Work Site / Work Station Inspection
Frequently Asked Questions

A Guide to Accompany the Work Site / Work Station Inspection Checklist for Off-campus Teachers Responsible for the Administration and Delivery of Off-campus Education.

An off-campus learning experience cannot begin until an approved work site inspection is in place and a signed work experience consent form is signed by all parties.

We are working in partnership with our employers to provide our students with an excellent learning experience. It is a good idea to call ahead to make an appointment for your first visit to the worksite / work station. You might open the conversation with the employer by saying, "Thank you for agreeing to take one of our students. In order to place the right student in the appropriate spot, would you mind if I looked around and asked you a few questions?"

1. Who will provide onsite supervision and job-related training for the student?

If a student is not competent to do certain aspects of the job he or she must be under the direct supervision of a competent worker. A *competent* worker is a worker who is adequately qualified and suitably trained and has sufficient experience to safely perform the work without or with a minimal degree of supervision. It is not often that the student is considered competent. *Direct* supervision of a person who is not competent means that person is under the personal and continuous visual supervision of a competent worker and the two workers are able to readily and clearly communicate with one another throughout the duration of work.

2. Will job-related health and safety training and orientation be provided to the student?

The company should provide a general orientation to the workplace before the student starts work. This would include items such as:

- student's responsibilities for health and safety
- dress code and personal protective equipment requirements
- work schedule, hours and company policies
- safety rules and procedures
- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) training if student will be handling chemicals
- emergency response procedures; e.g. fire exits, location of extinguishers and emergency eyewash, first-aid services and supplies
- how to report injuries or unsafe conditions
- care of equipment
- cleaning up the work area

You can provide the employer and / or student with a copy of the new employee orientation checklist found on pages 34–35 of the booklet *"X-treme Safety: A Survival Guide for New and Young Workers."*

Definition of High Hazard Work:

For the purpose of defining the first-aid equipment, supplies, and trained staff required at such a facility, the presence of the following hazards should result in the facility being classified as **"high hazard work":**

- working in the presence of a biohazardous material, toxic substance or chemical, which, if released, would result in workers needing immediate medical treatment as a result of inhalation or eye or skin contact
- working in the presence of equipment or machinery containing substances under high pressure, substances that may explode or catch fire or substances that may react dangerously when combined with another process material
- using tools, equipment or machinery for high-speed grinding, cutting, chipping or drilling
- working near mobile equipment where there is a possibility of a worker being struck
- working at elevations
- entering confined spaces where toxic atmospheres may exist or develop
- working where there are other hazard factors that may expose workers to risk of serious injury or occupational disease

3. Is the student required to wear any personal protective equipment (PPE)?

You should confirm with the work site what protective equipment is required, what the employer provides and what the student is expected to provide as a condition of employment. While onsite, validate use of PPE through observation. All PPE should meet regulatory standards listed in the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation and Code; e.g. safety footwear, hearing protection, gloves and protective eyewear must be Canadian Standards Association (CSA) approved (green triangle indicates CSA approved). Respirators must be National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) approved. Employers generally provide most required PPE; however, some items, such as footwear, may have to be purchased by the student.

4. Is the employer familiar with the process for reporting a student injury?

When a student is engaged in approved off-campus education activities, that student is regarded as an Employee of Alberta Education. Student injuries are covered under Alberta Education's WCB account. The Off-campus Teacher completes the required *WCB Injury Report Instructions & Worker Report of Injury or Occupational Disease form*, with the student, on behalf of Alberta Education and ensures that the WCB account number for Alberta Education (345912/6) is listed on the forms.

Procedure:

- Tell the employer.
- Give first aid or medical attention as required and document in the First-Aid Record at the work site.
- If the injury results in lost time away from the work site, report the injury to the school Off-campus Teacher as soon as possible.
- With the assistance of the student and employer, the Off-campus Teacher completes the *WCB forms*.
- The Off-campus Teacher signs his or her name on the Employer's Report of Accident and writes below his or her name "on behalf of Alberta Education." The Off-campus Teacher ensures that the Alberta Education WCB account number (WCB 345912/6) is on the report and that it is faxed to WCB within 72 hours of the incident. Fax a copy of the WCB report to Alberta Education, Curriculum Sector, at 780-422-3745.
- The Off-campus Teacher works with the work site supervisor to ensure that the incident is investigated and that corrective action is implemented to prevent further incidents.
- Depending on circumstances, the Off-campus Teacher may reconsider the decision to approve the work site / work station.

5. Are there emergency preparedness procedures in place; e.g. fire, spill?

- How are the procedures communicated?
- Are the procedures documented?
- Do the procedures in place put the safety of the student first? For example, what is the student instructed to do in case of fire?
- Evacuate the building?
- Use the fire extinguisher to fight the fire? (least desirable)
- What are the expectations of the student in the event of an emergency?
- What is the student to do if there is an incident of workplace violence?
- In the event of a robbery?
- Will the student be working alone?
- Generally, the work station is not approved if the student is not supervised.

6. Is a trained first aider available to the student at all times while the student is working?

Employers are required to have proof of employees certified in first aid. If you are uncertain, you can ask the employer to show you copies of valid certification.

