THE 7-STEP ASSESSMENT TO STUDENT PLACEMENT

Introduction

A focus on health and safety during the placement assessment and in subsequent monitoring meetings serves several purposes, including:

- providing the teacher a first-hand opportunity to review safety features, view the work area, see the equipment involved and discuss training the student will receive;
- articulating the school's requirements and expectations for a safe and healthy placement to the employer;
- for Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program students, ensuring that all the health and safety components of the appropriate Training Standard are included in the Learning Plan; and
- alerting the student to the safety requirements of the job.

What Educators Need to Know Prior to Placement

- What laws govern restricted trades or skill sets?
- Has general or trade specific health and safety instruction been presented and understood?
- Has instruction been validated by appropriate methods?

The ideal pre-placement assessment involves a physical review of the job location where the student will work and discussion with the workplace representatives the requirement for health and safety training, use of protective devices and equipment, review of policies and procedures. The assessment will provide a "snapshot" of the conditions of the day, the attitude of the workplace towards health and safety and the safeguards in place.

No one can guarantee that what is safe today is safe tomorrow. Guards can be removed, workplace conditions can change and the quality of promised training and instruction can diminish. The teacher's role is to obtain an understanding of the safety aspects of the student's assignment for the placement, ask questions and obtain commitments regarding workplace-specific training. Ultimately, the assessment will provide the teacher with a strong sense of the commitment and quality of the workplace, in order to determine if the placement is acceptable for the student.

Depending on the complexity of the placement, the assessment may involve some or all of the parties with a part to play in the protection of the student including:

- the employer or employer representative at the workplace;
- the student's supervisor, if different than the employer representative;
- a worker representative from the health and safety committee or the health and safety representative, if any;
- the student;
- the student's parent if the student is under 16 years old.

Each of these parties has either direct responsibility for the student's safety or an ability to help protect the student while at work.

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), the employer (in an industrial establishment) or the constructor (on a construction project), has ultimate responsibility for health and safety in the workplace. This responsibility cannot be delegated or deferred to another party by a waiver or a similar process.

In the case of students who are not paid and are not defined under the OHSA, the employer should:

- be aware that the student will be in the workplace and know what type of work they will be undertaking;
- ensure that the student receives work specific health and safety training and supervision;
- ensure that the student is protected by task-appropriate safeguards;
- ensure that appropriate personal protective equipment

is identified and used.

In small workplaces, the employer may also be the supervisor and will have to be present for the assessment. In larger workplaces, the employer may ask another company representative or the supervisor to take part in the assessment process.

Ideally, the employer or employer representative should be endorsing the learning plan and confirming the arrangements for orientation, training and provision of safety equipment noted in the placement assessment. They should also understand that the teacher should be contacted if:

- the student raises any health and safety concerns;
- the student acts in a manner that may endanger himself/herself or others;
- a new job or a considerably different task than what was discussed in the assessment is assigned to the student (before the changes take place).

Student's Supervisor for the Placement

Involving the student's direct supervisor in the assessment process will give you a better understanding of the work area and actual tasks that will be assigned and the opportunity to see a demonstration of the equipment that the student will be operating, including the safety devices. The meeting with the supervisor is also the ideal time to discuss on-the-job training, safety orientation, company policies or rules and any protective equipment that the student will require for the placement.

You may also want to ask the supervisor about the type of supervision the student can expect. Does the supervisor work in the same area where the student will be working? Is the supervisor readily accessible if the student has a question? Will the supervisor be providing feedback to the student on how he or she is performing the work? The Cooperative Education policy document states that one of the criteria for selecting a placement is that the employer offers "the opportunity for each student to work in a one-on-one relationship with a supervisor".

7-STEP HEALTH AND SAFETY ASSESSMENT TOOL

Placement Job/Task(s): *The employer must specifically define the job and/or tasks the student will be undertaking during the placement. The work may only involve one piece of equipment or it may involve a number of different types of tasks and equipment. The more details gathered about the work the student will undertake, the more effective the assessment will be.*

STEP 1

Have the employer identify hazards that the student may be exposed to during the placement.

This part of the assessment itemizes any hazardous equipment, machinery, chemicals or situations the student will be exposed to. Other hazards that you may consider include: working with knives, meat slicers and hot surfaces (kitchens), chemicals (hairdressing salons), infectious agents (veterinary clinics, daycares), violence (working with the public).

Examples of hazards to consider include:

1. **Working from heights** - ladders, scaffolds, personnel lifting devices and any elevated surface should be protected by either a guardrail or with the worker equipped and trained in fall arrest equipment and devices.
2. **Operation of mobile equipment** such as forklifts, order pickers, company vehicles, etc. All mobile equipment must be operated by a worker who has had theoretical and practical training validated by testing, and in the case of company vehicles, a valid G license.

3. **Working with or around chemicals or biological or infectious agents** including veterinary clinics or laboratories. Job specific WHMIS training must be provided by the employer; material safety data sheets (MSDS) must be available for each substance the worker will be handling, near or around. Biological and infectious agents must be identified where possible. Routine practices must be taught and practiced. Ask whether inoculations may be required. Flammable liquids should be adequately identified with WHMIS labels, stored in approved safety containers and large containers must be grounded.

4. **Regular or prolonged exposure to hot or cold conditions** (such as molten metal, freezers). Appropriate clothing used as protective equipment should be used or worn.

5. **Compressed gas cylinders** - Cutting and welding requires specialized training; hazards associated with welding should be highlighted including shielding from eye exposure to the electric arc or flame; moving and securing cylinders; the importance of ensuring that the safety cap is on the cylinder being moved; and the hazards of an empty cylinder as well as a full one.

