



Canadian Association of University Teachers
Association canadienne des professeurs et professeurs d'université

Occupational Health and Safety Report

Date: October 23, 2020

To: CAUT November Council

From: Laura Lozanski, Occupational Health and Safety Officer

Health and Safety Training During COVID

CAUT will be providing occupational workplace health and safety training virtually during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Workers Health and Safety Centre (WHSC) is now able to provide some modules through Zoom in two-hour or three-hour modules.

The following modules are currently available by virtual training:

Workplace Inspections (including COVID) – 3 hours
GHS/WHMIS – 3 hours
COVID-19 – 3 hours
Chemicals – 3 hours

You will need to be able to host Zoom on your computer as there are power point and video components to the training sessions.

* Please note that you must be able to use video and audio in the sessions. Video must be turned on for the duration of the training session. The instructor must be able to verify you by video in order to qualify for course recognition. If you have internet access issues, please contact me directly at the time of registration so that we can discuss potential alternatives. Virtual sessions will allow CAUT academic staff association representatives and their members to participate collectively in national training sessions, as well as being able to participate in virtual events planned locally at their individual campuses.

Please contact Laura Lozanski at lozanski@caut.ca to request a training session on these and other workplace hazards.

COVID Resources

As the COVID pandemic continues, Occupational and Industrial Hygienists are at the forefront of cutting-edge research and tools on how to assess and contain exposure to COVID, and the role and effectiveness of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Workplace Health Without Borders (WHWB) is a volunteer organization of international hygienists and researchers collaborating with health and safety activists on best standards and practices for workplace health and safety. It is based in

Canada, with the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers as a primary partner. Their work during the pandemic is focusing on COVID assessment and containment: <https://www.whwb.org/>. There is a link to COVID resources at the bottom of the home webpage.

The Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW) has a webpage dedicated to workplace COVID tools - <https://www.ohcow.on.ca/covid-19.html> - and has a YouTube video on working from home that is easily shareable: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iSSOpY2Ht7s>. OHCOW has a tool for workplace ventilation that workers and JHSC committees can use to review and enhance ventilation capabilities: <https://www.ohcow.on.ca/ventilation-checklist-2.html>.

The Workers Health & Safety Centre (WHSC) also has training, tools and information on COVID: <https://www.whsc.on.ca/Resources/Publications/COVID-19-Resources>. These resources include workplace inspections during COVID.

The American Industrial Hygienist Association (AIHA) is a participating partner with Workplace Health Without Borders (WHWB), and have developed a series of returning to work safely documents and protocols.

The AIHA is a resource for occupational and industrial hygienists in Canada, and is a reputable and reliable source for occupational hygiene. All of the principles in their resources are transferable except for references to specific US legislation or regulations. These documents and principles will be helpful for the practical side of implementing local, provincial and federal requirements for containing COVID-19 in your region.

https://www.aiha.org/public-resources/consumer-resources/coronavirus_outbreak_resources/aiha-covid-19-pandemic-efforts/free-covid-19-public-resources
<https://www.backtoworksafely.org/>

Accommodation for academic staff

Workplace accommodations are becoming challenging during the COVID pandemic. Workers are experiencing lack of support or challenges by the employer as to the legitimacy of their needs. Some of those needs have shifted to working from home, particular accommodations like ergonomics, equipment, mental health support, the ability to balance work and home requirements, particular support for medical conditions, transportation issues, etc.

The Centre for Research on Work Disability Policy (CRWDP) has presented several research projects on disability and accommodation during COVID, and most recently, presented on how transformational leadership in the workplace is an excellent prevention tool in assisting workers managing chronic pain. A Canadian Survey on Disability (Statistics Canada, 2017) reports that the prevalence of chronic pain disability is 14% among working age adults in Canada. The current study examines the role of transformational leadership regulating the relationship between chronic pain and work disability. Transformational leaders pay attention to the individual needs of their employees and can attend more specifically to the unique needs of their employees who suffer from chronic pain and mental health problems associated with chronic pain. More information can be found here www.crdwp.ca.

Academic association staff and elected representatives are finding this work challenging but are finding appropriate and creative solutions by working with CAUT's collective bargaining and health and safety staff. It is important that academic staff associations ensure training and support for their workplace representatives so that they can represent and support their members.

