

Joint Health & Safety Committee Participation in Hazard Assessment?



Hazard identification and assessment must be carried out in consultation with the JHSC.

QUESTION

The worker members of our joint health and safety committee (JHSC) say we're legally required to let them participate in general hazard assessment. Are they right? **Note:** We're federally regulated.

ANSWER

Yes, in a sense.

EXPLANATION

As in almost all provinces and territories, the *Canada OHS Regulations* require federally regulated employers to implement a written OHS program that includes hazard identification and assessment; and as in most of those jurisdictions, employers must carry out hazard identification and assessment "in consultation with" the workplace JHSC or health and safety representative.

Other than in Quebec, employers don't actually have to let the JHSC or safety rep perform the hazard assessment. You still have the right to control and manage the process. However, "consultation" involves more than just apprising the JHSC of the process and its results. Employers must not only give but receive information from the JHSC by listening and taking into account its views. Moreover, allowing JHSC members to participate in the actual hazard identification and assessment process makes a ton of sense as a best practice. After all, who knows more about workplace hazards than the workers who are on the front lines?