AgSafe ALBERTA



ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND OHS ESSENTIALS

A General Safety Introduction

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AgSafe Alberta is the health and safety association for farms and ranches in our province.

As a farmer-led, non-profit organization, we work alongside agricultural producers to provide practical health and safety tools, resources, and support that fits the realities of farming and ranching in Alberta. Our Board of Directors is made up of farmers and ranchers who understand the unique challenges and opportunities that come with working in agriculture.

We believe that everyone deserves to go home safe at the end of the day. That's why we provide free and low-cost training, educational resources, guides, tools, and support designed specifically for Alberta's agricultural industry.

Our goal is simple: safer farms and ranches across Alberta. By working together with producers, commodity groups, and industry partners, we help create safer places to live, work, and grow up on. We make farm safety practical, approachable, and achievable so Alberta agriculture can continue to thrive for generations to come.





Foreword

Welcome to AgSafe Alberta's ***Roles, Responsibilities and OHS Essentials: A General Safety Introduction.***

This general introduction is for farm employers, supervisors, and workers.

It explains what Alberta occupational health and safety (OHS) laws mean on farms, how they apply to you, and what your rights and responsibilities are. It also covers other important health and safety information you need to know.



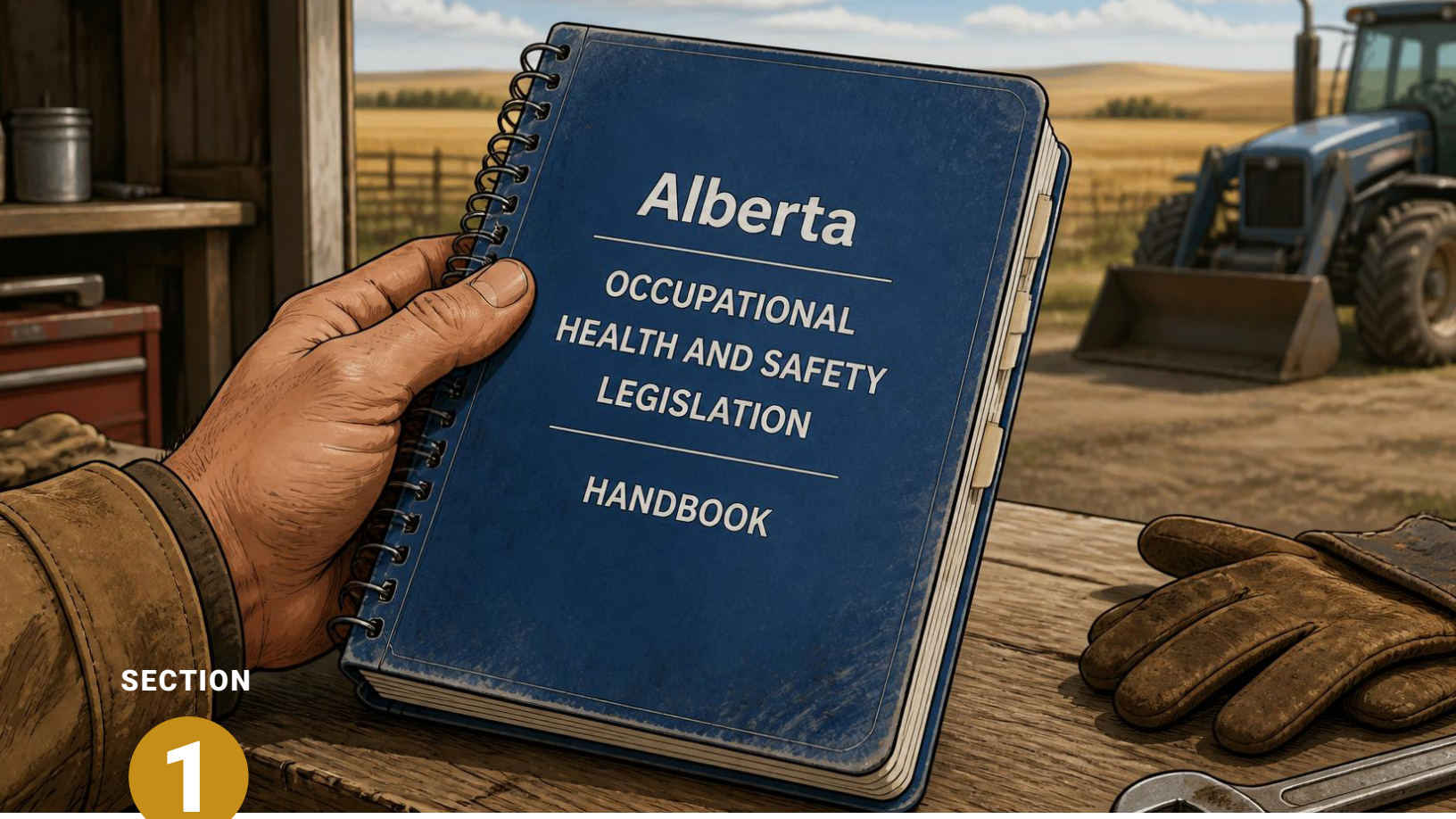
Employer



Supervisor



Worker



SECTION

1

Understanding OHS on Farms & "Basic Safety"

INTRODUCTION

This part will introduce you to important health and safety concepts. It will also help you to better understand how occupational health and safety (OHS) laws apply to farms and the people living and working on them.

What You Will Learn

- How Alberta's OHS laws apply to farms and ranches.
- The difference between farming and non-farming activities under OHS laws.
- Why “basic safety” is not as simple as it sounds.
- What the Internal Responsibility System (IRS) is and how everyone on the farm is responsible for safety.
- What “reasonably practicable” means and how it affects safety decisions.
- How the OHS Code can indirectly inform safety practices, even when only certain parts directly apply to farms.

- Common oversimplifications about farm safety and what you should understand instead.
- Possible legal and financial consequences of not taking reasonable safety measures or meeting your responsibilities.

OHS ON FARMS & "BASIC SAFETY"

What is Farming?

Alberta OHS laws define farming and ranching differently than many people think.

At the time this resource was published, only the Alberta OHS Act and Part 13 of the OHS Code directly apply to farms and ranches in Alberta.

Farming and ranching operations are defined in OHS law as:

- Producing crops, including fruits and vegetables, through land cultivation
- Raising and maintaining animals or birds
- Keeping bees

(Alberta OHS Code, 2025, s.1.1(1))

What Are Not Farming Operations or Activities?

Alberta OHS laws make it clear that the following are not farming operations:

- Greenhouses
- Mushroom farms
- Nurseries
- Sod farms
- Landscaping
- The raising or boarding of pets
- Activities that involve the processing of food or other products from farming operations

(Alberta OHS Code, 2025, s.1.1(2))

Why OHS Laws Exist

Part 2 of the OHS Act explains why OHS laws exist. Their purpose is not to create paperwork or make life difficult. Their purpose is to protect people!

Take a moment to think about the people you care about.

Some of them likely work off the farm, for businesses in other industries. Would it ever be okay for them to be injured or killed at work when the incident could have easily been prevented?

Of course not!

In the same way, it would never be okay for someone working on a farm to be injured or killed in an incident that could have easily been prevented.

The OHS Act was created to ensure Alberta workers:

- Are protected from physical and mental harm at work or, in more legal terms, provided with a high degree of physical, psychological, and social wellbeing.
- Are protected from things that could result in incidents, injury, illness, disease or death.
- Have legal rights that employers cannot take away and must respect.

What is Reasonably Practicable?

Alberta OHS laws set minimum health and safety standards; however, farm employers are still expected to take all reasonable steps to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of workers and others who may be affected by the farm's operations.

The term "reasonably practicable" is based on the reasonable person test. In simple terms, it asks: What would most reasonable people do in similar circumstances?

