

# 1 OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY PROGRAM

## 1.1 Cape Breton University Health and Safety Policy

Cape Breton University (“University”) is committed to the prevention of illness and injury, the promotion of the health and safety of its employees, and protection of its employees from hazards through the provision and maintenance of healthy and safe conditions on its premises. The University shall endeavour to meet its responsibilities for health and safety by adhering to the principles of the Internal Responsibility System provided for in legislation, to relevant health and safety standards and legislative requirement. The University will assist general and specific responsibilities for workplace health and safety enforcement of safe work procedures.

The University shall initiate appropriate training to acquaint its employees with their rights and duties in the workplace and applicable regulations and procedures for protecting their health and safety. The University shall establish arrangements and programs to assist in maintaining safe conditions and work practices and facilitating employee participation in health and safety activities including health and safety committees.

Everyone shall take responsibility in maintaining a healthy and safe workplace. All employees shall be responsible for the protection of their own health and safety and that of others at or near the workplace. To achieve this it is important that everyone in the workplace comply with prevailing legislation, regulations and standards and with safe work practices and procedures established by the University.

It is a primary duty of all persons in authority, including supervisors and instructors, to ensure that any persons under their direction are made aware of and comply with all applicable policy and safety procedures. They shall be responsible for ensuring that all aspects of the workplace, including teaching and research sites, are safe and that any risks, hazards and safety violations drawn to their attention are investigated and corrected promptly. All employees must therefore report any health hazards and unsafe conditions or practices immediately to supervisory staff.

This policy has been developed in cooperation with the Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee (“Committee”) as well the various components of the Health and Safety Program.

## 1.2 Application

This program applies to all faculty, staff and students of the University. This program is intended to complement and comply with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and regulations of Nova Scotia and, in the event of any conflict, the provisions of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and regulations will prevail.

## 1.3 Enforcement

It is the responsibility of each supervisor or department head to ensure that policies and procedures are being implemented in the areas under his/her jurisdiction.

It is our policy that all our activities comply with the highest standards of occupational health and safety. Therefore, any contravention or violations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act or the Occupational Health and Safety Program developed for the University will be cause for corrective action.

Contravention of the occupational health and safety standards will be regarded as very serious breaches of expected performance and may be cause for disciplinary action.

Corrective Action resulting from a violation of occupational health and safety requirements will be progressive and will be appropriate to the nature of the contravention, the seriousness of the offense, previous violations and any extenuating circumstances.

## 1.4 Administration

All faculty, staff and students will comply with the regulations under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* of Nova Scotia including the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS).

A copy of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* of Nova Scotia will be kept in each Department or School for perusal by faculty, staff and students. It is also posted on **the JOHSC** bulletin boards throughout the facility to ensure its accessibility.

Action may be necessary under this Act and Regulations and, following training on the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* of Nova Scotia and Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System, all staff must take whatever action is necessary to comply with the legislation. Any questions or problems should be referred to a supervisor, the Director of Human Resources or the University Safety Officer. Student compliance is also expected and will be held accountable through the student union judiciary process. Students should contact their student union administration for further information. Student representative(s) is/are also present on the Committee so that student issues can be brought forward to the administration.

## 1.5 Elements of the Program

The Occupational Health and Safety Program of the University shall include:

- a) a provision for the training and supervision of employees in areas that are necessary for their health and safety and the health and safety of other persons at the workplace;
- b) a provision for the preparation of written work procedures that are required to implement safe and healthy work practices and identification of the types of work for which the procedures are required;
- c) a provision for the establishment and continued operation of a committee required pursuant to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, including maintenance of records of membership, rules of procedure, access to a level of management with authority to resolve health and safety matters and any information required under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* or the regulations to be maintained in relation to a committee;
- d) a hazard identification system that includes:
  - evaluation of the workplace to identify potential hazards;
  - procedures and schedules for regular inspections (see inspections under section 3.7)
  - procedures for ensuring the reporting of hazards and the accountability of persons responsible for the correction of hazards; and
  - identification of the circumstances where hazards must be reported to the committee and procedures for doing so;
- e) a system for workplace occupational health and safety monitoring, prompt follow up and control of hazards;
- f) a system for the prompt investigation of hazardous occurrences to determine their causes and the actions that need to be taken to prevent their reoccurrences;
- g) maintenance of records and statistics, including reports of occupational health and safety inspections and investigations, with provisions for making them available to persons entitled to receive them pursuant to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*; and
- h) a provision for monitoring the implementation and effectiveness of the program.

A copy of the program shall be made available to the committee and, on request, to an employee at the workplace.

## 1.6 Definitions

Accident - An undesired event that results in physical harm to a person or damage to property. It is usually the result of a contact with a source of energy (kinetic, electrical, chemical, thermal, etc.) above the threshold limit of the body or structure.

