

Occupational Health and Safety Bulletin



Tips on Selecting an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Consultant

Why might I want to hire an OHS consultant?

Under the *OHS Act*, Regulation and Code, employers are required to protect the health and safety of their workers and other workers at the worksite. Often, employers rely upon themselves or their employees to ensure the worksite is healthy and safe. In some situations, an employer may choose to hire a consultant to assist them, such as when special expertise would be beneficial in addressing an issue that is complex or technical in nature.

Categories of consulting services

OHS consulting services may be available for a variety of topics. Some examples of these topics are:

1. Occupational hygiene
2. Occupational health
3. Workplace safety
4. Safety engineering
5. Ergonomics
6. Security

Tables 1 and 2 provide additional details about the consulting categories.

Government of Alberta ■

Table 1: Examples of Categories of OHS Consulting¹

Consulting category	Examples of consulting work	Examples of credentials of consultant ²
Occupational hygiene	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify hazardous environmental conditions and recommend ways to prevent injury or illness to workers. • Measure and improve environmental air quality. • Perform noise exposure assessments. • Perform chemical exposure assessments. • Recommend ways to reduce exposure to chemical, biological, physical or ergonomic hazards. • Inspect asbestos abatement projects. • Prepare hazardous materials assessment. • Conduct radiation measurements. 	<p>Designations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registered Occupational Hygienist (ROH), • Certified Industrial Hygienist (CIH), • Registered Occupational Hygiene Technologist (ROHT), or • Occupational Health and Safety Technologist (OHST). <p>Examples of Degrees or Diplomas with coursework in occupational hygiene:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Science (BSc), • Master of Engineering, • Master of Public Health (MPH) and • Diploma in Industrial or Occupational Hygiene.

Consulting category	Examples of consulting work	Examples of credentials of consultant ²
Occupational health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop measures to enhance physical, mental and social well-being of workers and prevent work-related injuries and illnesses. • Advise on Workers' Compensation claims involving disability case management and return-to-work programs, as well as claims not related to work. • Conduct employee health assessments. • Promote active worker participation in health and wellness activities. • Assist with monitoring and evaluation of health and safety programs. • Conduct radiation dose assessments. 	<p>Registered Nurse Designations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian Nurses Association Occupational Health Nursing Specialty (Certified) (COHN(C)), or • Certified Occupational Health Nurse (COHN). <p>Examples of Degrees with coursework in occupational health:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor of Science (BScN) in Nursing, or • Bachelor of Nursing (BN). <p>Physician Designation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fellow of The Royal College of Physicians of Canada, specializing in Occupational Medicine (FRCPC (Occ. Med.)). <p>Radiation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doctorate in Medical Physics (PhD) with specialization in Radiation.

Consulting category	Examples of consulting work	Examples of credentials of consultant ²
Workplace safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop procedural controls to prevent injury to workers or loss of property. • Identify hazards and recommend ways to prevent injuries. • Investigate incidents. • Conduct radiation safety audits. 	<p>Designations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian Registered Safety Professional (CRSP), • Certified Safety Professional (CSP), or • Occupational Health and Safety Technologist (OHST). <p>Degree or Diploma related to OHS with two or more years of related work experience (for example).</p>
Safety engineering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design, manufacture and operation of structures, machines, processes, products and systems. • Assess the safety of a piece of equipment (or re-certify it) and provide best practices on its operation and maintenance. • Classify areas under the Canadian Electrical Code. 	<p>Designations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional Engineer (P. Eng.) with specialization in area related to consulting service, or • Professional Technologist (Engineering) (P. Tech. (Eng.)). <p>Bachelor of Engineering degree (for example).</p>

Consulting category	Examples of consulting work	Examples of credentials of consultant ²
Ergonomics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and arrange work tasks, environment, conditions and equipment so that workers can interact efficiently, comfortably and safely. • Design work and layouts to prevent repetitive strain injuries and back pain. • Incorporate ergonomic principles into design of a product or machinery to prevent injuries. 	Designations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canadian Certified Professional Ergonomist (CCPE), or • Certified Professional Ergonomist (CPE). Bachelor or Master degree in Ergonomics, Kinesiology, Engineering or Occupational Therapy (for example).
Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop/review violence and harassment prevention and mitigation programs. • Develop personal security procedures for employees who travel. • Train employees to deal with emergencies/disasters. 	Designations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Certified Protection Professional (CPP) • Certified Security Consultant (CSC), or • Registered Psychologist (RP). Degree in Psychology or Criminology (for example). Police or emergency-preparedness work experience (for example).

¹ The services and expertise offered by a consultant in one consulting category may overlap with those of another category, and a mix of several categories of expertise may be available at individual consulting firms.

² This is not an exhaustive list of credentials. In some instances the OHS legislation may require specific expertise or credentials (e.g., Professional Engineer) and in those cases the relevant legislation must be followed.

