

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 choose 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 I)
2. *Workplace-Specific Hazard Certification Training* (Part II), and
3. *Certification Refresher Training*.

These training programs must be approved by the Ministry of Labour (MOL) and delivered by an approved provider. The Workers Health and Safety Centre (WHSC) *Part I*, *Part II* and *Certification Refresher Training* are MOL-approved and the WHSC is an approved training provider. Employers are required to carry out and pay for this training.

Basic Certification Training (Part I)

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 delivered over four days.

Workplace-Specific Hazard Certification Training (Part II)

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 II Training* should be discussed and selected by the JHSC.

Certification Part II 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 II 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

Ontario health and safety law mandates *Certification Refresher Training* be a minimum of one day in duration. The program must include a review of key concepts from Certification Training including specific duties and responsibilities of JHSC members, employers and other workplace parties as set out in the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA). The program must also look at new or amended health and safety laws, codes of practice and occupational health and safety best practices. WHSC *Certification Refresher Training* goes further, also reviewing current and emerging issues, research, prevention resources and recent legal decisions. The program further affords participants the opportunity to share and discuss current or emerging issues, plus best practices for hazard elimination and control.

To maintain certification status, a certified member of a JHSC in Ontario must complete a MOL-approved Refresher program within three years of completing *Certification Part II* and every three years thereafter. Like all Certification training, this Refresher program must be delivered by an MOL-approved provider. And just as WHSC is an approved provider of Part I and Part II Certification programs, WHSC is also approved to deliver *Certification Refresher Training*.

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 II 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. Regardless, our goal is to ensure every participant gains the knowledge and skills they need to meet their extensive obligations as certified members.

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 II* 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 II* 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*, *Certification Part II* and *Certification Refresher Training* for additional information.