New Training Program for Workers with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities



As you know, employers have a duty under the OHS laws to ensure the health and safety of all workers, such as by providing them with safety training. But it may be a challenge to train certain workers, such as those who aren't fluent in English or who have mental disabilities. However, an employer still must find a way to effectively train such workers.

A new resource may help employers provide appropriate training to workers with intellectual or developmental disabilities (IDDs).

NIOSH and the Labor Occupational Health Program at the University of California, Berkeley recently published a curriculum to help such workers learn how to stay safe on the job. Although this curriculum is based on the OHS laws in the US, it still provides useful guidance to Canadian employers on how to provide effective general safety training to workers with IDDs.

Workers with IDDs often have few options for health and safety training, particularly in a manner that meets their learning needs. A needs assessment conducted in 2006 by the Labor Occupational Health Program at UC Berkeley found almost no examples of these workers getting comprehensive health and safety training.

And when workers with IDDs *do* get training, it's typically a supervisor or job coach instructing them on what to do or not do with regard to a particular activity. Although this kind of instruction is important, it doesn't teach workers the skills they need to assess new environments and to problem-solve when the situation or task changes, or when something unexpected happens.

The *Staying Safe at Work* curriculum fills an important need for general training in workplace safety for workers with IDDs. *Staying Safe at Work* is a free training program that teaches basic workplace safety and health knowledge and skills to workers and students with IDDs. Its six lessons include:

1. Introduction to Workplace Health and Safety;
2. Looking for Job Hazards;
3. Making the Job Safer;
4. Staying Safe in an Emergency at Work;
5. Your Health and Safety Rights and Responsibilities on the Job; and
6. Speaking Up When There Is a Problem.

The curriculum uses highly interactive and fun learning activities to teach workplace safety and health skills, which are general, transferable and can apply across all jobs and industries. Click here to access the full curriculum and the PowerPoint slides.