

Occupational Health and Safety in the workplace



Why is Occupational Health and Safety so important in a working environment? Not sure what to do with that labour compliance order issued against you?

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The importance of OHSA in the workplace

The Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) is important to the workplace because it safeguards the welfare of those in employment. Occupational Health and Safety legislation was established to protect both employees and employers. It is part of the legislation under the basic guides of regulation. The Department of Labour takes the well-being of employees very seriously, as should employers.

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The OHSA Assessment

The Occupational Health and Safety Assessment is enforced by closely monitoring workplace conditions to identify and eliminate hazards. This includes everything from chemical and ergonomical risks to physical and psycho-social risks.

The level of risk associated with a profession or industry is taken into consideration when the assessment is undertaken. Construction workers are more at risk to suffer a serious fall than someone working at a desk (though not impossible). Those who work in industries that see violence and trauma on a daily basis are more at risk on a psycho-social level. These include those in industries such as healthcare and law enforcement who experience trauma on a daily basis.

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What is a safety representative?

A safety representative is responsible for enforcing the laws set by the OHSA and completing regular Occupational Health and Safety Assessments. The safety representative is responsible for:

- o identifying hazardous conditions and informing employees thereof
- o providing extensive training so that duties are performed safely
- o providing protective clothing and ensuring that it is worn
- o preventing employees who do not adhere to safety regulations or who have not received proper training from using potentially hazardous equipment
- o checking the functionality of equipment and ensuring that such equipment is maintained regularly
- o providing visible and clear warning signs for hazardous equipment and machinery
- o ensuring that the operators of dangerous machinery are in control and enforcing the same safety rules among other employees
- o providing and clearly marking escape routes
- o training workers on the proper emergency procedures
- o preserving evidence at the scene of an injury to prevent disturbance or removal thereof.

All *hazardous material*, equipment and machinery must be assessed so that those working with them are protected. Where, for instance, someone loses their hearing as a result of prolonged exposure to machinery and had not been provided with protection for their ears, a safety representative would have seen this potential danger and ensured that staff were provided with the correct safety equipment.

SERR Synergy assist businesses with *labour compliance orders and inspections* exemptions from bargaining councils. *Contact us* today to look at ways to protect the interests of you as the employer by ensuring that the relationship between employer and employee is lawful and mutually beneficial.

