

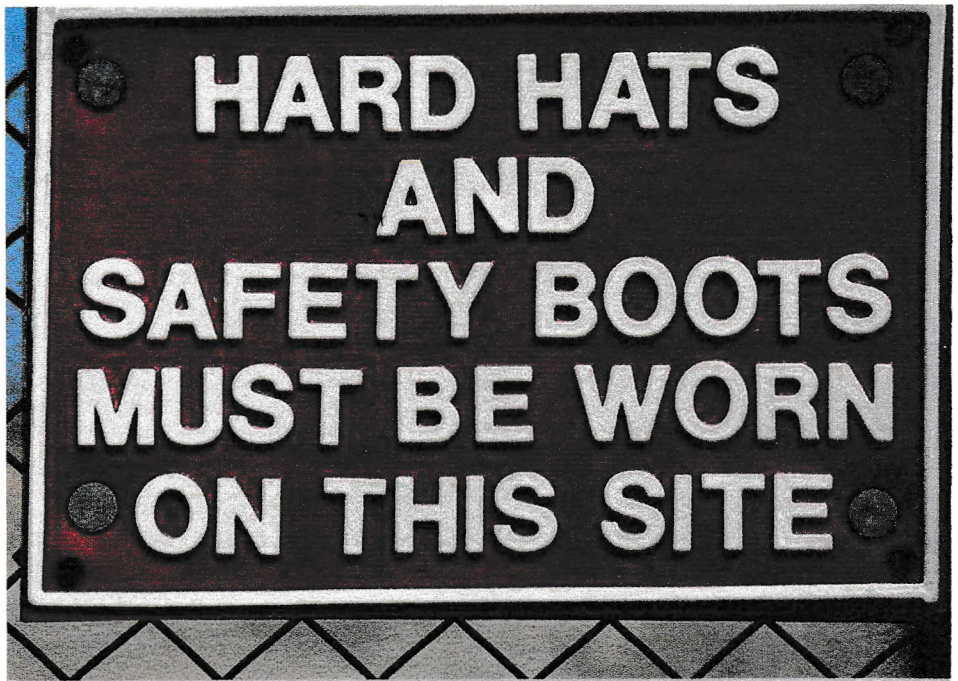
Health and Safety

You have the right to work in a safe place!

Ontario workplaces are regulated under the **Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)**, with the exception of those regulated by the **Canada Labour Code**. Both laws were created to make all workplaces safe. They define the rights and duties of everyone in the workplace—owner, employer, supervisors and workers.

The **Workplace Safety and Insurance Act** also applies in Ontario. It was created to promote healthy, safe workplaces, to encourage safe, timely return to work and to provide insured benefits to workers who get injured on the job. It is administered by the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board.

Each workplace should also have its own safety policy and procedures, and they should be clearly posted.



Reflection

What hazards have you seen at the places where you've worked?

Have you ever had an injury on the job? If so, can you discuss it with the class?

Your Rights

The Occupational Health and Safety Act stresses three rights for every worker:

To know. Your employer must inform you of any hazards in your workplace, and provide training so you can work safely.

To participate. You have the right to participate in health and safety issues in your workplace.

To refuse unsafe work. You have the right to refuse work that you believe is dangerous to your health or safety, or the health or safety of another worker.

Your Responsibilities

To inform yourself. If you don't know, you can't take care.

To work safely. Don't fool around. Use all equipment safely, the way your supervisor shows you. Use required protective equipment at all times, the way your supervisor shows you.

To report any unsafe condition or occurrence. Tell your supervisors—they need to know.

To report any injury. Tell your supervisors. Any injury on the job must be reported to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. And of course—go to your doctor! What might be some of the reasons that young workers don't report unsafe conditions or injuries?

Links

It isn't a legal requirement, but it's a good idea to know basic first aid. The St. John's Ambulance Society offers first aid courses in your community. Contact them and find out how to take one.

Hazardous Materials

One of the key regulations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (Ontario) concerns the **Workplace Hazardous Material Information System**, or WHMIS for short. The WHMIS regulations require:

Labelling. Every hazardous material must have a warning label that tells you what class a hazardous product is in and how to work safely with it.

Material safety data sheets. Every hazardous material must have a material safety data sheet (MSDS). These must be kept where workers can find them, so they can read about the hazards of a product, how to use it safely and what to do in an emergency.

Training. Every worker must be trained in how to work safely with the product.

ACTIVITY

What do these symbols stand for?



She Saw the Symbol

A young woman working at a health club noticed that the liquid she used to wash down the handball court had a WHMIS symbol. She wondered if this substance was responsible for the headaches and nausea she suffered at this job. When she asked the manager, he located the MSDS, which stated that the liquid should be diluted with water and used only in well-ventilated areas. Rubber gloves and a respirator were required, because the chemical could be absorbed through breathing passages and skin. The effects of the chemical were nausea, headaches, convulsions and death. The club decided to use a less toxic substance.

Links

All the above information is taken from the Young Worker Awareness Program, sponsored by the Workers Health & Safety Centre and the Industrial Accident Prevention Association, with funding from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. You can order these materials from:

Workers Health & Safety Centre, 15 Gervais Drive, Suite 802, Don Mills, ON M3C 1Y8. Phone (416) 441-1939. Toll-free 1-888-869-7950.

Industrial Accident Prevention Association, 250 Yonge Street, 28th floor, Toronto, ON M5B 2H4. Phone (416) 506-8888. Toll-free 1-800-669-4939.

Guided links to on-line information about these organizations are available at <www.careers.nelson.com>.

ACTIVITY

Research

1. What is the Employment Standards Act? What does it cover?
2. What is a bargaining agent? What is a collective agreement?
3. What is the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board of Ontario? What is the Workers Health & Safety Centre?
4. What is the Industrial Accident Prevention Association?
5. What is a “designated substance”?
6. Does the Employment Standards Act require employees to join a union?
7. What is the Internal Responsibility System?
8. What is a joint health and safety committee?