(Government of Alberta, 2017, p. 1)

To decide what is reasonably practicable, you need to consider:

- How likely it is that someone could get hurt.
- How serious the injury or harm could be.
- What is known about the hazard and how to control it.
- Whether there are suitable ways to reduce or remove the risk.
- The cost of those controls and whether the cost is reasonable compared to the risk.

(Adapted from Safe Work Australia, n.d., p.1)



DID YOU KNOW?

The OHS Act and Code are meant to keep the places where people work healthy and safe—and this includes farms.

- Alberta OHS Act: The Alberta OHS Act is the overarching, or main law that assigns obligations, responsibilities, rights, and duties to individuals and organizations.
- Alberta OHS Code: The Alberta OHS Code supports the OHS Act by providing minimum health and safety standards, or rules, in Alberta's workplaces (Government of Alberta, n.d.).

OHS ENFORCEMENT MEASURES

OHS Officers have the authority to do something when they see OHS laws that exist to protect people being broken.

You will learn more about OHS Officers later. For now, remember that when OHS laws are broken, an OHS Officer can:

- Issue orders (e.g., Compliance Orders, Stop Work Orders, Stop Use Orders, and Director's Orders).
- Write tickets.
- Issue administrative penalties.

OHS Orders

The best way to avoid OHS orders is to identify hazards, follow safe work practices, and address problems before they lead to a complaint, injury, or incident. When an Alberta OHS Officer visits a work site, they may use different enforcement or investigative powers depending on the situation. These may include the following:

Issue Compliance Orders
Think about how busy a farm can be. Now imagine receiving a compliance order that requires significant safety improvements within a set deadline. Time, money, and labour may need to be redirected from production activities to meet the requirements.

Issue Stop Use Orders
Imagine not being able to use a critical piece of equipment during a busy season. If a stop use order is issued, the equipment cannot be used until the identified safety concerns have been addressed.

Issue Stop Work Orders
A stop work order can bring some or all work activities to a halt until safety concerns are corrected. Delays like this can affect production schedules, deadlines, and farm operations.

Issue Director's Orders
What a director's order looks like and what must be done can vary depending on the farm's situation.

Seize Equipment
As part of an incident investigation, Alberta OHS may seize equipment. In some cases, this can take up to two years. Imagine continuing to make loan payments on a piece of equipment you cannot use. During the investigation, equipment may also need to be disassembled for examination and may not be returned in the same condition.

Penalties and Fines Can Be Costly

Most people are not familiar with OHS fines and penalties. These points do not cover every possible fine or penalty, but they will help you understand some of the financial costs that can result from not following health and safety requirements.

- Anyone found guilty of a first-time OHS offence may be fined up to $500,000, plus up to an additional $30,000 for each day the offence continues after the first day or up to six months in prison—or a combination of both.
- Anyone found guilty of a second or later OHS offence may be fined up to $1,000,000, plus up to an additional $60,000 for each part day or full day the offence continues after the first day or up to 12 months in prison—or a combination of both.
- Administrative penalties can be as high as $10,000 per day per OHS rule being broken.

You can read more about this in section 48(1) of the Alberta OHS Act.

DID YOU KNOW?

You can see who has been convicted under Alberta OHS laws, along with the penalties and fines that resulted, on the Government of Alberta's Convictions Under OHS Legislation webpage: https://www.alberta.ca/convictions-under-ohs-legislation .

The Criminal Code & The Legal Duty

At the federal level, section 217.1 of Canada's Criminal Code creates a legal responsibility for workplace health and safety. It also allows for serious criminal penalties when unsafe work practices cause someone to be injured or killed.

This section of the Criminal Code applies to anyone who ***directs*** the work of others, including businesses and the people who work on their behalf.

Section 217.1 says that anyone who directs another person's work has a legal responsibility to take reasonable steps to prevent injury to that person and anyone else who could be affected by the work.

The Criminal Code also allows organizations and individuals to face criminal charges when workplace safety failures happen. This includes cases involving criminal negligence (i.e., a reckless disregard for the safety of others) and other criminal offences.

UNDERSTANDING COMMON OHS OVERSIMPLIFICATIONS

Some information is often oversimplified, especially information about how Alberta OHS laws apply to farms and what those laws mean.

As a result, people may think they understand the requirements and are doing the right things when they are not. This can create risks for both workers and the farm.

At the time of publication, only the Alberta OHS Act and Part 13 of the OHS Code directly apply to Alberta farms and ranches.

What this means is that to a degree, the rest of the OHS Code indirectly applies to farms and ranches.

You are likely thinking "but that's not true, the Government of Alberta website even states that farms and ranches are only responsible for basic safety…"

Unfortunately, it is not as simple or clear as you might think, so let's take a moment to understand this better.

Oversimplification #1: "I can copy hazard assessments provided by my industry group or from a friend with a similar operation."

Hazard assessments are the foundation of workplace safety. Each farm needs to complete and document its own hazard assessments, based on the work it does and the conditions on the farm, rather than relying only on generic templates from other organizations.

When completed properly, hazard assessments identify hazards that could cause injury or harm. They also help the farm put controls in place to remove hazards completely or reduce the risk to a reasonable level. This helps prevent injuries and deaths and shows that the farm took reasonable steps to keep workers safe.



IMPORTANT

If an OHS Officer comes to the farm following a serious incident and performs their own hazard assessment, they will identify any unsafe conditions, as well as what was—or was not—done to control the conditions.

If the Officer determines that the farm failed to identify a hazard it should have, or failed to do enough to control it, enforcement action may follow—some of which can have serious consequences.

Oversimplification #2: "If a farm hires workers who aren't family members, it must follow generally acceptable industry practices, basic safety standards, and apply general health and safety principles."

When it comes to laws, definitions matter.

The phrase "reasonably practicable" is written directly into the OHS Act. However, terms such as "generally acceptable standards" and "general health and safety principles" are not.

The OHS Act also does not define what "basic safety standards" are, and there does not appear to be a clear written explanation of what Alberta OHS considers those standards to be.

These are just more reasons why it is important to do ***everything reasonably practicable*** to protect the health, safety, and wellbeing of the people working on the farm.

Oversimplification #3: "OHS rules only apply to a farm if a waged, non-family worker is present and then only to those individuals."

Don't let this wording confuse you. Even if you are a family member, such as the farm owner's child or sibling, you may still be considered a supervisor or another work site party under the OHS Act when workers are present.

No matter what your role is on the farm, when workers are present you must work safely and help protect the health and safety of others at or near the work site.

For example:

- You can't cause or participate in harassment or violence.
- You can't do things that endanger others, such as showing up to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol or operating machinery in a dangerous way.

(Adapted from Government of Alberta, n.d.)

What Everyone Needs to Know

In its 2024 guide, *Health and Safety on Alberta Farms and Ranches*, the Alberta Government explains that unpaid workers or family members on farming and ranching operations are generally not considered "workers" under Alberta's OHS legislation. This means that in some ways, legislation applies to them differently than it applies to workers in other industries.

 It also says there is one very important exception:

Unpaid and family workers are considered workers for the purposes of sections 5(1)(a) and (b) of the OHS Act. These sections set out health and safety obligations that all workers must follow (Government of Alberta, 2024, p. 7).

Unpaid and family members are not typically considered workers under Alberta OHS legislation. However, unpaid and family workers must still follow certain worker health and safety responsibilities under the OHS Act. This means they are expected to protect their own health and safety and avoid putting others at risk.



SECTION

2

Safe & Respectful Workplaces

INTRODUCTION

This part introduces important OHS topics that everyone on the farm should understand. From this point forward, the term “OHS legislation” will be used in place of “OHS laws.”

What You Will Learn

- What competence really means.
- What the basic worker rights are and what they mean.
- What harassment and violence hazards are.
- When and how concerns or incidents may be reported to Alberta OHS.
- What cooperating with an OHS Officer can look like.

