



REPORTING REQUIREMENTS: PROTECTING WORKERS IN EDUCATION

This PSHSA Fast Fact is intended to provide information on reporting of occupational illness and communicable diseases for the educational sector.



OCCUPATIONAL ILLNESS: REQUIREMENTS TO REPORT TO THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR

Employers have an obligation to report occupational illnesses to the Ministry of Labour, the joint health and safety committee (JHSC) or a health and safety representative, and to the trade union, if any. An occupational illness is defined in the Occupational Health and Safety Act (section 1(1)) as “a condition that results from exposure in a workplace to a physical, chemical or biological agent to the extent that the normal physiological mechanisms are affected and the health of the worker is impaired thereby and includes an occupational disease for which a worker is entitled to benefits under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997”.



EXAMPLES OF OCCUPATIONAL ILLNESSES

- Asbestosis
- Dermatitis, such as skin rashes and inflammation
- Occupational asthma
- Infectious diseases, such as tuberculosis, hepatitis, norovirus, influenza, chicken pox
- Certain types of cancer
- Noise-induced hearing loss
- Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease
- Silicosis

WHAT ARE THE EMPLOYER'S RESPONSIBILITIES?

TO CURRENT WORKERS

The employer's responsibilities as outlined in Section 52(2) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act are:

"If an employer is advised by or on behalf of a worker that the worker has an occupational illness or that a claim in respect of an occupational illness has been filed with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board by or on behalf of the worker, the employer shall give notice in writing, within four days of being so advised, to a Director, to the committee or a health and safety representative and to the trade union, if any, containing such information and particulars as are prescribed."

TO FORMER WORKERS

The employer's responsibilities as outlined in section 52(3) of the Occupational Health and Safety Act are:

"Subsection (2) applies with all necessary modifications if an employer is advised by or on behalf of a former worker that the worker has or had an occupational illness or that a claim in respect of an occupational illness has been filed with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board by or on behalf of the worker."

The requirement to submit a report does not necessitate confirmation of an occupational illness, but simply that the employer has been notified about an illness by or on behalf of an employee or the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.

COMMUNICABLE/INFECTIOUS DISEASE

Schools may experience outbreaks of illnesses such as norovirus (stomach flu) or influenza during which employees become ill. If the employer receives notification that an employee has an infection acquired



as a result of a workplace exposure, the illness should be considered to be an occupational illness and a WSIB claim should be submitted. The reporting requirements to the Ministry of Labour must be completed within four calendar days. Laboratory confirmation is not required. Prompt identification of these outbreaks/illnesses should result in an investigation by the joint health and safety committee or health and safety representative to decrease the risk of further transmission.

COMMUNICABLE DISEASES: REQUIREMENTS TO REPORT TO PUBLIC HEALTH

Under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, school administrators must report to the local Medical Officer of Health any person who, in their opinion, is or may be infected with a designated reportable communicable disease. This ensures prompt and complete follow-up of suspected cases.

A complete list of reportable diseases is available on the website of your local Public Health Unit. Public Health will conduct surveillance activities when required and assist schools in the management of communicable disease outbreaks.

THE COMMUNICABLE DISEASE REPORT

Principals are required to submit a report to Public Health containing the following information:

- Name of the school, contact person and telephone number
- Student's name, sex, birth date and telephone number
- Name of the disease

FOR MORE INFORMATION

To learn more, visit www.pshsa.ca or contact a PSHSA consultant from <https://www.pshsa.ca/consulting/find-a-consultant>

Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations may be accessed from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90o01_e.htm

A listing of the Ministry of Labour offices may be found at http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/about/reg_oices.php

Health Protection and Promotion Act may be accessed from http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/html/statutes/english/elaws_statutes_90h07_e.htm

Contact your local Public Health Unit. For a list of locations go to <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx>