



Ergonomics

The following is a brief excerpt from our [Ergonomics FAQ](#).

How do I know when I need help in ergonomics?

Triggers that suggest you may already have a problem include the following.

- If employees in your workplace, or certain specific work areas within, are experiencing soft-tissue injuries such as tendinitis, back injuries, sore muscles, etc. Regularly review your lost-time statistics, WCB records, absenteeism records, and listen to workers' comments.
- High rates of general absenteeism and/or worker turn-over can also be indicators of poor workplace design.
- High number of mistakes, or requirement for rework on products due to poor quality can also have a basis in ergonomics.

Poor, or declining, productivity over the course of the work period also can mean the work is not designed well for workers

How do I find an ergonomics consultant (ergonomist)?

To determine whether an individual is qualified and experienced, there are several questions you need to research and/or ask:

- Is the person a certified Ergonomist? By what body? In Canada, we have Canadian Certified Professional Ergonomists (CCPE). You might also see Ergonomists with the designation BCPE, an American type of certification.
- Does the person belong to an Ergonomics Association? In Canada, we have the Association of Canadian Ergonomists (ACE). Most qualified Ergonomists belong to ACE. Check what membership category the person holds. There are many qualified Ergonomists in Canada who are not yet certified, and s/he would have been classified as a Full Member of ACE.
- Visit the [ACE website](#), to view membership and certification status of a prospective ergonomics consultant.

Does the person have experience relevant to your type of problem? If your workplace is industrial and your problem is soft-tissue injuries, make sure you hire someone with experience in these areas.

Are there laws that regulate ergonomics in the workplace?

Section 13 of Nova Scotia's [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) (commonly viewed as the 'General Duty Clause') specifies that "every employer shall take every precaution that is reasonable in the circumstances to ensure the health and safety of persons at or near the workplace". Although not named specifically, this can include ergonomic issues where an officer on investigation determines that reasonable steps are not being taken to address a hazard and the resulting risk in a workplace.

This Issue

<i>Ergonomics</i>	1
<i>Occupational Health and TLVs&BEIs</i>	2
<i>New Officer Training Program graduates</i>	2
<i>OHS Act Post-ing Requirements</i>	3
<i>Recent Incidents</i>	3
<i>WHSR Consultation</i>	4
<i>Changes to WHMIS Regulations</i>	4

Occupational Health requirements and TLV & BEI booklet

Occupational Health requirements are contained in [Part 2 of the Workplace Health and Safety Regulations](#).

The regulations require the employer to comply with the threshold limit values for exposure to all of the following as listed in the latest version of the Threshold Limit Values and Biologic Exposures Indices of the [American Conference of Government Industrial Hygienists](#):

- Gases
- Vapours
- Mist
- Fumes
- Smoke
- Dust
- Chemical substances
- Physical agents
- Acoustic (noise, sound)
- Electromagnetic
- Ergonomic
- Mechanical
- Thermal (hot, cold) nature

Physical agents are defined as being of a:

The 2015 Edition of the booklet is now available and may be purchased directly from the [ACGIH site](#).

The OH&S Division has purchased a number of the 2015 booklets and distributed them to each of the 9 regional libraries for public access. These would be available for reference and not for general circulation/borrowing.

For a map of regional libraries please go to: [Regional libraries of Nova Scotia](#).

New Officer Training Program Graduates

On February 26, 8 persons (6 OHS Officers and 2 Education and Outreach Officers) graduated from the OH&S Division's New Officer Training Program.

Persons hired as Occupational Health and Safety Officers undergo a rigorous education program administered by the Division. It covers such items as: OHS legislation; how to carry out inspections; how to secure accident scenes; take statements; investigate discriminatory action complaints and right to refuse actions; as well as various interpersonal skills items such as defusing tense situations.

Aside from classroom activities students are also assigned to veteran officers and accompany them on inspections.

On graduation the OHS Officers receive their badges and are assigned a territory. We welcome the graduates and know they will be making a difference in Nova Scotia workplaces.

Back row (l to r): Ron Buchanon, Officer; Kenny MacDonald, Officer; Harold Carroll, OH&S Ex. Director; Scott Nauss, Sr. Director, Compliance and Inspection Services.



Front row, left to right: David Welsh (education and outreach); Esther Bourque, Officer; Dave Bell; Gail Keeping (education and out-

reach); Mark Brine, Officer; Rodney Woodworth, Acting Manager, Education and Outreach; Tony Scott, Officer (not in picture).



Posting requirements under the OH&S Act

Do you know what information you are required to post under the OH&S Act?