Control Banding – an effective tool to manage hazard risks

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) defines control banding as follows:

Control banding is an assessment method that can be used to manage workplace risks. It is a process that matches, for example, a control measure (e.g., ventilation, engineering controls, containment, etc.) to a range or "band" of hazards (e.g., skin/eye irritation, very toxic, carcinogenic, etc.). The control banding method also groups chemicals according to similar physical or chemical characteristics, how the chemical will be handled or processed, and what the anticipated exposure is expected to be. The method then determines a set of controls chosen to help prevent harm to workers.

In general, bands represent:

- health hazards or risk (e.g., skin/eye irritation, carcinogenic, etc.),
- exposure potentials (e.g., quantity used, or characteristics of the products),
- control measures (e.g., types of ventilation, engineering controls, containment, etc.).

https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/chemicals/control_banding.html

The Lawrence Livermore National Library (LLNL) collaborates with OHCOW, and focuses on research and technical assistance to develop control banding for all workplace hazards:

Control banding (CB) strategies offer simplified solutions for controlling worker exposures to constituents that are found in the workplace in the absence of firm toxicological and exposure data. These strategies may be particularly useful in nanotechnology applications, considering the overwhelming level of uncertainty over what nanomaterials present as potential work-related health risks and how these risks can be assessed and managed appropriately.

<https://controlbanding.llnl.gov/>

Electromagnetic Field Exposures

CAUT is participating with the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS), academic researchers, labour, healthcare professionals, ministry representatives and others with the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW) new EMF and Health Network to develop strategies and educational components on the issue of electromagnetic (EMF) exposure, particularly in the workplace.

Dr. Magda Havas, Professor Emerita at Trent University, is collaborating with OHCOW on developing EMF tools, is an environmental toxicologist researching the effects of chemical and electromagnetic pollutants on humans and other species. She is currently researching electrosmog, electromagnetic hygiene, electrohypersensitivity and electrotherapeutics. For more information visit her websites: www.magdahavas.com and www.youtube.com/magdahavas.

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/q5uxm64pswy9552/EMF%20Health%20Network%20final.wmv?dl=0>
<https://youtu.be/kfIccyOrYVI>

Sheena Symington is the Director of the Electro Sensitive Society which assists people who are Electro Hyper Sensitive (EHS). Sheena works as a Research Associate with Dr. Havas (www.theroselab.com) and provides information to educate people on how to maintain an electromagnetically clean environment.

These are some links for information for healthcare professionals and accommodating workers with EMF sensitivities at work. A form for Taking an Exposure History that workers can fill out and take to their healthcare provider can be found on this website.

*Please note that the organization does not offer diagnosis or medical support.

<https://www.electrosensitivesociety.com/>

<https://www.electrosensitivesociety.com/information-for-health-care-professionals/>

<https://www.electrosensitivesociety.com/accommodating-ehs/>

Collective agreement language

Academic associations should continue incorporating and enhancing health and safety collective agreement language during the pandemic, to ensure effective workplace health and safety. CAUT has several resources to assist with strengthening and improving health and safety language, particularly during the collective bargaining process. Please contact Laura Lozanski at lozanski@caut.ca for more information.

Canadian Labour Congress

The Canadian Labour Congress' (CLC) Health, Safety and Environment Committee will be meeting in the next few weeks.

Joint Health and Safety Committee Training

Academic staff associations should ensure they have representatives elected or appointed to their workplace joint health and safety committees (JHSC). JHSC training needs should be reviewed on an on-going basis to ensure compliance with provincial, federal and other training requirements. JHSC representatives need a sound knowledge base in health and safety to effectively carry out their legislated duties. Contact CAUT's Occupational Health and Safety Officer at lozanski@caut.ca for course information and to schedule training dates.

General health and safety training

CAUT offers training on many hazard-specific health and safety issues, such as:

- Asbestos
- Mental Health and Workplace Stress
- Lockdown: a crisis prevention plan
- Workplace Inspections
- Indoor Air Quality
- Ergonomics
- Violence

These and many more are three-hour modules and can be delivered as stand-alone sessions or as an addition to the Joint Health and Safety Committee Training module.

Upcoming health and safety training

Training is now resuming using virtual sessions. Please contact Laura Lozanski at lozanski@caut.ca to book a session.