

WHSC Labour Education Programs

At the Workers Health & Safety Centre (WHSC) we believe with every WHSC-trained worker our movement for change grows. As the only labour-endorsed health and safety training delivery organization in Ontario, the WHSC is dedicated to supporting the prevention efforts of workers and their representatives. The following WHSC programs aim to build competent and confident worker health and safety activists. Our movement for change: Let's work for it *and* train for it.

Level I: Program Duration: 30 hours
Occupational Health & Safety Training

This flagship program is essential training for worker health and safety activists who want to exercise fully their legal rights and responsibilities and then go one step further to expand their skills to negotiate workplace improvements. The program covers health and safety legislation for every jurisdiction in Canada. It utilizes the best of adult education techniques with a greater emphasis on participant-centred activities. It introduces the need for continuous bargaining, namely every conversation or meeting with the employer must be viewed as an opportunity to meet the union's health and safety goals. Finally, the program debunks the myth of the careless worker and the latest expression of this myth, Behaviour Based Safety programs, by focusing on a hazard-based approach to healthy and safe workplaces. The *Level I* program consists of seven compulsory, plus three elective modules, each three hours in length.

Level II: Law Program Duration: 30 hours
(Ontario & Federal) — Pre-requisite: Level I

Drawing on lessons from past successes, *Level II Law* participants learn how workers won health and safety rights and what needs to be done in the workplace to enforce these rights. To this end, participants take an in-depth look at how occupational health and safety laws and regulations have been interpreted and used to safeguard worker health and safety. They also review inadequacies of the law and its enforcement and formulate strategies to overcome them. Further, participants come away

with the knowledge necessary to help support union efforts for improvements to health and safety law.

Level II: Committees Program Duration: 30 hours
(Ontario & Federal) — Pre-requisite: Level I

Graduates of WHSC *Level II Committees* programs will be better equipped to ensure meaningful worker participation *and* full employer responsibility for the identification and elimination of workplace hazards. Building on knowledge gained in the WHSC's *Level I* labour education program this advanced level training program is jam-packed with participant discussions, skill developing exercises and practical tools worker JHSC members need to carry out their considerable roles and responsibilities. Among other important skills participants are equipped with those necessary to perform effective workplace inspections along with incident and disease investigations.

Making the Link Program Duration: 12 hours
Between Occupational Disease & the Workplace

This program opens with a discussion of the epidemic of work-related cancers and other diseases. It also looks at human, financial and social costs of these devastating diseases. But rather than immobilizing participants with the magnitude of the problem, this program inspires activists, giving them the knowledge and tools to identify and prevent occupational disease. The science of epidemiology and environmental monitoring and their limits, body mapping exercises, physical inspections, job hazard



analysis, worker surveys and exposure profiles are all covered using a host of participant-centred techniques designed to return participants to their workplaces ready to combat this challenging issue.

Occupational Hygiene Monitoring

Program Duration: 6 hours

Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act* allows for a designated worker member of a joint health and safety committee, or a worker representative in smaller workplaces, to be present at the beginning of hygiene monitoring/testing. This program will help these individuals and others who may be involved in the monitoring/testing of toxic substances, radiation, temperature and other hazards. Specifically, participants will explore the need to develop and implement an effective sampling strategy that will help overcome potential testing limitations and errors that can mask harmful exposures. Discussion will also cover some of the more commonly used monitoring/testing devices.

Coordinators Training Program Duration: 60 hours **Pre-requisite: Instructor Training**

This advanced-level training program is designed to provide worker representatives with the knowledge and skills necessary to secure and co-ordinate health and safety training for multiple workplaces and committees. Participants discuss the arguments for employer-paid training, including mandatory and due diligence training requirements. Participants also return to the workplace able to develop and implement a plan for multi-site training, taking into account scheduling, budgeting, and the preparation and presentation of proposals for training.

Appeals (Federal) Program Duration: 6 hours

The worker's right to refuse unsafe work or lodge a complaint with the Ministry of Labour provide essential 'back stops' for workplace health and safety. But when a Ministry of Labour inspector writes a dissatisfying order or fails to write one at all, workers have the right to an appeal. Trouble is the appeal process can seem daunting. So this program seeks to demystify it. Participants will review procedures, forms, and time frames relevant to the appeal process. Emphasis is placed on specific tasks required to prepare for an appeal and the actual hearing, including gathering research, presenting a case and examining witnesses. Participants will

also discuss the steps involved in appealing employer reprisals for workers exercising their health and safety rights.

Appeals (Provincial)

Program Duration: 6 hours

Demystifying the appeals process is but one of the goals of this key labour education program. Essentially though, the program emphasizes the specific workplace roles for worker joint health and safety committee members, worker health and safety representatives and other labour leaders in determining if a Ministry of Labour (MOL) inspector's order or decision not to issue an order need to be revisited for the purpose of an appeal. If this determination is reached, these key workplace representatives can then turn to their local or national union for the experienced representation needed to handle the intricacies of appealing an order or decision to the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB). Content to achieve these objectives includes an in-depth review of MOL field visit reports and inspector orders, the appeals process, legal terminology and significant case law.

Coroner's Inquest

Program Duration: 17.5 hours

This program will help prepare workers, their representatives, family members and others who may be required to participate in a coroner's inquest. It provides an introduction to Ontario's coroner system and the *Coroner's Act*, including technical terms and procedures. Participants will discuss issues involved in preparing for a coroner's inquest such as gathering information from incident investigation reports and witnesses. Attention is focused on the roles of individuals, questioning witnesses and presenting recommendations. Participants also explore strategies they can use to lobby for an inquest or to obtain standing. A mock inquest aids in the learning process.

Stress Awareness

Program Duration: 30 hours

This program offers a comprehensive look at how stress impacts both physical and mental health. The "fight or flight" response experienced when faced with stressful situations is explored focusing on specific health effects to various systems and organs of the body. Participants will also acquire the knowledge they need to play a proactive role in identifying the three categories of stressors — physical, organizational and social. Although coping methods are discussed, emphasis is placed on strategies for eliminating or changing stressful working conditions.