

Prevention Update



ADAPTING TRAINING FOR NEW WORKERS

Prince Edward Island has a diverse workforce with workers who speak a variety of languages. This diversity presents both challenges and opportunities in the delivery of Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) programs in the workplace. It is imperative for employers to provide foreign workers with essential safety information, making them aware of potential hazards and safe work procedures to protect their health and safety.

HIGHER RISK

[A study conducted](#) by The Institute for Work & Health, a Canadian leader in work injury and disability prevention research, revealed that "recent immigrant workers are 1.6 times more likely than Canadian-born workers to experience occupational health and safety (OHS) vulnerability" in the workplace. In addition, the study noted that "the OHS vulnerability experienced by recent immigrant results from exposure to hazards combined with inadequate workplace OHS policies and procedures, or exposure to hazards combined with inadequate levels of empowerment to protect themselves in the workplace." Communication barriers further amplify the challenges, affecting safety training and supervision.



LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Section 12(c) and Section 23(3)(a) of the *Occupation Health and Safety Act*, emphasizes the employer's obligation to provide information, instruction, training, supervision, and facilities as are necessary to ensure the occupational health and safety of workers. With these obligations in mind, employers are responsible for making their safety programs accessible for all workers. Beyond written procedures, employers need to consider using visuals, videos or demonstrations, etc.



TRAINING BEST PRACTICES

1. Identify languages in your workplace

- Determine the primary languages spoken by your workforce
- Tailor training programs to accommodate linguistic diversity beyond English and French

2. Translate training

- Employ interpreters fluent in relevant languages for translating safety-related information if not already available onsite
- Consider having an interpreter onsite during orientation to enhance understanding
- Translate standard forms, procedures, and posters into languages spoken by workers
- Provide user-friendly translation apps for supervisors working closely with new workers

3. Reinforce safety messages

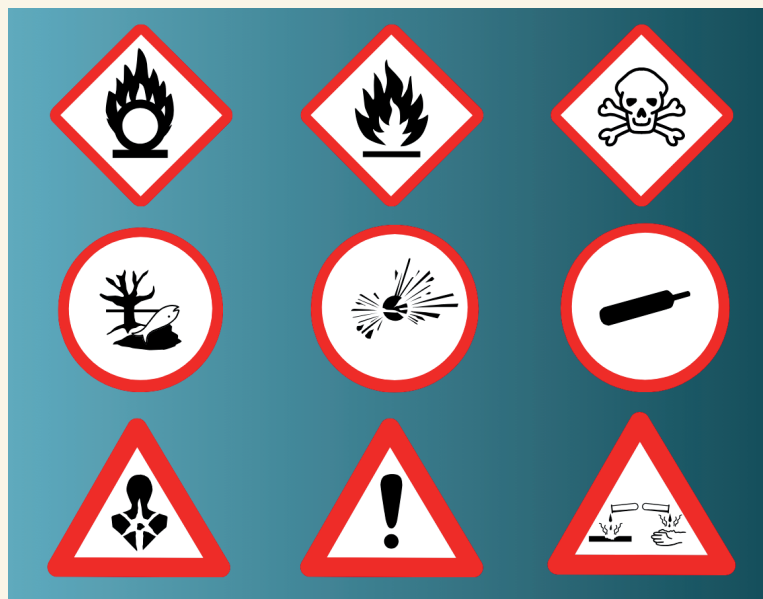
- Use translated posters and publication to reinforce safety messages
- Demonstrate commitment to safety through multilingual communication
- Showcase due diligence by providing hazard-specific training in workers' languages

4. Use pictograms

- Implement pictograms as visual aids to overcome language barriers
- Ensure pictograms are simple and universally understood, like WHMIS labels

5. Make sure there is comprehension

- Do not assume understanding. Confirm comprehension through open-ended questions
- Include practical, hands-on demonstrations during training
- Supervise workers to make sure they are safe while performing tasks
- Adjust training styles to address diverse learning preferences of workers



Employers can create a safer working environment for all workers by adopting these training best practices. This approach not only reduces risks of work-related injuries or illness but also demonstrates a commitment to the well-being of all workers in the workplace.