Table 2: Common Subject Areas of OHS Consulting

Subject area	Examples of Categories of consulting expertise ¹					
	Occupational hygiene	Occupational health	Workplace safety	Safety engineering	Ergonomics	Security
Air quality	•					
Asbestos	•	•				
Audiometry		•				
Audits			•			
Biological and medical monitoring		•				
Chemical exposure	•	•				
Course development	•		•			
Cranes			•	•		
Electromagnetic radiation	•					
Emergency response planning	•		•			•
Engineering				•		
Environmental health	•	•				
Ergonomics		•			•	
Fall protection			•	•		
Fire/explosion	•		•	•		•
First aid		•				
General safety	•	•	•		•	•
Hazard Assessment	•	•	•	•	•	•
Hearing conservation	•	•				
Incident investigations	•		•	•		•
Indoor air quality	•					
Laboratory analysis	•					
Mould	•					
MSDS preparation	•					

Subject area	Examples of Categories of consulting expertise ¹					
	Occupational hygiene	Occupational health	Workplace safety	Safety engineering	Ergonomics	Security
Noise measurement and control	•					
Occupational health nursing		•				
Occupational hygiene	•					
Occupational physicians		•				
Publication development	•	•	•		•	
Radiation health and safety	•	•	•			
Respiratory protection	•	•				
Risk management	•	•	•	•	•	•
Road safety			•	•		•
Site inspection and assessment	•		•	•		•
Standards development	•	•	•	•	•	
Toxicology	•	•				
Training	•	•	•		•	•
Transportation of dangerous goods	•					
Ventilation systems	•			•		
WCB claims management		•				
WHMIS	•					

¹ The services and expertise offered by a consultant in one consulting category may overlap with those of another category, and a mix of several categories of expertise may be available at individual consulting firms.

Example steps in selecting an OHS consultant

Employers who choose to enlist the services of a consultant continue to carry the obligation of ensuring the health and safety of their workers and other workers present at their work sites. Therefore, it is important to do a proper job of selecting a consultant who is qualified to provide the necessary services. The following guide may assist you in selecting an OHS consultant:

1. Clearly identify your needs and expectations for the consultant, especially any timelines/requirements that may be identified in your OHS Compliance Orders (if any).
2. Examine the qualifications of more than one consultant if possible. Ask for relevant certifications, education, training, experience and references. Satisfy yourself that the consultant is qualified to provide the service needed. Some sources of consultant listings include:
 - the Yellow Pages, for example, under the categories “Safety Consultants and Training”, “Acoustical Consultants” or under the alphabetical index topic “Consultants”,
 - an Internet search engine under the keywords, for example, “occupational hygiene consultant Edmonton” or “noise assessment consultant Calgary”,
 - your industry health and safety association, some of which are listed at: www.employment.alberta.ca/SFW/337.html, or
 - by word of mouth from sources you trust.
3. You may invite the consultant(s) to come to your business for a meeting (if applicable) to discuss your needs, services offered, scope of work and the potential cost or fee structure. Having the consultant visit your work site may enable you to obtain a more reasonable cost estimate.
4. Compare consultants to one other and select the best one based on their ability to meet your needs.

Approved training courses

Most types of health and safety training do not require special approval by Alberta Human Services. However, under Alberta's OHS legislation, the following courses DO require government approval:

- asbestos abatement workers (working in restricted areas)
- audiometric technicians
- emergency mine rescue workers
- explosives workers (blaster's permits)
- first aiders and
- pulmonary function technicians (assessing exposure to asbestos, silica or coal dust).

Additional information about these courses is available at:
<http://employment.alberta.ca/SFW/265.html>.

For other types of work, employers have the responsibility to ensure workers are competent to perform their work in a healthy and safe manner. Suitable training, along with adequate qualifications and sufficient experience are all required. Alternatively, a worker who does not meet these requirements may work under the direct supervision of a competent worker.

Training for many trades and occupations (e.g., boilermaker, carpenter, crane operator, electrician, roofer) is approved by Alberta Advanced Education and Technology through the *Apprenticeship and Industry Training Act* and associated regulations, which are available at:

www.tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca/index.html?page=forms_publications/legislation/legislation.html.

Additional information about health and safety training and bulletins covering various types of work and hazards are available at:

www.employment.alberta.ca/SFW/12616.html.

Industry health and safety associations

Your industry health and safety association, if you are associated with one, likely offers a variety of OHS services, which may include:

- Health and safety training specific to your industry.
- Assisting your company in obtaining or maintaining a certificate of recognition (COR) for your company's health and safety program.
- Providing information or guidance on a variety of OHS topics.
- Health and safety advisory services specific for your company.

A listing of industry health and safety associations is available at:
www.employment.alberta.ca/SFW/337.html.

Contact us:

Province-Wide Contact Centre



Edmonton

780-415-8690



Other locations

1-866-415-8690

(Toll Free)



Deaf or hearing impaired

- Edmonton 780-427-9999
- Other locations 1-800-232-7215
(Toll Free)

Web Site



www.worksafe.alberta.ca

Getting copies of *OHS Act*, Regulation & Code:

Queen's Printer



www.qp.alberta.ca

Occupational Health and Safety



www.employment.alberta.ca/ohs-legislation



Edmonton 780-427-4952

Call any Government of Alberta office toll-free
Dial 310-0000, then the area code and telephone number you want to reach

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