

# New Worker Orientation and Training Guide

February 2026



**SAFE  
WORK**  
MANITOBA™  
A division of the WCB

The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB) serves workers and employers through a no-fault insurance system integral to the Manitoba economy. Funded by employers, the WCB promotes safe and healthy workplaces, facilitates recovery and return to work, delivers supportive compensation services and ensures responsible stewardship of Manitoba's workers compensation system.

SAFE Work Manitoba, a division of the WCB, is dedicated to preventing workplace injury and illness. Working with safety partners, we provide prevention education, safety programming, consulting and strategic direction to create a culture of safety for all Manitobans.

**This guide's content was created in partnership with the Government of Manitoba's Workplace Safety and Health department.**

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# INTRODUCTION

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New workers are an asset, bringing fresh eyes and new ideas to a workplace. However, new workers are especially vulnerable to workplace injury and illness due to lack of experience and ability to recognize hazards, assess risks and identify appropriate control measures. It is your responsibility as an employer to train all new workers to protect themselves from hazards in the course of their duties.

## Did you know?

### New workers often:

- Are eager to do a good job.
- Want to make a good impression.
- May not ask questions or speak up when they have concerns because they fear looking incapable or risking their job.
- Outline best abatement practices for working with and removing asbestos and ACMs.

### Worker injuries most often occur when:

- Safety and health training has not been provided for tasks performed (e.g., using equipment, tools, machinery and chemicals).
- Supervision provided is inadequate.
- People are unfamiliar with the hazards, risks and control measures involved in the work process.
- SAFE work procedures are not available or enforced to prevent injuries.



# WORKPLACE SAFETY AND HEALTH ACT AND REGULATION REQUIREMENTS

A workplace safety and health program is required by law in workplaces with 20 or more workers. Employers with less than 20 workers also have obligations under the objects, purpose and duties of employers in The Workplace Safety and Health Act (the Act), section 7.4(1). Employers are responsible for developing a safety and health program and making sure workers understand and abide by it and the Workplace Safety and Health Regulation (WSH Regulation).

A well-developed plan for training workers is an essential component of a workplace safety and health program. This guide provides practical help in developing and maintaining a training plan for young and new workers in your workplace.

## Employer's duty re: training [the Act, Section 4(4)]

Every employer shall provide information, instruction and training to a worker to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety and health of the worker, before the worker:

- Begins performing a work activity at a workplace.
- Performs a different work activity than the worker was originally trained to perform.
- Is moved to another area of the workplace or a different workplace that has different facilities, procedures or hazards.

## Performing work activity during training [the Act, Section 4(5)]

A worker may perform a work activity while being trained under the direction of a supervisor or other fully trained person who has enough experience to ensure that the safety or health of the worker, and any other person, is not at risk.

## Wages and benefits during training [the Act, Section 4(6)]

A worker is entitled to the same wages and benefits for any time spent in training that he or she would be entitled to had the worker been performing his or her regular work duties during that time.

## Content of program [the Act, Section 7.4(5)(h)]

A workplace safety and health program must include a plan for training workers and supervisors in safe work practices and procedures.

## Orientation for new workers (WSH Regulation, Part 2.2.1)

The WSH Regulation defines new workers as:

- Workers that are new to the workplace (e.g., workers starting employment, temporary or seasonal workers, new immigrants).
- Workers that have moved from one area of the workplace to another area of the workplace that has different facilities, processes or hazards (e.g., workers who are reassigned or transferred to a new job, workers being introduced to new equipment or processes).
- Workers that are being relocated to a different workplace with different facilities, procedures or hazards (e.g., workers with a change in career path).
- Workers returning to the same workplace, but the processes or hazards in the workplace changed while the worker was away (e.g., workers returning from a leave of absence).

An employer must ensure that when a new worker begins work at a workplace, the worker is given a safety and health orientation specific to that workplace.