While 'posting' is an undefined term under the Act, we understand posting to mean physically placing the material so that it is easily visible in an area where employees have free and easy access. Often this may be an oh&s specific bulletin board in a lunch room.

Posting on a computer network or intranet is acceptable if employees have access, know where to find the information and the computer works.

Material to be posted un-

der the Act by the employer includes:

- The names of the current occupational health and safety committee members or the representative and how they may be contacted,
- The minutes of the occupational health and safety committee meeting where there is one (were there are 20 or more regularly employed persons at a workplace),
- A current copy of the Occupational Health and Safety Act,
- The OHS Division telephone number for reporting occupational health or safety con-

- cerns to the Division,
- A copy an occupational health and safety policy where is one required (where there are 5 or more regularly employed persons in a business),
- Any order, compliance notice, notice of appeal, deviation or decision relating to the workplace and employer; and any code of practice required by the Act or the regulations.

The Act also has several requirements to make information available; this does not mean posting. This information may be kept by a manager or su-

pervisor and would be available upon request; such as:

- Any ohs regulations that apply to the workplace,
- Any information and reports that an officer asks to be made available to employees,
- A listing of chemical substances in the workplace.

Note that there may additional requirements in the ohs regulations; for example: Blasting Safety, First Aid, Occupational Diving, Occupational Safety General etc.

Recent Incidents

This selection of incidents investigated by our officers serve to encourage you to check and see where you stand with regards to these, or similar issues.

Arc Flash

An apprentice electrician received minor burns from an arc flash while working on a live main electrical panel. While installing a ground wire cable, the cable slipped from the person's hand and made contact with the electrical panel creating an arc flash. On investigation it was determined:

- requirements of the [Occupational Health and Safety Regulations, Part 11](#) were not followed;
- the company safe work procedure for live electrical work was not followed;
- company procedures for lock-out and tag-out not followed;
- not wearing appropriate PPE.

Ladder Safety

While replacing a phone line cable, the worker set-up a ladder against the main line between 2 poles allowing access to the lateral/residential line to be replaced. Once the lateral line was cut, the main line started to swing due to the tension from the lateral line being suddenly removed. The ladder slid along the main line causing the person to fall.

The [Occupational Safety General Regulations](#) section 147 deals with ladder safety—ladders need to be secured in an adequate manner against movement.



WHSR Consultation

In early February, Labour and Advanced Education Deputy Minister Duff Montgomerie issued a letter to consultation participants regarding the WHSR Phase II consultation process.

In the letter he notes and recognizes the considerable feedback received and efforts of Nova Scotians to be involved. The consultation revealed that people wanted to be more involved in the decisions on how regulations and future changes are made and rolled out.

In light of this the Department is rethinking what regulatory changes are needed at this time. The Department will be providing more information in the future.

If you have any questions please contact Conor O'Dea at Conor.ODEa@novascotia.ca or 902-424-2157.

To read the complete text of Deputy Minister Montgomerie's letter please go to [Stakeholder letter](#).

Links to related agencies:

- [Nova Scotia WCB](#)
- [Workers Compensation Appeals Tribunal \(WCAT\)](#)
- [Workers' Advisers Program \(WAP\)](#)
- [Workplace Safety and Insurance System \(WSIS\)](#)
- [Office of the Employer Advisor Nova Scotia](#)
- [Service Canada / Français](#)
- [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety \(CCOHS\) / Français](#)
- [CanOSH \(Canada's National Workplace Health and Safety Website\) / Français](#)

Changes to WHMIS Regulations

The Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) is changing. The old system (WHMIS 1988) is being replaced by a new system (WHMIS 2015) over the next three years. The new system allows the same style label and safety data sheet (SDS) to be used for each hazardous product in Canada and the United States. Two different versions of labels and safety data sheets – new and old – are starting to appear in Canadian workplaces. The changeover to the new system will be gradual. During the changeover, workplaces using the old labeling and SDS system won't be in violation.

The changes to WHMIS reflect requirements of the updated federal Hazardous Products Act and the new Hazardous Products Regulations that became law on February 11, 2015. WHMIS will be consistent with the Global Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS).

Information to help with the transition from WHMIS 1988 to WHMIS 2015 is available for suppliers, distributors, employers and employees through WHMIS.org. The [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](#) (CCOHS) also offers a free online course on WHMIS (after GHS) for workers, as well as other eCourses on WHMIS. CCOHS has also prepared a fact sheet [WHMIS 2015](#), summarizing key requirements.

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