

New health and safety training requirement coming for Ontario employers

Employer must train workers on various rights and duties by July 1

By Sherrard Kuzz LLP

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In November 2013, Ontario Regulation 297/13 became part of Ontario's health and safety laws under the , *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. The regulation requires all Ontario employers to ensure workers and supervisors complete a basic occupational health and safety awareness training program by July 1, 2014. This regulation applies to all Ontario workplaces, regardless of size or sector.

What kind of training is required?

The regulation requires all workers and supervisors to be trained on:

- The duties and rights of workers under the act.
- The duties of employers and supervisors under the act.
- The role of a health and safety representative and joint health and safety committee under the act.
- The role of the Ministry of Labour, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board and designated occupational health and safety entities under the act.
- Common workplace hazards.
- The requirements set out in the act's regulation regarding Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) with respect to information and instruction on controlled products.
- Possible occupational illnesses, including latency periods.

Supervisors must also be trained on:

- How to recognize, assess and control workplace hazards, and evaluate those controls.
- Sources of information on occupational health and safety.

In workplaces that have a joint health and safety committee, the regulation requires employers to ensure committee members receive the training necessary become a "certified member."

Are there exemptions?

The regulation recognizes that workers and supervisors may have already received equivalent training in the past; thus, an employer is exempt from ensuring a worker or supervisor completes the above training if:

- The worker or supervisor has previously completed a basic occupational health and safety awareness training program, either with the current or a former employer.
- The worker or supervisor provides the current employer with proof of that training.

- The current employer verifies the previous training meets the requirements set out in the regulation.

Record keeping

The regulation requires an employer to maintain a record of training until six months after a worker or supervisor is no longer performing work for the employer.

Ensure your organization is compliant with the regulation prior to July 1, 2014.

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