WHY COMPETENCE IS IMPORTANT

If someone is not competent, they may not recognize hazards or understand the safest way to do the work. This can put them and others at risk of injury or worse!

No matter what role someone has on the farm, they need to be competent. Competence is also an important word that is defined in Alberta OHS legislation.

Understanding Competence

Competence means that a person can actually perform a job or task safely, effectively, and properly. A competent person can be thought of as someone who is adequately qualified, suitably trained, has the necessary attitude, and has enough experience to safely perform work without supervision or with only a small amount of supervision.

Here, we will look at other terms that relate to competence in order to understand it better.

- **Qualified**
  Qualified means that someone meets the requirements to do the job or task on paper. Not all roles or jobs will require qualifications. Qualifications may include certificates, credentials, or the completion of a course. Qualifications alone do not make someone competent.
- **Trained**
  Training is the process where someone gains the knowledge and skills to do their job safely and well. This means a one-day powered mobile equipment course alone will not make someone adequately trained or competent to operate a piece of equipment.
- **Knowledge**
  Knowledge is what a person knows and understands about a job, task, or situation. Knowledge is gained from learning, training, and experience.
- **Experience**
  Experience can be thought of as both:
  - *Applying* training, knowledge, and skills in real-world situations; and
  - *Gaining* additional knowledge and skills through doing the work repeatedly over time.
- **Ability**
  Ability means someone is able to do something because they can apply their skills, knowledge, physical capability, mental capability, training, and experience to perform a job or task well.
- **Attitude**
  Attitude is a person's mindset and how they approach things, like their work. Attitude is reflected in things like if they are willing to learn and get better, to follow safety rules, to take responsibility for their actions, and to work well with others.

IMPORTANT

A person may have the required qualifications—such as certificates, credentials or completion of a course—but competency requires the appropriate combination of knowledge, training, experience, skills, ability and attitude to perform the work safely and effectively.

BASIC WORKER RIGHTS

Alberta OHS legislation gives workers legal rights. It is important that everyone, including employers, supervisors, and workers, understands these rights.

When a farm hires a worker, it is the farm's responsibility to make sure the worker understands their rights and responsibilities under OHS legislation. This responsibility does not belong to the worker's school, and workers should not be left to learn these things on their own.

Basic Worker Rights & Ability

1. The right to be informed of work site hazards and the ways to eliminate or control those hazards.

Before a worker starts work, the farm must ensure that the worker is told about any hazards, conditions, or work activities that could lead to an injury, illness, or incident.

Workers also need to know what is being done to eliminate hazards or reduce the risk so the work can be done safely.

This is achieved through a combination of things like:

- Training
- Safe work procedures and safe work practices
- Hazard and risk assessments
- Pre-job meetings
- Tailgate meetings

2. The right to meaningful participation in health and safety activities relating to their work and work site, including the ability to communicate health and safety concerns.

Meaningful participation is an important part of this right. It means that workers need to be involved in a way that matters and makes a difference.

It is more than just attending a meeting or checking a box on a form. It includes:

- **Having a voice that is heard.** Workers can share concerns, ideas, and suggestions, and others listen to and seriously consider what they have to say.
- **Being part of the decision-making process.** This does not mean workers make the final decision. It means they have an opportunity to be involved in discussions about issues that affect their work, health, and safety.

3. The right to refuse dangerous work.

This is a very important right, yet it is commonly misunderstood.

We will look at this right in more detail shortly. For now, it is important to understand that workers have the right to refuse dangerous work.

4. **The ability to work without being subject to disciplinary action for exercising a right or fulfilling a duty imposed by this Act, the regulations or the OHS Code.**

This may not be called a right, but it is just as important.

When a worker exercises a health and safety right, such as reporting a safety concern or refusing dangerous work, the employer cannot punish, discipline, or treat them unfairly for doing so.

THE RIGHT TO REFUSE DANGEROUS WORK: WHAT IT MEANS

The Alberta OHS Act includes a section called *Dangerous Work and Disciplinary Action*. This section explains a worker's right to refuse dangerous work and the process that must be followed when they exercise that right.

A worker has the right to refuse work or certain work if they reasonably believe that:

- There is an ***undue hazard*** at the worksite, or
- The work involves an undue hazard that places the worker's health and safety, or the health and safety of others, at risk.

Recognizing an Undue Hazard

An undue hazard is a hazard that:

- Creates a level of risk that is higher than what would normally be expected for the work.
- Poses a serious and immediate threat to someone's health or safety.

To better understand this concept, let's work through a couple of scenarios.

Scenario #1

A farm worker needs to feed cattle in -30°C weather as part of their daily duties.

- The tractor is in good condition and is parked in a heated shop when it is not in use.
- The worker has appropriate winter clothing.
- During extreme cold, the farm provides more frequent breaks, opportunities to warm up, and regular check-ins to make sure workers are safe.

Question: Given these factors, would it be reasonable for the worker to refuse the work?

Answer: No

Explanation: Based on these factors, the work would not be considered an undue hazard. The risks are normal for the work being performed, appropriate controls are in place, and there is no serious or immediate threat to the worker's health or safety. Therefore, it would likely not be reasonable for the worker to refuse the work.

Scenario #2

It is a busy harvest season. One of the farm's regularly used grain trucks has broken down, so an older, rarely used grain truck will be used instead.

During a pre-use inspection, the worker assigned to drive the truck discovers that the brakes are not functioning properly. As a result, the worker may not be able to slow down or stop the truck safely when needed.

When the worker raised concerns about the truck, the supervisor told him it was the only truck available and that he had to drive it.

Question: Given these factors, would it be reasonable for the worker to refuse the work?

Answer: Yes

Explanation: Based on these factors, there is an undue hazard. The truck's faulty brakes create a hazard that is unusual and unacceptable for the work being performed. This situation poses a serious and immediate threat to the safety of the worker and others who could be affected.

THE DANGEROUS WORK REFUSAL PROCESS

Here is a brief breakdown of the dangerous work refusal process.

A Worker Exercises Their Right to Refuse Dangerous Work

1. When a worker refuses dangerous work, they must immediately report it to their employer, supervisor, or another person chosen by the employer. They must also explain why they believe the work is dangerous.
2. Once the employer receives the report, they must notify the health and safety committee or health and safety representative, if one exists, as soon as possible.
3. The employer may require the worker who made a report to remain at the work site. The worker may be temporarily assigned other work that can be done safely while the concern is being addressed.
4. Any temporary work assignment should not result in a loss of pay. If a worker loses pay because they reported or refused dangerous work, it could be considered disciplinary action and that would be against the law.
5. Sometimes the problem can be fixed right away. For example, a faulty tool or piece of equipment may only need to be repaired or replaced.
6. If the hazard cannot be corrected immediately, the employer must continue discussing the issue with the worker and carry out an inspection to decide what should happen next.

When the Undue Hazard Cannot Be Resolved Immediately

1. If the employer cannot correct the undue hazard right away, the employer must:
   a. Talk with the worker who refused the work.
   b. Immediately inspect the reported undue hazard.

2. During the inspection, the employer must take steps to correct the hazard or ensure it is being properly addressed. If the farm has a health and safety committee or health and safety representative, they may also take part in the inspection.

3. After a worker refuses dangerous work, the employer cannot assign the work to another worker until:
   a. The situation has been investigated, and
   b. The employer has determined that the work can be performed safely.

4. In some situations, especially when a hazard is complex, a very detailed investigation may be needed. This helps identify why the hazard exists, what caused it, and what needs to be done to control the hazard and keep workers safe.



RESOURCE

To learn more about investigations, see Module 5: Investigations in the *Alberta FarmSafe Plan* or the AgSafe Alberta FarmSafe Plan Learning Program. Both resources are available free of charge at agsafeab.ca.

