

## Tip Sheet: Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) Workplace Inspections

This Tip Sheet was created as ONA progresses in implementing the 2021-2026 membership Strategic Plan priorities and actions, ensuring members are informed and supported to achieve better working conditions by addressing workplace safety concerns. Workplace inspections are an important Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) activity that aids in the identification and recording of workplace hazards for corrective action by the employer so that injuries and illnesses are prevented.

The Ontario *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHS Act)* recognizes the importance of workplace inspections. The *OHS Act* sets out requirements related to workplace inspections:

- Inspections are to be completed by the selected member(s) of the committee who represent workers (worker representative). [*OHS Act* s. 9(23)]
- It does not have to be the same worker representative to perform all or part of the inspections, and where possible, the certified worker representative should be designated. [*OHS Act* s. 9(24), (25)]
- Members are entitled to time away from work to perform their duties, such as workplace inspections, and the employer is required to ensure they cooperate and assist the committee to carry out any of their functions, including workplace inspections. [*OHS Act* 9(34), 25(2)(e)]
- Inspections must be completed monthly (unless there is a requirement or order by an inspector directing differently), and done according to the inspection schedule developed by the committee. [*OHS Act* s. 9 (26), (28)]

There are a number of activities that should be done before and after a workplace inspection.

Pre-Inspection Activities	Post Inspection
<input type="checkbox"/> Inspection schedule is reviewed.	<input type="checkbox"/> Complete and submit the inspection report to the supervisor of the area.
<input type="checkbox"/> Worker representative available to do the workplace inspection.	<input type="checkbox"/> Include recommended corrective actions in the report.
<input type="checkbox"/> Review of the previous inspection report.	<input type="checkbox"/> Report hazards and/or issues discovered during the inspection to the JHSC.
<input type="checkbox"/> Bring the previous inspection report to the inspection for reference.	<input type="checkbox"/> Monitor responses to the inspection report to ensure hazards and issues are addressed.
<input type="checkbox"/> Review unit-specific documents (violence risk assessments, training records, etc).	

When doing workplace inspections, remember:

- Be methodical - look up, down, around and inside.
  - Always wear personal protective equipment (PPE) when it is required (i.e., hard hats)
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and ear plugs in engineering spaces, nonslip shoes, etc.). If PPE is not available, do not proceed with the inspection but note this on the inspection report and try again in the future.

- Engage with workers to learn about hazards they have encountered.
- Document hazards through photos or diagrams.
- Use descriptors when reporting a hazard (location, size, colour, etc).
- Be prepared to address immediate hazards.
- If you correct a hazard or issue during the inspection, still document the hazard or issue in the inspection report.
- If you do not inspect a certain area, be sure to note this in the report, as well as the reason why the area was not inspected (i.e., patient room eight due to patient care activities).
- Follow up on responses to inspection reports and escalate reports where identified hazards or issues have not been corrected.
- If your committee is having issues with completing monthly workplace inspections, consider submitting a recommendation to add additional time to get caught up with inspections before the end of the year.

Below is a list of items to keep in mind when conducting a workplace inspection.

<b>General</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lunchrooms and washrooms are clean and tidy.</li> <li>○ Materials are neatly stored preventing them from tipping over or collapsing.</li> <li>○ Large or heavy items are stored on lower shelves.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Storage shelves are not overloaded.</li> <li>○ Work areas are clean and clear of obstructions.</li> <li>○ Stairs are clear and adequately lit.</li> <li>○ Wall and ceiling fixtures are fastened securely.</li> <li>○ Fire extinguishers are inspected monthly.</li> </ul>
<b>Clinical Spaces</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Required hallway items lined up on designated side of hall/space.</li> <li>○ Proper storage and disposal of sharps.</li> <li>○ Sharps containers not obstructed or full.</li> <li>○ Waste containers are not stored under sharps containers.</li> <li>○ Biological, pharmaceutical and regular waste is appropriately disposed of.</li> <li>○ Food and drink is not consumed, stored, handled or used near chemicals, infectious materials or pharmaceuticals.</li> <li>○ PPE is available, stored and used appropriately. Fit-test records are available.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Hallways, floors and passages are clear and free of clutter and equipment.</li> <li>○ Mechanical lifts are stored properly, have been load-tested within the last year and are easy to move and apply the brakes.</li> <li>○ Ceiling tracks are flush to the ceiling, end/stop plates present, and all hardware in place.</li> <li>○ No fraying on slings/straps.</li> <li>○ Staff are trained in the safe use of equipment.</li> <li>○ Hand sanitizers are full, and handwashing sinks are available and accessible.</li> </ul>
<b>Engineering Spaces</b>	<b>Laboratory Spaces</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ PPE is available and being used properly.</li> <li>○ Ladders are safe, well maintained and properly affixed.</li> <li>○ Ladders are labelled with load capacity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Lab coats are available and stored properly.</li> <li>○ Safety glasses with side-shields are always worn.</li> </ul>

