

ALBERTA
FARM SAFETY
PROGRAM

A Farm Employer's Guide to Employee Orientation and Training

Growing Forward 2 

A federal-provincial-territorial initiative

Alberta  Government

Canada 

ALBERTA FARM SAFETY PROGRAM

TO OBTAIN COPIES OF THIS DOCUMENT, CONTACT:

**Alberta Agriculture and Forestry
Publications Office**
7000 113 Street
Edmonton, AB T6H 5T6
Toll free order line: 1-800-292-5697
www.agriculture.alberta.ca/publications

DISCLAIMER

While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, Alberta Agriculture and Forestry does not accept responsibility for errors or omissions. Contributors to this publication cannot be held responsible for publication errors or any consequences resulting from the use of this publication.

Although we include references to the legislation throughout this manual, it is the responsibility of owners and employers to review the legislation in its entirety and know which pieces apply to their operation.

©Copyright 2018

All rights reserved by her Majesty the Queen in Right of Alberta. Materials may not be reproduced without the permission of Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. Email inquiries to farm.safety@gov.ab.ca.



Table of Contents

The Importance of Orientation and Training	2
Why are New and Young Workers at a Higher Risk?	2
What's the Law?	3
What Does the <i>Occupational Health and Safety</i> act Say?	3
WCB Coverage for Workers	4
Due Diligence	4
Hazard Identification	4
Hiring and Training	5
Orientation	5
Orientation Day	6
Record Keeping	6
Why Train?	6
Goal of Training	7
Build Your Own Job-Specific Training Checklist	8
Organizing Your Orientation and Safety Training Program	9
Creating a Positive Work Environment	9
Making Safety Part of the Plan	10
How Does a Person Learn?	10
Sample Orientation and Safety Training Checklist	11
Sample General Orientation Checklist	12
Sample Training Record	13
Resources	14
Alberta Agriculture and Forestry Training Opportunities	14



The Importance of Orientation and Training

Training of new employees is good business and an important area of risk management on any farm. Well-trained, safe and healthy employees are essential for the smooth functioning of your operation. The loss of an employee due to an injury or illness can have a severe ripple effect and create many more hidden costs than you as the operator may realize. As well as the usual compensation and medical costs, there is down time in production, training time for replacement employees, repairs to damaged equipment, plus the psychological effect an accident has on other employees and families.

Workers need to be adequately trained to understand their tasks as well as their contribution to the larger picture. Never assume that someone has the common sense to work safely. Making an assumption like that can be dangerous, especially where a young or new worker is concerned.

There are some basics to a good training program that all owners, operators, and managers can use to make their operation efficient and safe for optimum production. You can help create a future workforce that is well-trained and safety conscious. A first job experience can shape a young person's attitudes and behaviours for the rest of their lives. You want their first job experience to be rewarding and safe.

This guide will provide information on employee orientation and training as it relates to ensuring a safe and healthy workplace.

Why are New and Young Workers at a Higher Risk?

Young worker health and safety is a major challenge in any sector of Alberta's workplaces. According to the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB), workers under 25 are one-third more likely to be injured than their older coworkers. Over 50 per cent of accidents involving young workers occur during their first six months on the job. Employers of this age group need to recognize the vulnerability of youth in the workplace, taking the time and effort to ensure their safety.

Supervision and training of new and young farm workers needs to be higher than older, more experienced workers as they may be in their first job and may have few job skills and little training. They're often willing to take risks, may not admit when they don't know something, and could struggle to follow a complex set of instructions. They typically don't like to ask questions and would rather "learn on the fly."

Developmentally, younger workers may not set their sights beyond the present, which explains an inability to consider long-term consequences of their actions. While a teen's capacity to solve complex problems increases as they mature, they are still relatively inexperienced in life and even older teens may apply their skills erratically or act without thinking of the outcome (healthychildren.org).

By providing both new and experienced workers with orientation and safety training, you will ensure that all workers are trained and competent leading to greater levels of success with job tasks and workplace satisfaction.



What's the Law?