Inspection Findings and Next Steps

1. Following an inspection, the farm must create a written report. The report needs to describe the dangerous work refusal, the inspection, the findings, and any corrective actions taken.

2. A copy of the report must be given to the worker who refused the work and to the health and safety committee or representative, if the farm has one.

3. If the worker reviews the report and still believes there is an undue hazard, they have the right to contact Alberta OHS.

When Alberta OHS Is Notified

1. If Alberta OHS has been notified of a dangerous work refusal, the employer cannot simply assign the work to another worker without first providing certain information in writing.

2. The employer must tell the new worker:
    a. That another worker previously refused the work.
    b. Why the work was refused.
    c. Why the employer believes the work does not involve an undue hazard.
3. If Alberta OHS is notified about an undue hazard, an OHS Officer will investigate the situation.
4. The OHS Officer will prepare a written report that explains what was investigated and what was found.
5. A copy of the report will be given to:
    a. The employer
    b. The worker
    c. The health and safety committee or health and safety representative, if there is one.

UNDERSTANDING HARASSMENT & VIOLENCE

It is important that everyone on the farm understands what harassment and violence are.

Three key reasons for this include:

1. **Violence and harassment are workplace safety hazards, not just human resources issues.** Farms need to include these hazards in their hazard assessments. They also need fair and reasonable policies and procedures for investigating and addressing concerns.
2. **Farms have unique workplace relationships and dynamics.** Many farms have owners, family members, supervisors, seasonal workers, young workers, foreign workers, contractors, and the workers of other employers working alongside one another. In some cases, farms may also be going through a transition from one generation to the next, which can be stressful and emotional. Because of these situations, workers may not always be sure what behaviours are acceptable at an agricultural workplace.
3. **It supports the Internal Responsibility System.** It reminds everyone that they are responsible for their own safety and the safety of others—even when there are hazards we don't immediately think of at work.

IMPORTANT

Under Part 1: *General Obligations of the Alberta OHS Act*, violence and harassment are recognized as workplace hazards.

RESOURCE

At the time this was written, Part 27, *Violence and Harassment*, of the Alberta OHS Code does not directly apply to farms and ranches. However, it explains reasonable and practicable steps that farms should take to help prevent and address violence and harassment at work.

WHAT IS HARASSMENT?

TEXTBOOK EXPLANATION	SIMPLE EXPLANATION
Harassment can be a single incident or repeated incidents of unpleasant, unwelcome, or offensive actions, behaviours, comments, or bullying by a person and that person should reasonably know that what they are saying or doing will or could be perceived as insulting, humiliating or harmful to another person's health, safety, and wellbeing.	Harassment can happen one time or many times. Harassment can include actions, behaviours, or comments, that may make someone feel uncomfortable, upset or offended. The person doing it should know that what they say or do could be upsetting, embarrassing, or harmful to the other person's health, safety, or wellbeing.

These harassing actions, behaviours, or comments can be directed at someone due to their:

- Race
- Physical Disability
- Place of origin
- Family status
- Gender expression
- Religious beliefs
- Age
- Marital status
- Gender
- Sexual orientation
- Color
- Ancestry
- Source of income
- Gender identity

Sexual Solicitation

Sexual solicitation is included in the harassment definition.

Sexual solicitation happens when someone offers, promises, or suggests giving another person something of value, such as money, gifts, better work opportunities, or favours, in exchange for sexual activity or contact.

An example of this might be a supervisor telling a worker, "I'll give you extra hours if you go on a date with me."

What Is and Is Not Harassment

As you review these, keep in mind that they are simplified examples, and real-life situations can be more complex than what is presented here.

WHAT IS HARASSMENT	WHAT IS NOT HARASSMENT
• Name-calling or spreading rumours about someone. • Trying to make someone look bad in front of other workers or supervisors. • Leaving someone out of a group on purpose. • Making gestures or saying things that make someone afraid they could be hurt. • Creating or sharing an artificial intelligence (AI) image or video of someone without their permission. • Sharing or posting information, images, or videos that could make someone feel hurt, embarrassed, upset, or uncomfortable.	• A supervisor checking work areas or equipment records. • The farm putting new health and safety measures in place when needed. • A supervisor evaluating a worker's job performance. • The farm providing additional training when it is needed. • The farm investigating safety concerns or complaints. • The farm taking corrective or disciplinary action that follows its policies and procedures.

Other Behaviours That Are Not Harassment

Sometimes a person may think something is harassment when it is not. For example:

- Being assigned a different task. Sometimes a worker may be given a different task because the farm needs the work done and the worker is trained and qualified to do it. For example, if a worker is sick, another trained worker may be asked to take over their duties.
- Reporting a safety concern or unsafe behaviour. Workers have a responsibility to report hazards and unsafe acts. Reporting a safety concern honestly and in good faith is not harassment.
- Differences of opinion or minor workplace disagreements. It is normal for people to disagree from time to time. As long as everyone treats each other respectfully, a disagreement on its own is not harassment.

WHAT IS VIOLENCE?

TEXTBOOK EXPLANATION	SIMPLE EXPLANATION
The Alberta OHS Act defines violence as “whether at a work site or work-related, means the threatened, attempted or actual conduct of a person that causes or is likely to cause physical or psychological injury or harm, and includes domestic or sexual violence (Alberta OHS Act, 2025, (rr)).”	Violence can be an action or threat involving physical force. The action or threat is intended to injure or kill a person, or damage or destroy property. Violence may occur at the work site, but it doesn’t have to for it to be work related.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is violent, threatening, or controlling behaviour that happens at home. It often involves abuse between spouses or partners, but it can also involve other family or household relationships.

Domestic violence can affect ***anyone.*** It can occur in any intimate or family relationship. Domestic violence is about things like physical abuse, financial control, verbal abuse, sexual abuse, stalking, threats, isolation, monitoring locations, etc., and NOT about the age or gender of the people involved.

Domestic violence becomes a workplace hazard when it happens at work or affects the workplace. This can put the person experiencing the violence, as well as other workers, at risk of harm.

Like any other workplace hazard, the farm must take reasonable steps to identify violence and either eliminate it or control the risk it creates.

REPORTS TO OHS

Different types of reports can be made to Alberta OHS in different ways and by different people. We will look at reporting in more detail here.

Employer Reporting

Serious Incident Reports

Some types of workplace incidents must be reported directly to Alberta Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) by the employer as soon as possible. These are called serious incidents, and include:

- A worker's death.
- A serious injury or illness that requires admission to a hospital (beyond treatment in an emergency room or urgent care centre).
- An uncontrolled explosion, fire, or flood that causes, or could have caused, a serious injury or illness.
- A crane, derrick, or hoist collapsing or tipping over.
- The collapse or failure of part of a building or structure that is important to its stability or safety.

(Adapted from the Alberta OHS Act, 2025, s. 33.)

IMPORTANT

Serious incident reports must include details, like when it happened, where it happened, and what happened.

Potentially Serious Incidents (PSIs)

Employers are also required to report ***potentially serious incidents*** (PSIs) to OHS.

Alberta OHS describes a PSI as any incident that had "likelihood" to cause serious injury or illness. It also means there is reason to believe that changes may be needed to prevent a similar incident from happening again.

Some incidents that seem minor, including certain near-misses, may still be considered PSIs if they meet these criteria. When that happens, a copy of the investigation report must be submitted to Alberta OHS.

More information about potentially serious incidents can be found on Alberta OHS's PSI webpage.

Reports By Other Organizations

Alberta OHS may be notified of an incident by outside organizations, such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Workers Compensation Board - Alberta (WCB), medical clinics, or hospitals.

Anyone Can Make a Report to OHS

Unsafe acts, conditions, and even incidents can be reported to Alberta OHS by anyone—and this can be done anonymously.