The following topics must be included in the new worker's orientation, Part 2.2.1 (3) of Manitoba's Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation:

- The employer's and worker's rights and responsibilities under the Act and applicable regulations.
- The name and contact information of the new worker's supervisor.
- The procedure for reporting unsafe conditions at the workplace.
- The procedure for exercising the right to refuse dangerous work at the workplace.
- Contact information for the safety and health committee or representative (as applicable).
- Any policies, programs and SAFE work procedures that the employer is required to develop pursuant to the Act and applicable regulations that apply to the work to be done by the worker.
- The hazards to which the worker may be exposed and the control measures undertaken to protect the worker.
- Location of first aid facilities, means of summoning first aid and procedures for reporting illnesses and injuries.
- Emergency procedures (e.g., first aid, fire, evacuation, etc.).
- Identification of prohibited or restricted areas or activities.
- Any other matters necessary to ensure the safety and health of the worker at the workplace.

Employers must keep a record of all safety and health orientations provided to new workers.



*Unsafe conditions*



*Prohibited or restricted areas*



*First aid facilities*

# EMPLOYMENT STANDARDS CODE AND REGULATION REQUIREMENTS

Young people working in Manitoba have the same rights and obligations as other employees. They are entitled to general holiday pay, vacation pay, overtime, minimum wage and all other rights under the Employment Standard Code.

## YOUNG WORKER READINESS

Young people 13, 14 and 15 can work in Manitoba. They must complete the Young Worker Readiness Certificate Course and obtain a certificate of completion that is signed by their parent or guardian before they can work.

### Restrictions for young workers

Young people 13, 14 or 15 years of age are not allowed to work alone and must be directly supervised by an adult in the workplace. Young people under 18 years of age cannot work alone between 11 p.m. and 6 a.m.

People under 16 years are not allowed to work:

- On a construction site.
- In industrial or manufacturing processes.
- Drilling or servicing rigs.
- On scaffolds or swing stages.
- Pruning, repairing, maintaining or removing trees or shrubs.
- At heights more than 1.5 meters.
- With herbicides or pesticides.
- Without direct adult supervision.

Young people who are 13 years of age cannot prepare food if they need to use dangerous tools or machinery such as deep fryers, slicers, grills or knives. However, they can still work in food preparation areas doing tasks such as, but not limited to, washing dishes, mixing salads or filling drink orders.

**\*Note:** The Employment Standards Code uses The Construction Industry Wage Act definition of construction:

**“Construction”** includes alteration, building, decoration, demolition, erection, maintenance, relocation, renovation or repair of buildings, structures, roads, sewers, water or gas mains, pipelines, transmission lines, tunnels, bridges, canals or other works at the site thereof.

People under 18 years old are not allowed to work alone between the hours of 11 p.m. and 6 a.m. They also are not allowed to work in the following industries:

- Forestry.
- Sawmills or pulp mills.
- Confined spaces.
- Underground in mines or on the face of open-pit quarries.
- Asbestos abatement and removal.

### Further restrictions on hours for workers under 16

Fatigue can affect a worker’s ability to do a job safely. Employees under 16 years old can only work 20 hours or less while school is in session or when the child should be in school. During vacations like Christmas and summer, it may be possible to work more. Employment permits may also restrict when young people can work.

# EMPLOYER AND SUPERVISOR DUTIES

Under the Act, employers and supervisors have specific duties when it comes to workplace safety and health.

## Employer duties:

- Take necessary precautions to ensure the safety, health and welfare of workers.
- Provide and maintain a safe workplace, including safe equipment, tools and systems.
- Make sure all workers and supervisors are aware of hazards in the workplace, as well as any necessary precautions.
- Provide new workers with a safety and health orientation before they begin work.
- Provide all workers with information, instruction, training, competent supervision and facilities to ensure the safety, health and welfare of workers.
- Take precautions to make sure other persons are not exposed to safety or health risks due to workplace activities.
- Consult and co-operate with the workplace safety and health committee or representative.
- Co-operate with others on workplace safety and health matters.

## Supervisor duties:

- Take necessary precautions to ensure the safety, health and welfare of workers.
- Make sure workers are following safe work procedures and safety and health act and the regulations.
- Make sure workers use all safety devices and wear all personal protective equipment required for the task.
- Make sure workers are aware of the hazards of the area in which they are working; when a worker moves to another area or different activity, they must have the appropriate training for that area or activity before beginning work.
- Co-operate with any other person exercising a duty imposed by this Act or the regulations and to comply with the Act and Regulation.

