

Health and Safety

General information for parishes of the Anglican Diocese of Huron

The Worker has three rights:

1. To know how to work safely
2. To refuse unsafe work
3. To participate in creating a safe workplace

The Diocese of Huron is concerned about the health and safety of everyone who works or comes in contact with the diocese or its parishes or other ministries. Consequently, health and safety regulations and procedures are a priority. Although much of the Church's ministry is accomplished through the efforts of dedicated volunteers, each parish and ministry facility is also a workplace for workers. Therefore, our parishes must comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), Workplace Hazardous Materials Information Systems (WHMIS) and other relevant health and safety legislation. Consequently, the enforcement of occupational health and safety laws by the priest and churchwardens must be a priority at each parish and ministry.

According to the diocesan canons (Canon 18 (12)), the churchwardens represent the interests of the parish. The parish is the employer of parish staff. Accordingly, each churchwarden must take steps, along with the incumbent, to ensure that the parish is operating in compliance with all applicable health and safety legislation. The Health and Safety Team of the Human Resources Department of the Diocese of Huron has provided this section of the guidelines manual to assist parishes and ministries to comply with this legislation.

Parish workers include paid honorary assistants, independent contract cleaning staff, paid soloist and weekly nursery attendants, or anyone else who performs work or provides services on the premises of the parish or ministry for monetary compensation.

The OHSA creates an internal responsibility system where everyone has a role to play to ensure a healthy and safe workplace.

Churchwarden's Responsibilities:

- Taking every reasonable precaution for the protection of the worker
- Providing information, instruction and supervision to a worker to protect his or her health and safety
- Appointing a competent person as supervisor of the workplace
- Acquainting workers with work related hazards
- Ensuring that workers are trained for safe practices
- Posting inspection reports

Section 25-8...2

- Ensuring a worker representative is chosen
- Assisting and cooperation with a worker representative and providing him/her with any and all information regarding hazardous materials, dangerous practices and workplace accidents or illness
- Ensuring outside contractors use appropriate equipment
- Ensuring the building(s) are in good repair so that they are safe workplaces
- Ensuring that personal protection equipment is used when necessary

Supervisor's Responsibilities:

- Taking every precaution for the protection of the worker
- Being aware of all the potential hazards of the workplace
- Warning workers of dangers/risks
- Providing written safety instructions whenever there is a risk in a job/task
- ensuring the workers comply with the verbal and written instructions
- ensuring that personal protection equipment is used when necessary

Worker Representative's Responsibilities:

- conducting a monthly inspection
- identifying dangerous or hazardous situations and making recommendations to the worker or supervisor
- obtaining information from the worker about hazardous materials, dangerous practices and workplace accidents or illnesses
- inspecting the site any accident and filing a report

Worker's Responsibilities:

- working in a manner which is healthy and safe
- complying with the OHSA
- reporting risks and hazards
- contacting the employer immediately (or as soon as possible) after an accident
- correctly wearing all personal protective equipment when provided
- reporting violations of the OHSA
- following instructions
- not participating in horseplay

To make a parish as safe and healthy as possible:

1. Leaders must be committed to health and safety principles and process and lead by example at all times
2. Safety must become an integral part of ministry or work, rather than simply complying with specific legislative requirements

Section 25-8...3

3. Workplace safety must not be seen as optional but, instead, be recognized as part of a legal and moral obligation. Getting the job done quickly is not more important than working safely.
4. Employers, supervisors and workers must learn and understand their respective health and safety duties and that they have a right to a safe and healthy workplace.

REQUIREMENTS for parishes that have 5 or less workers:

1. Place a health and safety bulletin board in a prominent area of your building where workers and the general public can easily see it. Display up to date posters, the small green OSHA book, an accurate list of those who have received certification training in First Aid, an inspection card for the First Aid box and the Parish Safety Policy described in 15 below.
2. Post emergency numbers near all telephones that are accessible to the public as well as office phones.
3. Provide a First Aid kit that has a First Aid Training Manual; 1 card of safety pins; 24 individually wrapped adhesive dressings; 12 (3in) sterile surgical bandages/pads; 6 triangular bandage; 2 rolls of splint padding and 1 roll up splint. First Aid boxes and training are provided by agencies such as the Canadian Red Cross (www.redcross.ca/english/firstaid), and St. John Ambulance (www.sja.ca/english/content/new.html).
4. Create a station for the First Aid kit, possibly in a cupboard in the parish hall and another one in the church. Make sure it is marked with a big, bold sign and is in a room the general public can easily access.
5. Ensure at least one worker has received certification training in First Aid and is in charge of stocking the First Aid box and maintaining the station. For First Aid training call one of the agencies listed above.
6. Collect and store Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all hazardous materials, such as those used for cleaning and in photocopiers, etc. Even though many cleaning fluids, like bleach, are common household products purchased at the local grocery, they are hazardous chemical and churches, as a place of employment, must ensure all hazardous products are properly labeled and managed. Most MSDS can be found on the internet or from a product supplier.
7. Ensure all workers are trained to do their work safely and in a manner that reduces risk of injury or illness. In a parish, this will likely require written instructions for changing light bulbs in high ceilings, using "wet floor" signs when washing floors, and correct procedures for handling lawn mowers, snow blowers and other equipment. Safety materials and equipment can be purchased from a safety supply company found in your yellow pages under Safety Equipment.