For example:

- A worker may report:
  - > An unsafe working condition
  - > An unsafe work practice
  - > A disciplinary action complaint
- Someone may report an incident because they don't believe the employer will—such as a family member of a worker.
- Someone who is not involved in the work, but is at or near the work site, may witness something unsafe and report it.
- Someone may report a work vehicle that was involved in an incident or is being operated in a dangerous way. This is possible because a work vehicle is considered a work site under Alberta OHS legislation.

Ways to Contact Alberta OHS

There are different ways to contact Alberta OHS depending on the reason for contacting them. We will look at those options here.

Ask An Expert

Ask an expert helps you get answers to OHS related questions direct from Alberta OHS.

Complete the online form found at https://www.alberta.ca/ask-expert.

Report OHS Concerns

For non-urgent situations and where no immediate danger exists, report online at https://ohscomplaintsportal.labour.alberta.ca/prescreening/

OR

Call the OHS Contact Centre by phone:

780-415-8690 (Edmonton)

Toll free: 1-866-415-8690

TTY to voice: 711

Voice to TTY: 1-800-855-0511

Report Unsafe Work

Call the OHS Contact Centre by phone:

780-415-8690 (Edmonton)

Toll free: 1-866-415-8690

TTY to voice: 711

Voice to TTY: 1-800-855-0511

Report Potentially Serious Incidents (PSIs)

Report online at https://www.alberta.ca/report-potentially-serious-incidents

Report Serious Incidents

Employers must call the OHS Contact Centre at 1-866-415-8690 as soon as possible.

COOPERATING WITH OHS OFFICERS

An OHS Officer may visit a farm for several reasons. Some of these reasons include a dangerous work refusal, a serious incident, or a hazard that has not been properly addressed.

In some cases, Alberta OHS may receive a phone call or online report about a safety concern. It is important to remember that these reports do not always come from people working on the farm.

An OHS Officer may also visit if WCB-Alberta receives a report of a work-related injury or illness. Sometimes, an OHS Officer visits because a serious incident has occurred.

Key points to remember:

- OHS Officers help make sure workplaces follow occupational health and safety laws.
- Employers, supervisors, and workers are required by Alberta OHS legislation to cooperate with OHS officers who are doing their jobs.
- OHS officers may speak with and request assistance from anyone on the farm—including workers. For this reason, it is important for everyone to have a general idea of what to expect if an OHS officer arrives on the farm.

Working Together for Safety: OHS Officer Visits

There is often confusion about what an OHS officer can and might do. Part 7 of the OHS Act contains much more information than is covered here. This section highlights some of the key points you should be aware of.

What OHS Officers Can Do

1. **Access the Work Site and Safety Information.** An OHS officer's powers allow them to come onto the work site and gather information. An OHS officer can:
   a. Enter a work site at any reasonable time.
   b. Ask to see health and safety records, plans, books, or documents, including electronic records.
   c. Review these records, make copies, or temporarily take them to make copies.
   d. Use workplace computers or electronic devices to access health and safety records.
   e. Ask for reasonable help in accessing records or information.
   f. Speak with workers and other people who may have information about health and safety at the work site.
   g. Ask people at the work site to provide identification, the name of their employer, and their role at the work site.

(Alberta OHS Act, s.34(1) & s.35(1))

2. **Inspecting and Examining the Work Site**. An OHS officer's powers allow them to physically inspect the workplace, equipment, and materials.
   a. Inspect, take (seize) or collect samples of any material, product, equipment or other thing made, used or found at the work site.
   b. Have materials, products, tools or equipment taken apart or tested, as long as it isn't damaged or destroyed—unless that can't be avoided or is found necessary.
   c. Take measurements, photos, recordings, or perform tests at the work site.
   d. Ask the employer, or someone chosen by the employer, to show how machinery, safety equipment, or other equipment is used.

   (OHS Act, s.34(1) & s.35(1))

3. **Using Resources and Expertise to Conduct the Inspection**. An OHS officer's powers allow them to carry out a thorough inspection. An OHS officer can:
   a. Bring any equipment or materials needed for the inspection.
   b. Have someone with special knowledge join and help with the inspection.

   (OHS Act, s.34(1) & s.35(1))



SECTION

3

OHS Roles & Responsibilities on Alberta Farms

INTRODUCTION

In this part, you will learn about the general health and safety responsibilities assigned to employers, supervisors, and workers under the OHS Act.

What You Will Learn

- Who employers, supervisors, and workers are on a farm.
- What employers, supervisors, and workers are responsible for when it comes to health and safety.

EMPLOYER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

According to the Alberta OHS Act, an ***employer*** is someone who:

- Works for themselves (that is, they are self-employed),
- Hires or brings in one or more workers to do a job—including workers from a temporary staffing agency,

- Is chosen by the employer to speak or act on their behalf (a designate), or
- Is a manager or leader in a company who is responsible for making sure workers are safe on the job.

(Alberta OHS Act, 2025, s.1(k))



IMPORTANT

This means an employer could be an owner of a small farm, the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of a large corporation, or the manager of a feedlot.

Farm Employers & The OHS Code

Farm employers must take all reasonably practicable steps to keep everyone on the farm healthy and safe, not just the farm's own workers.

Health and safety at its most basic level, begins with the identification, assessment and control of hazards.

Even if a hazard is not written into OHS legislation or it is only found in the OHS Code, the farm still needs to deal with it and keep people safe!

General Employer Responsibilities

The responsibilities listed here include those required by the OHS Act, as well as some responsibilities based on the Act itself.

Exactly what an employer needs to do will go beyond what is listed here and will depend on the farm's specific activities and operations.



RESOURCE

For more information and to gain a better understanding of what an employer might need to do, refer to the *Alberta FarmSafe Plan Manual*, the AgSafe Alberta FarmSafe Plan Learning Program, and the many other free resources available at agsafeab.ca.

Responsibility: Protecting the health, safety, and welfare of workers.

Farm employers must take reasonable steps to ensure that people are:

- Not injured or killed at work
- Do not develop work related illnesses and diseases
- Are in a good state of wellbeing while at work

Safety starts with identifying hazards before work begins and assessing the risks they may create. Once hazards are identified, steps are then taken to remove them or reduce the risks they pose to a reasonable level.

DID YOU KNOW?

If a farm has 20 or more regularly employed workers, Alberta OHS legislation requires it to develop a health and safety program and put it into effect.

Responsibility: Ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of other employers' workers while they are on the farm or performing work on behalf of the farm and independent contractors.

Farms must take reasonable steps to protect contractors, subcontractors, service providers, and other employers' workers from hazards on the farm.

To do this, farms will first need to identify hazards, assess the risks they create, and eliminate or control them.

Having a farm-specific health and safety program, a contractor management program, and providing farm-specific safety orientations to people before they begin work on the farm will all support this.

Responsibility: Ensure the health, safety, and welfare of people who may be present at or near the work site, including anyone who may be affected by identifiable and controllable hazards related to the work being performed.

In simpler terms, farm employers must help keep people safe if they are on or near the farm and could be affected by hazards from the farm's activities.

For example:

- People visiting the work site (e.g., visitors during Alberta Open Farm Days).
- Neighbours (e.g., the farm across the fence may be affected by spray drift).
- Others who in some way may be affected by the farm's operations (e.g., someone driving on a public road could hit a hay bale that has fallen off an unsecured load of hay).

Responsibility: Ensuring that the people working for the farm are not subjected to, or participate in, any form of harassment or violence.

As you learned earlier, violence and harassment are workplace hazards. Like all hazards, they need to be identified, assessed, and eliminated or controlled.

This can be achieved by such measures as developing a violence and harassment prevention plan, investigating incidents, and taking appropriate actions when violence or harassment occurs.