6. **Machines that can cut, crush** or otherwise cause injury to the student must be adequately guarded or locked out. Powered machinery with moving parts that the student may be exposed to may include, conveyor belts, rotating shafts and belts, automobile hoists, grinding wheels and any moving part that the student or workers can be caught in either by reaching with hands or caught by clothing or hair. Lock out procedures should be written and available for review.

7. **Power tools** - May include saws (including chain saws), drills, planers, machine tools, etc.; must have adequate guards on the equipment and be adequately grounded.

8. **Entry into confined spaces** such as tanks; Confined spaces in the workplace must be identified by the employer; only trained workers may enter into a confined space. A student should not be required to enter a confined space for any reason.

9. **Working alone** - Many occupations call for workers to work alone, for example a gas station or convenience store attendant. Student work experience programs should not place a student in an environment that may become hazardous as a result of working alone.

10. **Other**

STEP 2

Match hazards identified above to hazard-specific training.

For each of the hazards listed in the first step, there must be a workplace commitment to training the student to perform the work safely. This hazard specific training should teach the student how to use equipment appropriately, provide information about work procedures and explain how all protective devices (such as guards) work. In this step, include detailed information, such as who will deliver training and when it will be delivered, so that everyone is clear what needs to be done. Note that work that involves entry into confined spaces and operating mobile equipment, such as forklifts, requires very specialized training and should not be carried out by students.

Hazardous Job/Task	Training to be provided related to this hazard	Delivered by	When training will be delivered
Work with table saw	Use of blade guard at all times, use of the anti-kickback device and using pushers for some jobs	Supervisor	Before saw isused

STEP 3

Protective measures required for this placement.

Some types of protective equipment, such as respirators, require specialized training to ensure proper use and fit. Learning how to use any type of equipment properly is essential so that the equipment will offer the protection it was designed to provide. For example, if safety glasses are worn improperly or don't fit, material can still enter the eye. Establishing what safety equipment is required, whether it is required daily or occasionally, whether or not training will be provided on how to use and care for it (critical for respirators) and who will be providing it helps everyone be prepared for the job.

STEP 4

Overall training and orientation.

In addition to the hazard-specific training identified in the second step, or the training in the use and care of personal protective equipment in the third step, identify all orientation, instruction and training that will be provided and note the agreed upon training dates/timeframes.

Some workplaces may have other training requirements, such as pedestrian training for walking in a factory, vehicle traffic rules, human resources policies and procedures, etc. that should be added to your list. *All students participating in OYAP, whether registered apprentices or not, should have all applicable health and safety components of the trade's Training Standard or Schedule of Training included in their Personalized Placement Learning Plan. The inclusion of these components will ensure that students receive the same high quality health and safety training as demanded of all apprentices.

Overall Safety Training/Nature of Training	Training Date[s]/ Time Frame
Workplace specific WHMIS training [may be included in the hazard-specific training if student is working with the products identified; if the student is working around or near the products, a WHMIS orientation program is appropriate]	Before using any WHMIS product
General workplace orientation – tour, location of fire exits and extinguishers, first aid stations and list of first aiders, evacuation procedures, MSDSs, staff bulletin boards, Joint Health and Safety Committee or Representative names and locations	
Job/Task specific training; regular operating procedures including use of any safety devices, applicable lock out procedures, written safety rules of use, etc.	
Other training required by the employer/workplace or as identified in the assessment process	
* For Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program [OYAP] students, workplace trade-specific health and safety training.	

STEP 5

Clearly establish who will provide supervision.

Lack of adequate supervision of young people in the workplace, along with little or no training; has been identified as two of the main contributors to injuries on the job. Ensure that supervision will be provided, which should include having a supervisor in or near the work area where the student is placed, continual observation of how the student performs the task, regular feedback when tasks aren't performed properly or safely and an opportunity for the student to ask questions. Consider including the name of the student's direct supervisor on the safety assessment so that everyone is clear who will be overseeing the student's work.

STEP 6

Include a note in case there are any changes in job assignment or introduction of new tasks.

Consider including a note that reminds the employer and supervisor that if a student is placed at a new job or if different types of tasks are assigned, a review of new safety training needs is expected so that appropriate orientation, training and safety equipment will be provided to the new work. Also note that you would like to be notified by the workplace before any new assignments are undertaken.

STEP 7

Acknowledge the results of the assessment.

Based on the information provided during the assessment meeting, note the date of the meeting and whether or not you recommend this placement for this student. Making this note, especially if the placement does not satisfy the educational needs or safety requirements, will benefit cooperative education teachers who may consider this placement in future semesters. You may decide that no is the answer:

- where there is a reluctance to show the type of work the student will do or the equipment they will work with or you don't feel you've been provided with all the information;
- where there is no commitment regarding training or the attitude makes you feel that the agreement for training is not sincere and may not be carried out;
- where you feel the tasks are beyond the capabilities of the student and may put him/her at undue risk;
- where the workplace feels there is no need for personal protective equipment when you're sure it is necessary for the job the student will undertake;
- where health and safety issues are minimized or treated as "part of the way we've always done this" or "not really necessary"; or
- where your instinct tells you that the student will be at risk it's okay to say no, thank you!

Adapted from the document: "Live Safe! Work Smart!" with revisions.

Health and Safety Association for Government Services

4950 Yonge Street, Sutie 902, Toronto ON M2N 6K1
tel: 416-250-2131 toll free: 1-877-250-7444 fax: 416-250-9190
www.hsags.ca