## How can an employer or supervisor perform these duties well?

- Spend ample time explaining the job, providing training and competent supervision with new workers. Remember, employers are responsible for workplace training.
- Identify all hazards, assess the risks and suitable control measures, and provide specific training on how to perform job task safely before asking new workers to do a job. Before allowing them to work, make sure new workers demonstrate what they've learned and correct any unsafe practices immediately.
- Explain company safety rules and emergency procedures and be sure everyone follows them.
- Encourage new workers to exercise their rights, report unsafe work conditions immediately and ask for help or advise if they are unsure about a task. Keep a record of all safety training provided at a workplace, including evaluations to demonstrate workers know how to follow the safe work procedures for the specific and any other job tasks they were hired to do.
- Develop a system to refresh or review safety policies and procedures for training on a regular basis and when introducing new equipment or work processes.
- Explain the importance of prompt reporting of unsafe work conditions and safety concerns. Make sure new workers know it is a priority for you and tell them how and to whom they must report a hazard or safety concern. It is important to act on those concerns or workers will quickly assume that the company is not really interested in creating a positive, SAFE work culture.
- Check back frequently to make sure there is follow-up with new staff.

## Be a positive role model

Supervisors and senior workers are role models. New workers will take note of how things are really done around the workplace, because they are eager to fit in. They will adapt very quickly to the existing safety culture, attitudes and behaviours of co-workers and supervisors.

### Remember:

Many new workers will not ask questions unless their supervisor encourages them to do so. Be available and willing to answer questions and provide advice. Workers are more likely to follow safety rules and procedures if they know what they are, so be clear about the expectations.

# WORKER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

## Worker rights

New workers, like all workers, have rights set out by the Act 2(2)(e)(i)-(iv):

### The right to know

Workers have the right to know how to do their jobs safely, what hazards and risks are in the workplace and how to prevent injuries from those hazards.

### The right to participate

Workers have the right to participate in safety and health activities in the workplace without fear of discipline.

### The right to refuse dangerous work

Workers are legally entitled to refuse work they believe to be dangerous to their safety and health or to that of another worker.

### The right to protection from reprisal

Workers cannot be disciplined or have a loss of pay or benefit or reprisal carried out against them for exercising their rights and acting in the best interest of safety, or carrying out a duty in accordance with Manitoba's Workplace Safety and Health Act and Regulation.

## Worker duties

New workers are responsible for following safety and health procedures in a workplace and taking care to uphold their duties towards maintaining a safe and healthy workplace.

All workers must:

- Take reasonable care to protect themselves and others.
- Follow the safety and health rules of the workplace.
- Use personal protective equipment, clothing and devices provided by the employer.
- Consult and co-operate with the workplace safety and health committee or representative.
- Consult and co-operate with others on workplace safety and health matters and persons exercising a duty imposed by the Act and the regulation.
- Comply with the Act and the regulations.

# SAFETY AND HEALTH ORIENTATION AND TRAINING

A workplace safety and health orientation is essential to preventing injuries to new workers. It will help them become familiar with the workplace and the hazards to which they or others may be exposed. Orientation ensures that workers are aware of the employer's rules and expectations for safety and health.

Various people in the workplace may hold responsibility for different parts of a safety and health orientation program. Some examples include:

- A safety and health coordinator may deliver a presentation on the employer's policy and procedures.
- An occupational health nurse may review incident reporting procedures and first aid.
- A competent supervisor may detail specific hazards and safe work procedures.

The orientation process may involve a buddy system, where a new worker is paired with an experienced worker for the first few days or weeks on the job. This is an effective way to help ensure that new workers have ample time to observe and understand safe work practices before assigning them to their new job.

## Additional safety and health orientation topics

Workers must receive a safety and health orientation when they are first hired. Large amounts of information can be overwhelming for new workers, so it is important to provide workers with something they can take away from the orientation to use as a reference when needed.

Orientations for new workers must cover all of the required topics as identified in the WSH Regulation Part 2.2.1(3). Additional topics to be covered during an orientation will vary depending on who is being oriented.