Section 25-8...4

8. Ensure workers are provided with personal protective safety equipment and are trained to use them properly. For example, heavy duty gloves or an arm extender should be used when picking up trash, safety glasses must be used for some machinery and a fall arrest system must be used where there is a hazard of falling more than, 10 feet or 3 meters.
9. Ensure all workers know what to do if there is a workplace illness or accident.
10. Ensure supervisors investigate all accidents and near misses, file written report in the parish office and make necessary and appropriate changes to reduce the risks of the situation.
11. Hold an orientation session for new staff and highlight health and safety.
12. Establish a Health and Safety Policy and Program and have it approved by the parish council.

REQUIREMENTS for parishes that have from 6 to 20 workers:

1. Place a health and safety bulletin board in a prominent area of your building where workers and the general public can easily see it. Display up to date posters, the small green OSHA book, an accurate list of those who have received certification training in First Aid, an inspection card for the First Aid box and the Parish Safety Policy described in 15 below.
2. Post emergency numbers near all telephones that are accessible to the public as well as office phones.
3. Provide a First Aid kit that has a First Aid Training Manual; 1 card of safety pins; 24 individually wrapped adhesive dressings; 12 (3in) sterile surgical bandages/pads; 4 (2 in) rolls of bandage gauze, 4 (4in) rolls of bandage gauze; 12 sterile gauze pads; 6 triangular bandage; 2 rolls of splint padding and 1 roll up splint. First Aid boxes and training are provided by agencies such as the Canadian Red Cross (www.redcross.ca/english/firstaid), and St. John Ambulance (www.sja.ca/english/content/new.html).
4. Create a station for the First Aid kit, possibly in a cupboard in the parish hall and another one in the church. Make sure it is marked with a big, bold sign and is in a room the general public can easily access.
5. Ensure at least one worker has received certification training in First Aid and is in charge of stocking the First Aid box and maintaining the station. For First Aid training call one of the agencies listed above.
6. Have the parish workers select a Worker Representative. This person is to be paid their regular wages for the time it takes to fulfill the health and safety duties associated with being a worker rep.
7. Ensure the worker representative conducts a monthly workplace inspection of the building(s).

Section 25-8...5

8. Collect and store Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all hazardous materials, such as those used for cleaning and in photocopiers, etc. Even though many cleaning fluids, like bleach, are common household products purchased at the local grocery, they are hazardous chemical and churches, as a place of employment, must ensure all hazardous products are properly labeled and managed. Most MSDS can be found on the internet or from a product supplier.
9. Ensure all workers are trained to do their work safely and in a manner that reduces risk of injury or illness. In a parish, this will likely require written instructions for changing light bulbs in high ceilings, using “wet floor” signs when washing floors, and correct procedures for handling lawn mowers, snow blowers and other equipment. Safety materials and equipment can be purchased from a safety supply company found in your yellow pages under Safety Equipment.
10. Ensure workers are provided with personal protective safety equipment and are trained to use them properly. For example, heavy duty gloves or an arm extender should be used when picking up trash, safety glasses must be used for some machinery and a fall arrest system must be used where there is a hazard of falling more then, 10 feet or 3 meters.
11. Ensure all workers know what to do if there is a workplace illness or accident.
12. Ensure supervisors investigate all accidents and near misses, file written report in the parish office and make necessary and appropriate changes to reduce the risks of the situation.
13. Hold an orientation session for new staff and highlight health and safety.
14. Establish a Health and Safety Policy and Program and have it approved by the parish council.

Note: This document is intended only as a resources tool to assist churchwardens become familiar with the key principles of occupational health and safety. This is not intended as a comprehensive summary of occupational health and safety requirements in the workplace. Each churchwarden is responsible for reviewing the Occupational Health and Safety Act and all other applicable regulations and ensuring it is complied with and enforced. This document in no way relieves each parish or ministry from its statutory duties and responsibilities as an employer.