. Providing opportunities for employees to participate in making the workplace safer.
4. Working cooperatively with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee or Safety Representative to define opportunities and resolve issues.
5. Making safety orientation and training available to managers, supervisors and employees to perform their jobs safely.
6. Identifying, reporting and correcting hazards in the workplace.
7. Performing audits and evaluation of the safety program to ensure its success.



**A SAFETY  
COMMITTEE OR  
REPRESENTATIVE  
GIVES SAFETY A  
VOICE IN YOUR  
WORKPLACE**

# CREATE A JOINT OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE OR SAFETY REPRESENTATIVE

A Joint Occupational Health and Safety (JOHS) Committee is required by law if you employ 20 or more people.

Effective Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees are comprised of management and employee representatives. Joint representation and participation is necessary to understand different views and reach the best solution.

## Safety Leadership Means...

1. Implementing a Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee where managers and employees work together for a safer workplace.
2. Inviting the JOHS Committee to participate in the development of the health and safety goals of the organization.
3. Inviting the JOHS Committee to participate in health and safety promotion, workplace inspections and actively make recommendations to senior management.
4. Ensuring each employee member is aware of how they can raise a safety issue with management and the JOHS Committee.
5. Making sure a Safety Representative is selected if a JOHS Committee is not required. A Safety Representative is required by law at any workplace where you employ five or more people. The Safety Representative's role is similar to that of the JOHS Committee.

**DO SOMETHING  
ABOUT IT  
BEFORE IT'S  
AN INJURY**

# CONTROL HAZARDS

For many businesses, hazards in the workplace are an unavoidable reality given the nature of the work. Businesses committed to safety identify these hazards and do everything possible to control them, to minimize the risk of personal injury and property damage.

Many hazards are avoidable. The key is identifying them and taking action.

Musculoskeletal injuries, or sprains and strains, are the most common workplace injuries in Nova Scotia. Preventing them starts with understanding them. Our brochure, *Sprains and Strains: Preventing musculoskeletal injury through workplace design*, will help you spot the hazards and make a few simple changes to reduce the likelihood of future injuries. Contact us for your copy, or view the brochure online.

## Safety Leadership Means...

1. Evaluating all jobs to identify those with significant risk of injury.
2. Identifying tasks with specific hazards for control.
3. Eliminating or controlling hazards and developing safe work procedures.
4. Recognizing people, materials, equipment and the environment as possible hazard sources.
5. Conducting workplace inspections to identify unsafe conditions or acts with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee or Safety Representative.
6. Defining and enforcing housekeeping standards.
7. Implementing hiring processes that ensure new employees have the skills and abilities to perform their job safely.



**INCREASE  
PREVENTION  
REDUCE  
INJURIES  
LOWER YOUR RATES**

## LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE

It is important to investigate incidents right away in order to better understand the cause and prevent it from happening again.

### Safety Leadership Means...

1. Focusing on preventing the injury in the future - not placing blame.
2. Ensuring the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee investigates injuries and incidents in the workplace to determine underlying causes.
3. Ensuring JOHS Committee members are trained in investigation techniques.
4. Monitoring trends and identifying recurring events or causes.
5. Designating someone responsible for implementing corrective action in a timely manner.

#### MONITOR YOUR CLAIMS COSTS, SUBMIT INJURY REPORTS AND MORE – ALL ONLINE

You can access your WCB account online. MyAccount gives you an up-close look at injury's impact on your workplace, 24/7.

Be sure to register for MyAccount at [MY-ACCOUNT.NS.CA](https://my-account.ns.ca).



# **SAFETY IS A LEADERSHIP COMMITMENT**

# LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING

Everyone in the organization needs to have a clear understanding of your company's approach to, and expectation for, safety and return-to-work programs. Safety information needs to be regularly updated and reinforced with all employees.

Education and training are the cornerstones of a safety culture. Management, supervisors, and employees need the training required to create a safe work environment and to know what to do if an injury does occur.

## Safety Leadership Means...

1. Ensuring the safety message comes from senior management but is developed in conjunction with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee or Safety Representative.
2. Ensuring everyone in the organization receives the same message, including sub-contractors.
3. Using several methods to communicate the message – seminars, newsletters, weekly meetings, posters, etc.
4. Providing safety orientation for new employees, including job specific training; and safety refreshers for current employees.
5. Encouraging senior leaders to embrace safety and become role models.
6. Making sure the consequences of departing from safety procedures (for employees, management, unions and contractors) are understood.
7. Keeping records for all training, safety activities, incidents and injuries.



**SPRAINS  
AND STRAINS  
ACCOUNT FOR 60%  
OF TIME-LOSS  
INJURIES IN  
NOVA SCOTIA**

# RETURN-TO-WORK PROGRAMS

Work is healthy, and research proves it. When injury occurs, staying connected to the workplace and continuing to work is the most important factor in recovery.

It's critical to show leadership in a return-to-work policy. It must not be simply a poster on a wall or a piece of paper in a filing cabinet – it must be a philosophy lived and breathed across the organization. From the CEO to the entry-level employee, strive to foster a work environment based on the fundamental belief that work is healthy and helps recovery.

## Return-to-Work Leadership Means...

1. Developing a comprehensive return-to-work program in consultation with unions and employees.
2. Effectively communicating the return-to-work program to all managers, supervisors and employees.
3. Ensuring managers and supervisors have a strong commitment to early and safe return to work.
4. Helping managers and supervisors recognize the financial benefits of early and safe return to work for both the employer and the injured employee.
5. Performing a job task analysis to determine duties that can be assigned to an injured employee based on their functional abilities.
6. Reassuring an injured employee that management is concerned for their health and wellness and will help them safely return to work as soon as possible.

# HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

- How does your safety and health program measure up against the best practices?
- Is there room for improvement?
- What changes could make things better?
- Who should follow up?

Please use this matrix to assess where your organization fits.

| BEST PRACTICE               | DOES YOUR PROGRAM INCLUDE SOME OF THE SUGGESTED IDEAS? | COULD YOUR PROCESSES BE IMPROVED? | IS ACTION REQUIRED? |
|-----------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| COMPANY SAFETY POLICY       |  |                                   |                     |
| KNOW YOUR RESPONSIBILITIES  |  |                                   |                     |
| HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM   |  |                                   |                     |
| HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE |  |                                   |                     |
| CONTROL HAZARDS             |  |                                   |                     |
| LEARN FROM EXPERIENCE       |  |                                   |                     |
| LEADERSHIP AND TRAINING     |  |                                   |                     |
| RETURN TO WORK              |  |                                   |                     |

## OTHER THINGS YOU MIGHT WANT TO CONSIDER:

- What improvements should be our priority?
- Do we need any external resources?
- How should we evaluate our progress?
- What action is required?



**my-account.ns.ca**  
**worksafeforlife.ca**

**WORK SAFE. FOR LIFE.**  
WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD OF NOVA SCOTIA

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