7. Are fire extinguishers and first-aid kits maintained and readily available?

If they are not readily observed, ask for the location of equipment.

8. Are emergency exit / safety signs clearly visible?

Emergency exit and safety-related signs should be posted and clearly visible.

9. Is emergency eyewash equipment (if necessary) maintained and readily available?

If chemical hazards are present, eyewash equipment should be readily available.
True eyewash stations are plumbed units on a water line that can provide enough water for continuous irrigation of the exposed eye for 15 minutes. It is strongly recommended that at least one eyewash station be installed in the central first-aid area. Portable eyewash bottles should be available in areas where corrosive chemicals are used; e.g. science, CTS, custodial work areas. Portable squeeze bottles can be used in satellite areas to help transport an injured person to a proper eyewash station.

10. What are the most critical potential hazards of this job?

Understanding the potential hazards of the job allows the Off-campus Teacher to better assess if they are being adequately controlled. Existing and potential workplace hazards are generally grouped under the following categories:

- **Chemical** – exposure to solvents, asbestos, dangerous gases (e.g. carbon monoxide)
- **Biological** – exposure to moulds, parasites, blood and body fluids
- **Ergonomic** – lifting heavy or awkward materials; repetitive work
- **Physical** – manual lifting, exposure to noise, radiation, workplace violence, dangerous machinery and confined spaces
- **Psychological / Cultural Factors** – stress, harassment, sexual harassment, crude language, gender considerations (e.g. student is the only male / female at the work site)

Consider:

- Will the student be required to work alone? If so, have the job hazards been controlled and is there an effective communication system in place in the event of an emergency?
- Does the job involve handling cash?
- Will there be training in emergency procedures; e.g. fire, robbery?
- Does the job involve dealing with difficult people?
- Will the student be working extended hours? If the student is working outside the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. the employer is responsible for providing workers' compensation coverage. Extended hours cannot be used for senior high school credit.
- Do the working conditions present a potential problem to students with health issues or special needs?
- Will the student be operating equipment and / or driving machinery / vehicles?

11. Have these hazards been identified and controlled by the employer?

Employers have a responsibility to inform workers about on-the-job hazards and the control measures in place to protect them. This can be accomplished through new employee orientation, classroom and / or onsite training, or by having students work under the *direct supervision* of a *competent* worker.

Provide the employer and student with *Be Safe at Work: "Ask These Questions at Work."*
Ask the student to document and return the answers to these questions.

12. How will the student be made aware of these hazards / dangers?

Asking this question provides a better understanding of the job demands and potential job risks to the student and whether special training, protective equipment or supervision will be required. What is the process for letting employees know about the hazards? For example:

- word of mouth (least desirable)
- signage
- safety meetings
- new worker orientation

13. What tools, materials and equipment is the student expected to use or handle?
Are there concerns regarding the tools, materials and equipment that the student will be handling? Is training provided, if required? Will the student be asked to drive heavy equipment? If yes, does the student have a driver's license?

14. How does an off-campus supervisor decide if a work site appears to provide an orderly, well-maintained, safe and caring environment?

- You should feel comfortable that the answers to the above questions are satisfactory. The employer should seem knowledgeable, have a positive attitude and be in agreement to completing any checklists or questions with the students.
- Look for good lighting and proper exhaust ventilation and if there is exposure to excessive dust, fumes and offensive odours.
- The work site should be orderly. Exits and entrances must be accessible, free of debris and other materials at all times.

15. Should I approve the work site?

How do you evaluate a company's health and safety program?

A health and safety program is a management system put in place by the employer to minimize the incidence of injuries and illness to workers at the work site. Look for evidence of the following to help determine if the employer has an effective program in place. Not every work site will have each element, and the scope and complexity of the program will vary depending on the nature of the work site, and the nature of operations carried out.

- Do they provide health and safety training?
- Do they have a process to assess the work site for actual and potential hazards, and establish controls to eliminate and / or minimize the risk of those hazards?
- Is everyone aware of their obligation to refuse imminent danger work?
- Do they have a work site health and safety committee or regular safety meetings?

- Do they keep records of health and safety inspections and accident / incident investigations?
- Do they have any outstanding health and safety compliance orders?
- Have they had any serious workplace incidents or fatalities?
- Have they ever been prosecuted and fined under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*?
- Do they have control measures to eliminate or reduce health and safety hazards to workers; e.g. ventilation, procedures, personal protective equipment?
- Is there a current health and safety manual outlining company policies, procedures and regulations?
- Do they participate in the Partnerships in Health and Safety Program?
- Do they have a certificate of recognition (COR) for their health and safety program?

It is important that the employer be made aware of the unique health and safety risks that face young workers.

Provide the employer with a copy of the following tip sheets: *"Tips for Supervisors – Supervising Young Workers"* and *"Tips for Employers – Employing Young Workers."*

Ask the following:

- Will the employer / supervisor provide a safe and caring learning environment? Are they willing and capable of meeting the expectations of the placement?
- Ask yourself, would you want to have your own child at this work site?
- If in doubt, do not approve the site OR request a second opinion from your Occupational Health and Safety District Representative.
- Work station inspections are to occur every 12 months (not every school year or calendar year).

Please email a copy of each completed Off-campus Education Work Site / Work Station Inspection Form as required by local policies.