

# Do I need a joint work site health and safety committee or a health and safety representative?

## *OHS information for workers, employers, and prime contractors*

### KEY INFORMATION

- Employers with 20 or more workers at a work site are required to establish a joint work site health and safety committee (HSC)
- Employers with 5 to 19 workers at a work site are required to have a health and safety representative (HS representative)
- If the project is expected to last for fewer than 90 days, HSCs or HS representatives may not be required

### What is a joint work site health and safety committee or health and safety representative?

Joint work site health and safety committees (HSC) are a group of worker and employer representatives working together to identify and solve health and safety concerns at the work site. Health and safety representatives (HS representatives) also promote awareness and interest in health and safety, and take on many of the roles of the HSC.

All workers and employers are accountable for health and safety. HSCs and HS representatives form an important part of this internal responsibility system and further ensure that work site parties are aware of their roles and responsibilities in the workplace.

HSCs and HS representatives contribute to the basic rights all workers have in protecting their health and safety: the right to know, the right to participate, and the right to refuse unsafe work.

### Which employers are required to have a HSC or HS representative?

When 20 or more workers are at a work site and when work is expected to last 90 days or more, the employer is required to establish an HSC. On work sites where there are from 5 and 19 worker employed for more than 90 days, the employer shall ensure that there is a designated HS representative.

### What are the requirements for work sites with multiple employers?

If there are 20 or more workers from two or more employers/self-employed persons and the work is expected to last 90 days or more, the prime contractor will coordinate the establishment of an HSC for that work site. If there is no prime contractor, all employers and self-employed persons are collectively responsible to ensure that an HSC is established.

If there are 5-19 workers total from two or more employers/self-employed persons and the work is expected to last 90 days or more, the prime contractor will coordinate the appointment of a HS representative for that work site. If there is no prime contractor, all employers and self-employed persons shall coordinate the appointment of an HS representative.

Several examples are presented in the following table and additional resources are listed at the end of this publication.

Example	Worker participation
Employer with 50 workers at one location (e.g. small manufacturing company).	One committee
Employer with 5,000 workers at one location (e.g. large manufacturing company).	One committee
Employer with 60 workers evenly distributed at three work sites.	Three committees, one at each work site*
Employer with 60 workers at 10 locations evenly distributed (e.g. restaurant chain).	10 representatives*
Employer with 5,000 workers at 10 locations, more than 20 workers at each (e.g. school board).	10 committees, one at each work site*
Employer with 1,000 workers at six locations, 990 at one central site, two workers each at five sites (e.g. city that operates landfill operations in addition to municipal offices).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One committee at one work site</li> <li>• Five work sites with no committee or representative</li> <li>• Workers are involved in hazard assessments**</li> </ul>
Employer with 60 workers at 10 locations, unevenly distributed, 20 at one site, 12 at one site, 5 at three sites, 3 at four sites, 1 at one site (e.g. cement producer with manufacturing and distribution work sites).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One committee at one work site</li> <li>• One representative at four work sites</li> <li>• Five work sites with no committee or representative</li> <li>• Workers are involved in hazard assessments**</li> </ul>
Employer with 20 workers at five work sites evenly distributed (e.g. retail gas station franchise or small bakery chain).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No committee or representative</li> <li>• Workers are involved in hazard assessments**</li> </ul>
Employer with 20 workers, four at one location, 16 with no fixed work site location (work at other employer's work sites—e.g. an electrical contractor where the "work site" may be a vehicle, a respite agency, telework).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No committee or representative</li> <li>• Workers are involved in hazard assessments**</li> </ul>
Employer with 20 or more workers operates a mobile work site such as a drilling rig, highway paving operation, tree planting operation, etc. Workers and equipment function as a mobile work site that deploys to a location, does the work then moves to the next location. While the length of time at each physical location may be less than 90 days, overall the work lasts 90 days or more.	One committee at the mobile work site

\*Under the new OHS Act, the employer is not responsible for coordinating the activities of multiple representatives or committees. They can operate independently, depending on the needs of their work site.

\*\* Employers of any size are required to protect the health and safety of all parties at their work sites. All workers, regardless of number, also have health and safety rights and obligations. To find out more about worker participation in health and safety, see the other publications referred to in "For More Information".

### Contact Us

#### OHS Contact Centre

Edmonton & Surrounding area

- 780-415-8690

Throughout Alberta

- 1-866-415-8690

Deaf or hearing impaired:

- 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)
- 1-800-232-7215 (Alberta)

#### Website

[work.alberta.ca/ohs-contact-us](http://work.alberta.ca/ohs-contact-us)

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

**Joint work site health and safety committees - OHS information for workers, employers, and prime contractors (LI036)**

**Health and safety representatives - OHS information for workers, employers, and prime contractors (LI040)**

**Worker participation in health and safety OHS information for workers, employers, and prime contractors, without health and safety committees or representatives (LI041)**

### Get Copies of *OHS Act, Regulation and Code*

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[work.alberta.ca/ohs-legislation](http://work.alberta.ca/ohs-legislation)

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