Responsibility: Ensuring workers are supervised by a competent person who understands the Alberta OHS requirements that apply to the work being done.

When the farm hires or promotes someone to be a supervisor, it needs to take steps to ensure that person is competent and able to do the job safely and effectively.

To support this, the farm should develop role-specific training plans and competency checks for workers, supervisors, and other key positions.

Position-specific orientations, training programs, and performance reviews also help. When hiring or promoting someone, the farm should review their resume, check any required certifications, and contact references when needed.

Responsibility: If the work to be done could put a worker at risk, the employer must make sure that the work is either done by a worker who is competent to do the work, or by someone who is being directly supervised by a competent worker.

Employers must make sure that workers are trained and competent to do their jobs, especially when the work is high risk.

Sometimes, a worker may not yet be fully competent to perform a task independently. In these situations, the worker may perform the work if they have the necessary skills and training ***and*** are under the direct supervision of a competent worker.

The key word here, is ***direct supervision***.

The Alberta OHS definition of direct supervision is where a competent worker is personally and visually supervising a worker who is not competent and is able to communicate readily and clearly with the worker who is not competent.

DIRECT SUPERVISION MADE SIMPLE

Direct supervision can be thought of as a situation where a competent supervisor can see and hear who they are supervising and that person's activities.

The supervisor is regularly checking in, giving instruction, watching how the work is being done, correcting issues, and checking the work itself.

Responsibility: If the farm has a joint health and safety committee or a health and safety representative, the employer must make sure they carry out their duties as required by Alberta OHS legislation.

The OHS Act requires farms with 20 or more workers to have a health and safety committee. Farms with 5 to 19 workers must have a health and safety representative.

Health and safety committee members and representatives must receive training so they understand their roles and responsibilities under the OHS Act.

The farm should also have a way to monitor or review their activities to make sure they are meeting the requirements of the OHS Act and OHS Code.

RESOURCE

Visit agsafeab.ca to learn more about AgSafe Alberta's Health & Safety Committee Awareness Training and Health & Safety Representative Awareness Training.

Responsibility: Ensure that health and safety concerns reported by workers, supervisors, the joint health and safety committee, or the health and safety representative (if there is one) are dealt with in a timely manner.

When health and safety concerns are brought to the farm, they should be taken seriously and not ignored. The farm should investigate the concern and take appropriate action as soon as reasonably possible.

It is always recommended to develop some sort of written plan (e.g., policy, procedure) for doing this, so nothing gets forgotten or left unfinished.

Responsibility: Ensure that the health and safety committee or health and safety representative (if there is one) carries out its responsibilities under the Alberta OHS Act, OHS Code, and Terms of Reference.

The farm should regularly check that the health and safety committee or health and safety representative is carrying out its responsibilities.

The farm can do this just as it would for any other position on the farm by performing simple reviews or audits.

Responsibility: The farm should work with the health and safety committee or health and safety representative (if there is one) to address health and safety concerns and find solutions in a timely manner.

This responsibility is similar to a previous one, but it focuses specifically on health and safety committees and representatives.

Any health and safety concerns raised by the committee or representative should be taken seriously, carefully reviewed, and addressed as soon as reasonably possible.

Responsibility: Ensure that workers are aware of their rights and duties under Alberta OHS legislation.

When a farm hires a worker, it is responsible for making sure the worker understands their rights and responsibilities under Alberta OHS legislation.

To do this, the farm should have a process for sharing this information with workers before they start work.

Including this information in worker orientations, discussing it during safety meetings, and posting it in visible areas around the farm can help workers understand and remember their rights and responsibilities.

Responsibility: Ensure that workers have the training needed to do their work in a safe and healthy way.

Employers need to ensure that the people they hire, and others performing work for them, are trained and competent to perform their work in a way that is safe and healthy.

Training can include:

- Online training (e.g., AgSafe Alberta's Roles, Responsibilities and OHS Essentials: A General Safety Introduction online course)
- Third party training (e.g., first aid training)
- On-farm training (i.e., what they teach you on the farm)

Responsibility: Every employer must keep information about work site hazards, safety measures, safe work practices, safety data sheets, procedures, and other important safety information easy to access.

This information must be shared with workers, the health and safety committee or health and safety representative (if there is one), and the prime contractor (if there is one).

The farm will need to create (where appropriate) and maintain documents such as hazard assessments, safe work practices, work procedures, equipment manuals, safety data sheets, and emergency response guides just to name a few.

These documents need to be easy for workers and others performing work on the farm to find and use.

Responsibility: Ensure that a current paper, downloaded or stored electronic copies of the Alberta OHS Act, the regulations, and Code are easy for workers and the joint health and safety committee or the health and safety representative (if there is one) to find and use.

The farm needs to have a paper copy of the OHS Act, regulations, and Code or have these downloaded and stored where they are easily accessed by the people working on the farm.

Responsibility: Employers must work together with workers, supervisors, health and safety committees or representatives, OHS officers, and anyone else who has health and safety responsibilities under Alberta's OHS legislation.

The farm needs to work with anyone who is carrying out a responsibility required by the OHS Act, regulations, and Code.

1. **Cooperating with inspectors.** This was covered in detail in the previous section, *Cooperating with OHS Officers*.
2. **Cooperating with workers.** This goes back to the basic rights of workers—employers need to give them what they need to work safely, such as on-farm training, guidance on how to perform a task when someone asks for it, and taking workers health and safety concerns seriously.
3. **Cooperating with the health and safety committee or representative.** This is outlined in the Alberta OHS Act and Part 13 of the Alberta OHS Code—both of which apply directly to farms and ranches.

Responsibility: All workers employed by the farm must be trained and competent to perform their work safely while protecting their health.

Again, workers need to have the right qualifications, attitude, training, ability, knowledge and experience to perform the work they will be expected to do.

A few examples of what training should include are:

- Farm policies, procedures, and safe work practices
- How to safely use the tools and equipment
- How to safely perform farm-specific jobs and tasks

Responsibility: Report serious incidents to Alberta OHS as soon as possible.

As discussed earlier, employers must report serious incidents to Alberta OHS as soon as possible. When making the report, they need to provide important details, such as when the incident occurred, where it occurred, and what happened.

REMINDER

A serious incident occurs when a worker is killed; when a worker suffers a serious injury or illness and is, or is likely to be, admitted to a hospital for more than emergency room or urgent care treatment; when an unplanned explosion, fire, or flood causes, or could have caused, a serious injury or illness; when a crane, derrick, or hoist tips over or collapses; or when a building or structure collapses, or part of it fails in a way that affects its structural strength.

Responsibility: Investigate incidents that could have reasonably caused a serious injury or illness, and where something needs to be fixed to prevent it from happening again.

When a serious incident or potentially serious incident occurs, the employer needs to investigate it. Investigations must:

- **Look into what happened and why.** An investigation should be fair and focus on finding the cause(s) of the incident, not on blaming people.
- **Be documented in a written report.** The report should explain what happened, what was found during the investigation, and the actions taken to prevent a similar incident from happening again.
- **Be kept available for when it is needed.** The report must be available if requested by an OHS officer or the health and safety committee or representative. If there is no health and safety committee or representative, the report must be shared with workers once the investigation is done.
- **The investigation report must be kept for at least two years.**



RESOURCE

To learn more about investigations and how to conduct them, see the *Alberta FarmSafe Plan Manual* and the free online Alberta FarmSafe Plan Learning Program. Both are available at agsafeab.ca.

Responsibility: Unless an OHS officer or the police tell you otherwise, do not change, move, or disturb the scene of a serious injury, illness, or other type of reportable incident.

This includes the area where the incident happened and the immediate area around it, as well as any equipment, documents, or other information connected to it.

This is often called “freezing the scene.” An employer is responsible for making sure the scene is left undisturbed.