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- Guards and safety devices are in place.
- Lockout tags are in place and used as required.
- Portable hand tools and machines are properly grounded.
- Start/Stop switches are clearly marked and easy to reach.
- Manufacturers' manuals are available for all tools and machinery.
- Sharps and hazardous waste are disposed of appropriately.
- Spill kits are complete and available.
- Flammable and combustible materials are stored appropriately.
- Eyewash and safety showers are within 25M with no more than one door in the travel path.
- Fume hoods are used for handling hazardous materials and have a validation sticker.

#### **Outdoor Spaces**

- Walkways and parking lots are free from snow, ice, water, grease, etc.
- Exterior lighting is functional and adequate.
- Security protocols are in place for staff reporting to and from work after hours or in the dark.

#### **Office Spaces**

- Chairs and workstations are in good condition.
- Workstations are adjustable and the lighting is adequate.
- Office accessories, furniture and filing cabinets are secured from accidental tipping.
- Electrical and data cords are secured up off the floor.

#### **Loading Docks**

- Dock boards (bridge plates) used when loading and unloading from dock to truck and are in good condition.
- Wheel chocks are available and in place prior to accessing the truck or trailer.
- Lifting equipment is in good condition and has been load-tested within the last year.
- Policies are in place for hot and cold work.

#### **Employee Contacts and Observations**

- Employees are aware of emergency procedures, where to find PPE and the proper use and storage of equipment and PPE.
- Employees are able to complete the required annual training.
- Employees are aware of how to report workplace hazards, injuries and illnesses.

#### **Hazardous Materials**

- Hazardous materials are properly identified and labeled.
- All chemicals are properly and appropriately stored.
- Compressed gas cylinders are handled, stored and used properly.
- Restricted/confined spaces are properly identified.
- Safety data sheets (SDSs) are current and accessible.
- Employee WHMIS training is current.
- Spill kits are available, accessible and complete.

#### **Fire Protection**

- Sprinkler heads have the proper clearance (minimum 45 cm).
  - Fire extinguishers are appropriate and readily available (unblocked).
  - Fire extinguishers are inspected monthly.
  - Fire and emergency exits are clearly marked and unblocked.
  - Fire doors are not propped open and/or blocked.
  - Electrical equipment is plugged into permanent wiring outlets or surge protectors (no extension cords).
  - Electrical equipment is in good condition and certified.
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#### **Lighting, Walls, Ceiling, and Floor**

- Ceiling tiles are not damaged or raised.
- Ceiling tiles are not wet or have visible mold.
- Air vents are free of dust and debris.
- Light bulbs are working and protected from breakage.
- Floors are clean and in good condition.
- Walls are intact with no holes.

#### **Eyewash Stations**

- Eyewash stations are functional and accessible.
- Eyewash stations are identified with highly visible signs.
- Weekly eyewash flushes are completed and documented.
- Employees are aware of the location of eyewash station(s).
- Employees are trained in the proper use of eyewash stations and emergency showers where applicable.

#### **Radiation Protection**

- Lead PPE has been examined within the last year, stored appropriately and is in good condition.
  - Radiation warning signs are in place.
  - Dosimeters are available to staff and are examined quarterly.
  - The dosimeter results are to be clearly posted within the workplace.
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