OHS Workplace Inspections Rules Infographic



Regularly inspecting your workplace enables you to do at least 3 things to guard your workers against health and safety hazards:

1. Identify hazards that you didn’t recognize before, which may include urgent problems that require immediate attention;
2. Determine what controls or measures are necessary to manage the hazards you identify; and
3. Assess whether the current measures you use to control hazards are working and, if not, how to improve them.

So, it’s not surprising that the OHS laws of every province and territory require employers to establish and implement a schedule and set of procedures for regular inspections. What makes Canadian laws different from those of many of the world’s other industrial countries is that rather than dumping all of the burden on the employer, they make workplace health and safety a collective responsibility shared by all stakeholders, including workers. The workplace joint health and safety committee (JHSC) (or at smaller workplaces, the health and safety representative) is the principal instrument enabling workers to take direct action to make the workplace safer, including by carrying out or taking part in regularly scheduled workplace inspections. However, OHS requirements differ slightly with regard to:

- Who’s actually responsible for carrying out inspections;
- The role of the JHSC in the inspection process;
- How often inspections must be made; and
- What they have to cover.

Another key difference is whether the inspection schedule and process must be incorporated into a larger OHS program for the workplace. Here’s a visual summary of the OHS regular inspection rules in each jurisdiction. Use the OHS Insider Workplace Inspections Compliance Game Plan to implement a legally sound inspections program at your own workplace.