The scene can ***only*** be touched or changed when it is necessary, such as to:

- Help someone who is injured or ill.
- Attend to someone who has died.
- Prevent further injuries, illnesses, or incidents.
- Protect property that is at risk because of the incident.

Beyond the Minimum Requirements

Remember, not every employer responsibility is written out in Alberta's OHS legislation or the OHS Act. Farm employers need to identify what needs to be done and take reasonable steps to keep workers healthy and safe.

SUPERVISOR ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

According to the Alberta OHS Act, a ***supervisor*** is someone in charge of a work site or work area, or who has authority over a work site or work area and the people in it.

(Alberta OHS Act, 2025, s.1(nn))

A supervisor is a different type of worker. When deciding if someone is a supervisor, the key question to answer is whether they have authority over another worker or direct their work. This can include the farm's workers or workers from another employer.

IMPORTANT

Whether someone is called a lead hand, foreman/forewoman, manager, senior technician, or something else, it is critical to remember that a supervisor is a supervisor, no matter what title they have.

Supervisor Responsibilities

The responsibilities listed here come from the Alberta OHS Act. However, a supervisor's duties will go beyond these requirements. Each farm will need to decide what additional responsibilities supervisors have based on its size, activities, specific operations, hazards, etc.

Before moving on, keep the following points in mind about a supervisor.

A supervisor is someone who:

- Actively watches over the work being done and the workers doing it.
- Gives instructions and support.
- Steps in when there is a problem.

Responsibility: Take all reasonable measures to protect the health and safety of every worker under their supervision.

A supervisor helps keep workers safe and makes sure work is done properly.

To do this, supervisors need to:

- Know workers' health and safety rights and responsibilities and explain them to the workers they supervise.
- Make sure workers understand their health and safety responsibilities and what is expected of them on the farm.
- Address unsafe conditions, unsafe behaviours, and safety rule violations as soon as possible.
- Address health and safety concerns brought to their attention, or report them according to the farm's procedures if they cannot be resolved right away.

IMPORTANT

The employer creates and supports the farm's health and safety system. The supervisor puts that system into practice and makes sure it is followed day to day.

Responsibility: Ensure the workers under their supervision are working in a safe and healthy manner that follows Alberta OHS legislation.

To do this, supervisors need to actively supervise workers. They need to understand the health and safety legislation that applies to the work, make sure tasks are being done safely and correctly, and step in right away if they see something unsafe or wrong.

Responsibility: Make sure workers under their supervision do not engage in harassment or violence at the work site.

This responsibility may seem straightforward, but as you learned earlier, there is more to it than you might think.

When harassment or violence is obvious, supervisors need to stop the behaviour right away and follow the farm's process for reporting and addressing the issue.

Sometimes, harassment and violence are harder to identify. The signs can be subtle, and workers may not always report what is happening.

Supervisors need to watch for signs of harassment and violence and understand the different ways these behaviours can appear in the workplace.

Responsibility: Make sure workers under their supervision are aware of all known hazards and any potential hazards related to their work area and job tasks.

Supervisors can only meet this responsibility if they are trained and know how to identify hazards, assess risks, and put controls in place. After all, how can they tell workers about hazards or watch for them if they do not understand the process themselves?

This is why the farm's hazard and risk assessment process is so important. It helps everyone on the farm, including supervisors, identify hazards, communicate them, and make sure appropriate controls are in place.

Responsibility: Report any health and safety issues or concerns to the employer as soon as possible. This includes injuries, illnesses, equipment damage, near misses, and any known or potential hazards (as appropriate).

If something happens, or almost happens, that could hurt someone, damage equipment, or create a safety risk, the supervisor must report it to the employer right away.

Supervisors must not ignore, downplay, or hide health and safety concerns. If the employer does not know about a problem, they cannot take steps to fix it or prevent it from happening again.

Responsibility: Work with any person carrying out a duty required of them by Alberta OHS legislation.

The key words here are "any person." This means supervisors need to work with anyone who has health and safety responsibilities under Alberta OHS legislation.

For example:

- If a worker reports a safety concern, the supervisor needs to listen to the concern and take appropriate action.
- If the employer introduces new safety training or hazard controls, the supervisor needs to support those efforts and help make sure they are followed.
- If an OHS officer is carrying out an inspection or investigation, the supervisor needs to cooperate and provide assistance when required.

Supervisors should never make it difficult for others to carry out their health and safety responsibilities.

WORKER ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

A ***worker*** is anyone doing a job or task, even if they're not getting paid, like volunteers.

This does not include certain people working specifically on farms or ranches, such as people doing farm or ranch work who aren't paid wages (as defined by employment law) for doing farm work, someone who has shares in (that is, owns a part of) the farm, or a family member (e.g., the farm owner, the farm owner's children, the farm owner's children's spouses, etc.).

(Alberta OHS Act, 2025, s.1(tt))

Family Workers & OHS: One Rule Everyone Needs to Know—A Review

In its 2024 guide, *Health and Safety on Alberta Farms and Ranches*, the Alberta Government says that unpaid workers or family members in farming and ranching operations are generally not considered "workers" under Alberta's OHS legislation. Because of this, legislation does not apply to them in the same way that it applies to workers in other industries.

Do you remember the very important exception from Part 1?

Unpaid and family workers are considered workers for the purposes of sections 5(1)(a) and (b) of the OHS Act. These sections set out health and safety obligations that all workers must follow (Government of Alberta, 2024, p. 7).

Key Takeaways:

- Family members are generally not workers under OHS legislation.

- There is a very important exception—they still have certain health and safety responsibilities.
- Those health and safety responsibilities matter on the farm, even if they are unpaid.

A Worker Is a Worker Is a Worker

Alberta OHS legislation is written in a way that requires employers to protect the health and safety of all workers involved in the work and not just their own employees.

For example, a worker can be:

- An employee hired directly by the farm
- A worker supplied by a temporary staffing agency
- A worker employed by a contractor hired by the farm
- A fire fighter putting out a barn fire

Worker Responsibilities

Responsibility: Work in a safe and healthy way to protect their own health and safety, as well as the health and safety of anyone who could be affected by their work.

This means workers are responsible for their own safety and for making sure their actions do not put others at risk. Workers need to use their training and keep safety in mind while they work.

Responsibility: Work with their supervisor, employer, and others to protect their own health and safety, as well as the health and safety of anyone who may be affected by their work.

Safety is a shared responsibility. Workers need to work with others to help keep the workplace safe.

This includes following safety rules and procedures, taking part in safety meetings and training, reporting hazards, as well as stopping and reporting unsafe work when needed.

Responsibility: Use all required safety devices and wear the personal protective equipment (PPE) required by the farm and/or OHS legislation.

If a safety measure has been put in place to protect workers, it must be used. This may include wearing steel-toed boots, using a respirator when required, making sure PTO guards are in place, and using machine guards and other safety devices as intended.

Just remember, safety devices and PPE only protect workers when they are used correctly and consistently.

Responsibility: Do not cause or take part in harassment or violence.

As discussed earlier, it is important to understand what harassment and violence are.

Keep in mind that:

- Something one person thinks is a joke may be hurtful to someone else and could be considered harassment.
- What one person describes as a "quick temper" may be experienced by others as a violent outburst.

Responsibility: Report unsafe acts and unsafe conditions to the employer or supervisor.

Workers must report anything that could cause harm. This includes unsafe acts, such as someone operating equipment improperly, and unsafe conditions, such as damaged equipment or some other uncontrolled hazards.

These concerns must be reported to a supervisor or employer, even if the unsafe act or condition has already been corrected.

Responsibility: Take part in any training provided by the employer.

This means being actively involved in the training, paying attention, following directions, and taking part in activities and discussions.

Responsibility: Work with any person carrying out a duty required of them by Alberta OHS legislation.

The key words here are "any person." This means workers need to cooperate with anyone who has health and safety responsibilities under Alberta OHS legislation.

For example:

- If a supervisor asks a worker to follow a safety procedure, the worker needs to follow it.
- If the employer introduces new safety training or hazard controls, workers need to participate and help make sure those measures are followed.
- If an OHS officer is carrying out an inspection or investigation, workers need to cooperate and provide assistance when required.

Workers should never make it difficult for others to carry out their health and safety responsibilities.

NEXT STEPS

Health and safety is not a one-time task or one person's job. It depends on employers, supervisors, and workers understanding their roles and responsibilities, communicating openly, and taking action when something is unsafe.

There are many next steps you can take to help make the farm and your work safer. Visit agsafeab.ca for information, tools, templates, resources, and online learning opportunities to help you continue building a strong safety culture on your farm.

Terms

Act: A form of law that allows a government to regulate an area, such as Occupational Health and Safety (Government of Canada, 2011).

Administrative penalty: A type of fine issued by Alberta OHS for not following safety legislation (i.e., laws).

Bullying: Saying, writing, or doing things to someone (who may be viewed as being vulnerable) to harm, embarrass, intimidate, or get them to do something.

Codes: Codes are pieces of legislation that can be enforced.

Competent person: A person who is adequately qualified, suitably trained, has the necessary attitude, and has enough experience to safely perform work without or with only a minimal degree of supervision.

Compliance order: A written document telling you that an OHS officer has found an OHS rule has not been followed and needs to be fixed by a certain date.

Consultation: A process where people or groups share information, talk about issues, and get input or advice before decisions are made or actions are taken.

Contractor management program: A system, with clear plans and processes, used to help the farm ensure any contractors it hires are qualified, have their own safety systems in place, and can complete the work safely. It also outlines how the farm will monitor the work, deal with issues relating to the work, and assess the contractor's overall performance.

Cyberbullying: Using the internet, social media, texting, artificial intelligence video, etc. to harm, embarrass, intimidate, or get someone to do something.

Designate: Someone officially assigned or named to take on a certain task, role, or responsibility.

Direct supervision: 1. A situation where a competent supervisor is within the sight and hearing of a worker or group of workers and their activities; this includes the supervisor regularly checking in, giving instruction, and checking the work being done.
2. Where a competent worker is personally and visually supervising a worker who is not competent and is able to communicate readily and clearly with the worker who is not competent (Alberta OHS Code, s.1).

Director's order: A written document telling you that an OHS director (someone similar to an OHS officer) determines that certain things need to be done at a work site to ensure the health and safety of the workers at that site, such as create a health and safety program or establish a prime contractor, even if one is not specifically required by OHS legislation.

Discipline: Efforts or measures taken to correct an employee's behaviour or performance.

Domestic violence: Abusive or controlling behaviour between family members, spouses, or others. It can happen at home and may affect the workplace and can include physical, sexual, verbal, emotional, or financial abuse, as well as stalking.

Employer: An employer is someone who: a. Works for themselves (self-employed), b. Hires or brings in one or more workers to do a job—including workers from a temp agency, c. Is chosen by the employer to speak or act on their behalf, or d. Is a manager or leader in a company who is responsible for making sure workers are safe on the job (Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2025, s.1(k)).

Harassment: A single incident or repeated incidents of inappropriate, unwelcome, or offensive actions, behaviours, or comments.

Hazard: Something that could cause damage or harm to someone or something on your farm.

Health and safety program: A system with clear plans and processes to: help protect workers; identify, eliminate, or reduce hazards to a safe level; and, make sure that farm work is done safely.

Informed: Having enough knowledge and understanding of a subject or situation to make good, thoughtful decisions based on the facts of the situation.

Internal responsibility system (IRS): The foundational belief that all workplace parties are responsible for their health and safety and the health and safety of others.

Just cause: A really good, logical, fair reason that can be supported or proven.

Legal: Relates to anything based on, required by, or permitted by law.

Legislation: In this manual, legislation refers to OHS legislation. Legislation, such as the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, are written laws that give authority to the government.

Likelihood: How likely something is to happen.

Meaningful: Having value, purpose, or usefulness.

Orders: Orders are written documents issued by Alberta OHS officers and require work site parties to take measures in order to be compliant with OHS legislation. Orders can only be lifted when the requirements listed in them are met. The different types of orders are compliance orders, stop use orders, stop work orders, and director's orders.

Orientation: A process used to familiarize employees or others to a business or company, such as a farm. This is where critical safety related information about the job and farm are communicated.

Potentially serious incident (PSI): As any incident that had "likelihood" to cause serious injury or illness, and where there is good reason to believe that corrective actions may need to be taken to prevent what happened from happening again.

Principles: The core ideas that form the foundation of beliefs or actions.

Readily available: Quick and easy to get at, not locked away.

Reasonably possible hazard: A hazard where, based on sound, good sense judgement, it could be present or arise and result in damage or harm to someone or something on your farm.

Reasonably practicable: 1. Meeting a legislated occupational health and safety obligation in a way that is sensible, realistic, and would be thought of as making sense for the facts and conditions by a reasonable person. 2. A recognized term that is based on the reasonable person test, which basically asks, what would a dozen of your peers consider reasonable in similar circumstances (Government of Alberta, 2017, p.1)?

Right: A legal right. A claim recognized and protected by the law.

Serious incident: Serious work related incidents, such as: a worker's death; a serious injury or illness that requires admission to a hospital (beyond treatment in an emergency room or urgent care centre); an uncontrolled explosion, fire, or flood that causes, or could have caused, a serious injury or illness; a crane, derrick, or hoist collapsing or tipping over; the collapse or failure of part of a building or structure that is important to its stability or safety (Adapted from the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2025, s. 33).

Sexual advances: Actions, behaviours, or comments intended to communicate a desire for romantic or sexual engagement or activity with another person.

Sexual solicitation: Actions, behaviours, or comments made in an attempt to obtain sexual activity or contact with someone in exchange for something (e.g., money, goods, favours, or some type of other benefit).

Stop use order: A written document telling you that an OHS officer has seen a piece of equipment that is unsafe or could seriously hurt someone and that you must stop using it until the problem is fixed and the safety requirements are met.

Stop work order: A written document telling you that an OHS officer has observed something being done in a way that is unsafe or unhealthy for the workers and the work must be stopped until the safety requirements are met.

Supervisor: A person who is in charge of a work site, work area, or has authority over a worker (Occupational Health and Safety Act, 2025, s.1(nn)).

Supervision: The act or process of watching and directing work.

System: A set of elements with principles or procedures, that work together as a connected whole (e.g., health and safety program).

Temporary staffing agency: A person or company that retains workers and then sends them to work for other businesses that need help for a short time.

TTY: Stands for "teletypewriter," a device for text-based phone communication developed to help people with hearing or speech impairments communicate using telephone lines.

Undue hazard: A hazard that is too great, inappropriate, or is unusual for the work being performed; it can also be described as a serious and immediate threat to the health and safety of someone.

Violence: A behaviour that involves physical force that is intended to hurt, injure, or kill someone, and/or to damage or destroy something. Work related violence doesn't necessarily have to occur at the worksite.

Wellbeing: A good quality of life; a state of being happy, healthy, and doing well.

Welfare: The conditions and care that help support someone's well-being (e.g., safe work environment, rest breaks, clean washrooms, access to mental health supports, etc.).

Work site: A location where a worker is, or is likely to be, engaged in work for their job, including a vehicle or mobile equipment.

Work site party: 1. Someone who is self-employed or employed by someone else. 2. Anyone who fits the definition of an employer, supervisor, worker, supplier, service provider, contracting employer, owner, or temporary staffing agency under Part 1 Obligations of the Alberta OHS Act.

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