Some additional common items covered in orientations include:

- The roles and responsibilities of the safety and health committee or representative, and where the safety and health bulletin board is located.
- SAFE work procedures – a general review of what they are, where they can be found and how they are developed (see section on Job-Specific Training, page 10).
- Personal protective equipment (PPE), clothing or other devices required for their job.

- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) information specific to the products used in the workplace.
- Musculoskeletal injury prevention measures.
- Violence and harassment prevention measures.
- SAFE work procedures for working alone or in isolation.

## Conducting an orientation – step-by-step

Following a step-by-step approach to conducting an orientation will help prevent workplace injuries and fulfill legal requirements for training workers.

Steps to take:

1. Decide who should receive orientation or re-orientation.
2. List what workplace orientation topics and training you'll provide for employees. Be specific. Your safety and health committee or worker representative would be helpful in developing the orientation program.
3. Develop checklists for tracking when each part of the orientation is conducted and who conducts it.
4. Assign who will provide what parts of the orientation.
5. Write down expected timelines for the delivery of each part of the orientation.
6. Develop and collect the required materials for the delivery of each part of the orientation.
7. Provide the training, checking off each item as it is delivered and noting who delivers each part and on what date. After their training, workers should sign or initial on each area covered.
8. Designate who will be responsible to make sure the orientation is provided and that it is done in a timely fashion (make sure all senior managers and supervisors are aware that this is a requirement that is supported by company senior management).
9. Keep records of the training in individual personnel files.
10. Develop a system to refresh or review training when workplace changes are made (e.g., new equipment or procedures) and on a regular basis, even if no changes are made.

## Job-specific training

Workers must be trained in safe work procedures for the specific tasks they will be performing.

The extent of training will depend on the level of risk or detail associated with the task. It is important to consider barriers to training at this point. Use written safe work procedures and practical work demonstrations for your training and consider the need to have them translated into other languages or using pictures for workers who cannot read.

It is important to remember that worker training doesn't end when the initial training ends. Your training plan must make sure workers are trained when they take on new responsibilities and encounter new work or new areas at the workplace. Key steps to job-specific training include:

- Reviewing safe work procedures.
- Demonstrating tasks performed.
- Supervising new employees.
- Evaluating new employees prior to independent work.
- Annually evaluating worker competencies, or more often if required.
- Obtaining specific certifications where required (e.g., operation of a powered lift truck).

Safe work procedures may contain varying amounts of detail and include multiple steps, depending on the nature of the task. Some of the most common topics that should have written safe work procedures include, but are not limited to:

- Electrical safety
- Confined space
- Fall protection and roof work
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Chemical and biological substances
- Asbestos
- Working alone or in isolation
- Machines, tools and robots
- Ladders
- Welding
- Fire and explosive hazards
- Musculoskeletal injuries
- Scaffolds
- Powered mobile equipment

### NOTE:

Safe work procedures can also contain steps that a worker should not take. Identifying specific areas or tasks that are restricted helps to protect new workers who may be unfamiliar with the workplace environment and equipment.

## Ongoing training and competency evaluation

An effective training plan will help new workers understand and remember the information you deliver. It is important to make sure all workers understand training they receive. When new workers do not understand, or when they need more training, they should feel comfortable to ask questions.

To make sure that workers are competent to perform the work in a safe manner, it is important to evaluate those workers. When training is completed, the trainer should evaluate the workers by observing them, questioning them or performing tests, either written or verbal, depending on the job. Your training plan should describe how you intend to evaluate a worker after their training is complete. All evaluations should be documented and readily available.

It is also important to evaluate your overall training program. Talking to new workers is a great way to learn what parts of your training program are effective and what parts you can improve.

# TRAINING NEW WORKERS – THINGS TO CONSIDER

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## Language abilities

Learning about the ability of your workers to communicate in English can help you deliver safety and health messages that they will understand. A communication assessment kit can be custom developed specifically for your workplace.

If your business employs immigrant workers whose English skills need improvement, the Manitoba government's English at Work program can help. For more information and to request assistance in this area, call 204-944-8833 ex. 153 or visit the following website: <https://manitobastart.com/wp-content/uploads/ENGLISH%20AT%20WORK%20BROCHURE.pdf>.