Accident Cause - The many factors that act together to cause accidents. These factors could be:

### Personal

- lack of proper knowledge or skill
- improper attitude
- physical or mental stress

### Organizational

- inadequate work standards/procedures
- improper design
- inadequate maintenance
- inadequate purchasing standards
- normal wear and tear
- improper use of equipment, materials, etc.

Act - The *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

Aids - Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. Aids is the advanced stage of the disease caused by a virus called HIV.

Committee - A Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committee established within the University pursuant to the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.

Competent Person - A person who is (a) qualified because of their knowledge, training and experience to organize the work and its performance; (b) familiar with the provisions of the Act and the regulations that apply to the work; and (c) has knowledge of any potential or actual danger to health and safety in the workplace.

Contractor - A person who contracts work to be performed at the premises of the person contracting to have the work performed.

Controlled Product - Any product, material or substance specified by the regulations made pursuant to paragraph 15(1) (a) of the Hazardous Products Act to be included in any of the classes listed in Schedule II of that Act.

Employee - A person who is employed by the University.

Employer - Cape Breton University.

Environment - The surrounding conditions and atmospheric influences to which an employee is exposed in the workplace.

Ergonomics - the interface between the workplace and the worker, and can include workstation design, human factors, equipment, furniture and tools.

First Aid - Emergency care or treatment that is given to an injured person before medical help arrives.

Hazard - The potential that any piece of machinery, equipment, material or the physical environment has for causing harm to people or damage to property or the environment.

Hepatitis B - Hepatitis B is an inflammation of the liver caused by the hepatitis B virus, one of the three most common forms causes of viral hepatitis; the other two being hepatitis A and hepatitis C. Most people who become infected never feel sick and recover completely. Others get a flu-like illness and their skin and eyes may turn yellow (a condition called "jaundice"). About 10% of adults develop a chronic disease that can lead to cirrhosis and cancer of the liver later in life.

Hepatitis C - Hepatitis C is a disease of the liver first identified in 1989. The hepatitis C virus (or HVC for short) is spread by direct blood to blood contact with an infected person. Previously known as "Non-A Non-B hepatitis". The most common means of transmission is injection drug use.

HIV - HIV stands for Human Immunodeficiency Virus. HIV is the virus that causes a disease known as AIDS. The virus attacks and damages the body's immune and nervous systems.

Human Error - This term is used today to include not just workers' errors but engineering deficiencies and lack of adequate organizational controls which together account for the majority of accidents.

Incident - An undesired event (near miss) that can (or does) adversely affect the efficiency of the business operation.

Proper Procedures - A series of logical steps by which action is initiated, performed, controlled and completed.

Protective Equipment - Equipment that is designed to protect a person against injury from dangers in the environment.

Risk - The probability of a worker suffering an injury or health problem, or of damage occurring to property or the environment as a result of exposure to or contact with a hazard.

Standards - Guidelines set up and established by professional bodies, through legislation or within an organization through the establishment of procedures, rules and regulations.

Supervisor - Immediate supervisor or manager or person in charge at that particular time.

Tolerance - The allowable deviation from a standard.

Toxic Substance - A biological or chemical substance that, because of its inherent properties, can have a harmful effect on workers' health.

Violence - Violence is defined as the unjust use of force or exertion of power and is often exercised as an extreme on the continuum of harassing behaviour. While harassing behaviour may not always be physical, an individual who is the recipient of harassing behaviour will feel vulnerable and victimized. This is not acceptable.

Harassing behaviour and violence is unwanted, intimidating, abusive, unfair, offensive, or demeaning treatment of a person or group of persons by another person or persons. Harassing behaviours may include, but not be limited to:

- verbal abuse or threats;
- unwelcome remarks, jokes, innuendos or taunting about a person's characteristics, including body, attire, age, marital status, ethnic or national origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender;
- display of sexually explicit, racist or other offensive or derogatory material;
- practical jokes which cause awkwardness or embarrassment;
- unwelcome invitations or requests, whether explicit or indirect;
- intimidation;
- leering;
- offensive gestures;
- behaviour which undermines another's self-respect and/or which exhibits an air of superiority;
- unwelcome or inappropriate physical contact, including touching, patting, pinching, stroking, punching, physical assault.

Harassment does not include appropriate employee/employer supervisory practices or instructor/student instructional processes.

WHMIS - WHMIS stands for Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System. WHMIS is a nationwide system used to provide information on hazardous materials that are used in the workplace. WHMIS is applicable where controlled products are stored, handled or used at work.

Workers Working Alone - All workers who are performing a job function and are not in the presence of their employer, another person in a supervisory capacity designated by the same employer, or another worker directly associated with the same employer, at the particular workplace location and during the same time period the working alone job function is being performed.

Workplace - A place where an employee is or is likely to be engaged in any occupation and includes any vehicle or mobile equipment used or likely to be used by an employee in an occupation. It may be any location, either permanent or temporary, where an employee performs any work-related duty. This includes, but is not limited to, the buildings and the surrounding perimeters, including the parking lots, field locations, clients' homes and travelling to and from work assignments.

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