

Certification Training: The Process

The Law

Most workplaces employing 20 or more workers or using a designated substance must have a joint health and safety committee (JHSC). Ontario health and safety law also requires at least two members of this JHSC to be certified—one who represents workers and another who represents the employer. This said many Ontario employers chose to certify all JHSC members, helping to prepare each member for their significant legal obligations.

To become certified and maintain certification, a JHSC member must complete:

1. Basic Certification Training (Part 1)
2. Workplace-Specific Hazard Certification Training (Part 2), and
3. Certification Refresher Training.

These training programs must be approved by the Ministry of Labour (MOL) and delivered by an approved provider, such as the Workers Health & Safety Centre (WHSC). Employers are required to carry out and pay for this training.

Basic Certification Training (Part 1)

Basic Certification Training is applicable to any provincially-regulated workplace. The program must give participants an understanding of occupational health and safety legislation, including rights and responsibilities of the workplace parties and certified reps in particular. Equally important, program participants must learn about general hazard control and prevention theory and best practices for administering workplace health and safety policies and programs.

The law mandates this program to be a minimum of three days. Believing this minimum insufficient to ensure all essential learning objectives are met, the WHSC offers a more comprehensive, MOL-approved *Basic Certification Training* program over four days.

Workplace-Specific Hazard Certification Training (Part 2)

This training must address at least six hazards that are relevant to the JHSC member's workplace. The hazards to be addressed by *Certification Part 2 Training* should be discussed and selected by the JHSC.

Certification Part 2 Training is also applicable to all provincially-regulated workplaces. Though, compliance options exist. Workplaces can choose to customize their program or enroll in sector programs. The WHSC offers more than 60 WHSC hazard-specific modules for a more customized approach. Each is designed to build on the knowledge gained in *Basic Certification Training* and apply it to specific workplace hazards with emphasis on measures to eliminate or control exposures. As a second option to ease compliance, workplaces can enroll in one of several WHSC sector programs. These programs address hazards common to the majority of workplaces in a given sector.

Regardless, *Certification Part 2 Training* must be a minimum of two days in duration. In most cases, it must be taken within six months of completing *Basic Certification Training*.

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Certification Refresher Training

To maintain certification status, a JHSC member must complete *Certification Refresher Training* every three years. This training must involve a review of key concepts from Part 1 and Part 2 Certification Training, updates to legislation, standards, codes of practice and occupational health and safety best practices. The training must also give certified members an opportunity to share and discuss best practices and current occupational health and safety issues.

Certification Refresher Training must be at least one day in duration. WHSC offered this kind of training long before it became law, as training renewal is critical to the success of any health and safety representative. Our program is currently undergoing an update and will be submitted to the MOL for approval in short order.

New Standards and their application

The minimum program standards set out above, as well as new standards for training providers came into effect March 1, 2016. Of note, *Basic Certification Training* taken before this date is still valid toward completing the certification process. Workplaces still needing to complete Part 2 should take steps to gain compliance now.

Testing and evaluation

WHSC does not advocate evaluating learning by written, exam-style tests as it creates artificial barriers for workers who perform poorly in these tests or have language or literacy challenges. However, at the end of *Basic Certification Training* participants must complete a standardized test, required and created by the MOL. WHSC instructors must administer this test – including grading it.

However, our goal is to ensure every participant gains the knowledge and skills they need to meet their extensive obligations as certified members of JHSCs. For those who do not pass the test, WHSC instructors will offer additional assistance to help develop the knowledge assessed by the test.

For *Certification Part 2* and *Refresher Training*, the WHSC is permitted to use activity-based evaluation techniques, so central to effective adult education. Highly trained WHSC instructors evaluate participant learning throughout these programs. As participants engage in workgroup activities and general discussions, the instructor observes and can take steps to ensure participants come away with the requisite knowledge and skills. Thus, WHSC program participants avoid the stress and learning hurdles presented by traditional testing methods.

Administration of Certification paperwork

WHSC instructors ensure participants complete the WHSC student form and the MOL's class list form. Participants will also be offered the MOL's personal information disclosure form. Those who complete and submit this form are giving authority to the MOL to inform an employer or prospective employer if she or he holds a valid JHSC Certification card. The WHSC representative co-ordinating the training ensures the MOL receive these forms in a timely manner.

Within seven days of course completion, the WHSC submits a record of training electronically to the MOL along with other forms completed in-class. As such, there are no administrative requirements for employers or workers who take *WHSC Certification Training*.

Records of training cards and transcripts

Upon successful completion of WHSC *Basic Certification*, *Certification Part 2* and *Certification Refresher Training*, WHSC issues a record of training card to the participant and submits his or her information to the MOL. The MOL will also forward a record of training card. The WHSC training card is valid to prove compliance.

We can help

To learn more about WHSC *Certification Training* call 1-888-869-7950 and ask to speak to a WHSC training service representative.

Also see WHSC product sheets *Certification Part I* and *Certification Part II* for additional details.