## Literacy levels

Reports tell us that approximately 40 per cent of working age adults in Manitoba have prose literacy scores below the level considered the minimum for full participation in a knowledge-based economy and society. This represents approximately 285,000 Manitobans between the ages of 16 and 65. While a high percentage of this group work, their literacy skills limit their employment opportunities.

Source: The Consultation on Adult Literacy in Manitoba, Report Submitted to Manitoba Advanced Education and Literacy November 2008 by Dwight Botting. [https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/all/adultliteracystrategy/pdf/final\\_report\\_en.pdf](https://www.edu.gov.mb.ca/all/adultliteracystrategy/pdf/final_report_en.pdf).

Lower literacy levels may mean inability to understand written instructions and to adapt to change in the workplace, which are important factors for a productive and safe workforce.

For further information and assistance, visit the Workplace Education Manitoba website at: [wem.mb.ca](http://wem.mb.ca). It is a good source for essential skills consultation, assessment and co-funded workplace training partnerships.

## Culture

When people move to another country, they move into another culture. Different values and behaviours may affect worker safety and health on the job. For example, appropriate work clothing in Canada might be different from what is commonly worn at work in another country. PPE that is standard to you may be completely unfamiliar for someone new to the country.

It is important to understand cultural differences and provide training that is clear and specific. At <https://www.wcb.mb.ca/safeworkmanitoba/>, you will find many resources for safety and health in Manitoba.

# TIPS FOR KEEPING NEW WORKERS SAFE

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1. Get to know new workers before training begins. Take an informal tour of the workplace and introduce trainees to co-workers and key people, including the safety and health manager and safety and health committee members or representative.
2. Have new workers shadow experienced workers to learn SAFE work procedures by watching. Experienced workers can serve as mentors to new workers. They also can serve as someone to bring questions and concerns to.
3. Don't mistake silence for understanding. Remind workers of their right to know and participate.
4. Encourage comments and questions by making it clear they are always welcomed and valued.
5. Vary training and instruction methods and styles to ensure all workers can understand the message. Ask workers to provide you with a verbal or written explanation, followed by practical demonstration of what they have learned.
6. Explain why procedures are in place. Understanding the reason behind a policy or procedure increases the likelihood of following it.
7. Lead by example. Be sure your actions match your words.
8. Be available to answer questions before, during and after training.
9. Provide examples of unsafe equipment and work conditions to explain the importance of reporting safety concerns to the employer or supervisor.
10. Provide complete workplace safety and health training for new workers. Make sure they do not work on their own until you confirm they are ready to do it safely.

# SAMPLE CHECKLISTS FOR NEW WORKER SAFETY AND HEALTH ORIENTATION

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The following sample checklists serve as guidelines for conducting a safety and health orientation for workers new to a company or department. These samples include required safety and health orientation topics, verification of learning outcomes and competency evaluation. You need to discuss these and other workplace-specific topics with your new workers **before they begin to work.**

A checklist completed and signed by both the supervisor and the worker documents that orientation has taken place. **Please note that the lists shown here are not comprehensive.** They are samples only. Your orientation will need to include topics that are specific to your workplace. You must conduct a workplace hazard assessment to identify all necessary safety and health topics for training. You must conduct hazard identification, risk assessment and determine appropriate control of your specific workplace and identify all necessary safety and health topics for training.

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## SAMPLE: NEW WORKER ORIENTATION CHECKLIST

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EMPLOYEE NAME

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DEPARTMENT

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POSITION (TASKS)

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DATE HIRED

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DATE OF ORIENTATION

### Reason for orientation:

- Worker is new to the workplace.
- Worker has moved to another area of the workplace with different processes/hazards.
- Worker is relocated by an employer to a different workplace/location with different processes/hazards.
- Worker is returning to the workplace and processes/hazards have changed while the worker was away.

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PERSON PROVIDING ORIENTATION (NAME AND POSITION)

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COMPANY NAME



TOPIC	INITIALS (Trainer)	INITIALS (Worker)	COMMENTS
<b>Rights and responsibilities</b>			
General safety and health duties and responsibilities of employers, workers and supervisors.			
Workers' right to know, participate and refuse dangerous work and right to protection from reprisal.			
Supervisor name and contact number provided.			
Procedure for reporting unsafe conditions/hazards in the workplace provided.			
A procedure for exercising the right to refuse dangerous work is provided.			
Safety and health committee or the worker safety and health representative name(s) and contact numbers provided.			
<b>Policies, programs and safe work procedures</b>			
Policies and programs e.g., safety and health policy, training plan, working alone or in isolation, violence and harassment prevention, incident investigation, workplace safety and health program (if 20 or more employees), etc.			
Documented SAFE work procedures (job-/task-specific), e.g., machinery, equipment, tools, ladders, chemicals, lockout, musculoskeletal injuries, personal protective equipment, etc.			
<b>Hazards and control measures</b>			
Hazards to which the worker may be exposed in the workplace, and any control measures undertaken to protect the worker.			

TOPIC	INITIALS (Trainer)	INITIALS (Worker)	COMMENTS
<b>First aid</b>			
Location(s) of first aid kit(s) and eye wash facilities.			
Means to summon first aid, e.g., the first-aid attendant's name and contact information.			
Procedure for reporting injuries and illnesses (including near-miss and dangerous occurrences).			
<b>Emergency procedures</b>			
Locations of emergency exits and meeting points.			
Locations of fire extinguishers and fire alarms.			
How to use fire extinguishers.			
What to do in an emergency situation.			
Emergency contact (numbers).			
Other e.g., procedures for an emergency involving hazardous materials, including clean-up of spills.			
Prohibited or restricted area or activities.			
Other matters necessary to make sure safety and health of workers.			



## SAMPLE: NEW WORKER LEARNING OUTCOME OBJECTIVES

COMPANY NAME

EMPLOYER/SUPERVISOR

DEPARTMENT

DATE

REFRESH DATE

Initials (Worker)	Please initial beside each element to verify orientation and documentation
	I received information on the hazards, risks and control measures specific to my job and learned how to protect myself from injury and illness.
	I know my legal workplace safety and health rights, including the right to refuse dangerous work.
	I know my legal roles and responsibilities as a worker.
	I am aware of and understand the workplace safety and health policies and rules at my workplace.
	My workplace has a joint safety and health committee or a safety and health representative. I know who the committee members are or who the representative is.
	I received a safety and health orientation when I was first hired.
	I received training on how to do my job safely and understand the specific SAFE work procedures for the tools, equipment and materials I use in my job.
	I received training on the personal protective equipment I need to wear and learned how to use it properly.
	I received training on emergency procedures, including where the exits and first aid stations are located.
	I work with a WHMIS-controlled substance and received WHMIS training.
	I know where to find Safety Data Sheet (SDS) information and review it before handling a WHMIS-controlled substance.
	I will look out for hazards and know how to report an unsafe condition or act.

EMPLOYEE SIGNED

SUPERVISOR SIGNED

**SAMPLE: WORKER SAFETY OBSERVATION FORM – SAMPLE COMPETENCY EVALUATION RECORD**

WORKER'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_

WORK LOCATION \_\_\_\_\_

SUPERVISOR \_\_\_\_\_

OBSERVER \_\_\_\_\_

DESCRIPTION	YES	NO	NOT OBSERVED	COMMENTS
Wears required personal protective equipment.				
Follows SAFE work procedures and policies.				
Ask questions when does not know how to do a task safely.				
Practices good housekeeping.				
Demonstrates a safe attitude every day.				

**GENERAL COMMENTS AND OBSERVATIONS**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

# NEW WORKER RESOURCES

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## **New Worker Safety**

<https://www.wcb.mb.ca/topics/new-worker-safety/>

## **Safe work procedures and Job Hazard Analysis**

<https://www.wcb.mb.ca/topics/safe-work-procedures/>

## **Right to Refuse Dangerous Work**

<https://www.wcb.mb.ca/safeworkmanitoba/safety-rights-and-responsibilities/right-to-refuse-dangerous-work/>

## **Worker Rights and Responsibilities**

<https://www.wcb.mb.ca/safeworkmanitoba/safety-rights-and-responsibilities/>

## **Young Worker Readiness Certificate Course**

<https://swmb.bluedrop.io/storefront/online-registration/20509>

