



Face-to-face safety training builds safety awareness and fosters a healthy safety culture — which can help prevent injuries on the job.

NUTS AND BOLTS

How to hire a safety training provider

By Nancy Neill

Most employers know that education and training are critical to the well-being of their workers — and their business. Here's how to find the right people for the job.

Providing occupational health and safety training is one of the most important responsibilities an employer has. Not only does effective training help you meet WorkSafeBC requirements, it also builds safety awareness within your workforce and fosters a healthy safety culture. These in turn can prevent injuries, which helps protect your workers and keeps overall costs down.

If your organization is ready to hire an outside training service, then you probably have a lot of questions about who needs training, the kind of training needed, and how you go about getting it.

Everyone needs training, including owners, supervisors, and workers. Some workers and supervisors may require specific types of training depending on the nature of their work. For example, new workers, workers performing specialized processes, and supervisors all have specific training needs that must be addressed. So do joint safety committee members and worker representatives who are entitled to annual paid education leave under the *Workers Compensation Act*.

Before you can select the best trainer for your organization, you need to identify and prioritize your training needs:

Step 1 — Identifying your training needs

- Determine the skills and knowledge needed for each job to be performed safely
- Review your accident and incident reports to determine trends
- Get input from your joint safety committee or worker representatives

Step 2 — Prioritizing your training needs

- Determine if WorkSafeBC has specific requirements for training in your workplace (e.g., WHMIS)
- Determine if the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation requires training for specific jobs (e.g., confined space entry)
- Consider whether there is training that may benefit all employees (e.g., musculoskeletal injuries)

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Step 3 – Choosing your training provider

- Consult with colleagues and workers in your organization to determine what training is required
- Talk to colleagues and speakers at conferences, get recommendations from industry safety associations, professional groups, medical associations, and even advertisements from professional publications
- Review WorkSafeBC's list of education and training providers, which is available online at www2.worksafebc.com/pdfs/safetyupdates/training_providers.pdf

After narrowing your search to several service providers, you can start assessing their qualifications.

You'll need to review the trainers' professional credentials and occupational health and safety experience. Once you've narrowed your choices further, you should consider the following questions:

- Has the trainer had special training in adult education?
- Can the trainer customize a standard course for your firm?
- Can the trainer meet the training needs of your workforce, by including, for example, young workers, ESL workers, learning-challenged workers?
- Can the trainer deliver a standard course in another language?
- Does the trainer have a thorough knowledge of WorkSafeBC regulations, policies, and standards relative to the training requirements?

- Is your service provider a registered employer with WorkSafeBC?
- Is your service provider registered with the Private Career Training Institutions Agency (PCTIA)?

Don't forget to discuss the service provider's fee structure and what training materials are included. Consider whether they bill clients by the total job, by the day, by the hour, or some other arrangement. Will the service provider be adding on expenses, such as travel, shipping, and report writing? Are cost estimates binding, and what insurance and bonding does the provider have?

Find out if the training will be provided on your premises or the service provider's and adjust costs accordingly. Try to interview the people who will be doing your training and find out their approach to training. Will it be a good fit with your employees? Call references. Negotiate carefully. Communicate information in clearly written documents and demand written responses. Choose the provider that best understands your needs and best meets your expectations, time frame, budget, and other requirements.

While there are many service providers calling themselves safety trainers, you need to ensure you hire a reputable service that is the right fit for your company.

"Anybody can call themselves a safety professional," says Betty-Ann Lee, WorkSafeBC industry specialist, "because there is nothing in law requiring they be registered like a doctor or a teacher, so you need to ask questions."

The WorkSafeBC network

WorkSafeBC has an education network for employers and workers throughout the province. The network includes trainers from all sectors that meet the criteria that WorkSafeBC has specified.

These education partners can offer WorkSafe courses either to the public or to their own members or employers. WorkSafe courses are designed for occupational health and safety committee members, including employer and worker representatives, and health and safety professionals committed to preventing occupational injury and disease.

There are currently six WorkSafe education courses available:

- Hazard Recognition and Control
- Occupational Health and Safety in Small Business
- Preventing and Investigating Musculoskeletal Injury
- Preventing Workplace Violence
- Responsibilities of Joint Health and Safety Committees
- Supervisor Safety Management

For more information, and for a list of approved course providers, visit www.worksafebc.com/newsroom/courses/default.asp. 