Alberta farms and ranches employing one or more paid workers are included under the provincial *Occupational Health and Safety Act* governing safety in the workplace. This includes any operation directly or indirectly involved in the production of crops and the raising of livestock.

Farms and ranches who do not employ paid farm workers or who employ family members are exempt from *Occupational Health and Safety Act* legislation. For more information on who is covered by the legislation and who isn't, visit the farm and ranch workplace legislation webpage at www.alberta.ca/farm-and-ranch.aspx.

What Does the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* Say?

For Alberta workplaces operating under the *OHS Act* (including the regulations), there are requirements placed on employers to ensure:

- workers are aware of the hazards and safe work procedures,
- the safety of workers employed or present at the worksite,
- work is being done by a competent worker or the worker is being supervised by a competent worker,
- workers have safety training and are familiar and competent in the use of safety equipment and procedures,
- processes are in place to protect workers from harmful substances, and
- WCB Coverage is provided for all waged, non-family workers.

The *OHS Act* also places responsibility on the worker to:

- refuse unsafe work,
- protect their own health and that of others,
- cooperate with the employer to protect the health and safety of everyone on site,
- ask for training and not perform work if they are not competent,
- immediately report any equipment that is not safe or is not being used safely, and
- follow the employer's health and safety practices.

The above is a general listing of responsibilities under the *OHS Act*. For more details or copies of the *OHS Act*, go to <http://employment.alberta.ca>.

WCB Coverage for Workers

In Alberta, the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) provides no-fault insurance coverage for employers and employees. If you have one or more waged, non-family workers on your farm, then WCB coverage is mandatory. The WCB provides disability benefits for workers injured on the job, and liability insurance for employers. This means that as an employer you will be protected from court action by injured workers. More information on WCB coverage can be found at www.wcb.ab.ca.

Due Diligence

If your operation is covered under the *OHS Act*, you must be able to show due diligence by providing a safe work environment and offering sufficient job-related training to your employees.

Orientation activities to any new workplace are very important for safety. Workers need to be oriented when they first arrive at the workplace. They need to know the facilities, equipment, safety expectations, the dos and don'ts, disciplinary measures, emergency response, how to contact their supervisor, and they need to be trained for their job. This means more than simply handing them a manual – time must be spent with the new worker to ensure that they are adequately oriented and trained before starting any tasks. Using an orientation guide and checklist can help supervisors and managers ensure that all workers receive the same level of orientation and training while also providing a means to document proof of that training.

Hazard Identification

Every workplace has potential hazards. As an employer or supervisor, you need to know what these potential hazards are so that you can communicate them to your workers. Over the years, you may have become accustomed to some of the hazards on your operation and it can take a fresh set of eyes or a checklist to remind you of their existence.

There are many useful and customizable safety checklists, inspection lists and safety audits available online or through Alberta Agriculture and Forestry. These audits or checklists can be used to formally document your hazard identification process. Alberta Agriculture and Forestry's FarmSafe Alberta is a safety planning guide available to farmers by visiting www.agriculture.alberta.ca/farmsafety. The safety planning process will go a long way in helping you identify your farm's hazards and decide how to best eliminate or reduce the risks.



Hiring and Training

Frustration often occurs when an employee spends one or two days on a new job and decides it isn't the right job. Likewise, the employer may suddenly realize that the person hired is not working out. In order to hire the right person, be sure to outline the requirements of the job and the specific skills required. A concise job description will help both you and the prospective employee decide if the job is right for them.

When looking for the right person, take the time to ensure they are a good fit for the realities of the job. Be prepared to train all new workers even if they are experienced. They will need to become familiar with your rules, processes, machinery, and premises.

Ensure they understand the importance of working safely. Ask about their previous training and work experience. Check their references to see if they have a positive safety record. Confirm the validity of any certification or accreditations they claim to have.

Qualifications could include:

- industry-specific certificates,
- apprenticeship programs (e.g. Green Certificate training), and
- specific operator skills, certificates and licenses.

New and young workers will need extra time and attention during the training period. They may not ask many questions, perhaps for fear of looking incompetent or too inexperienced. They also may not know the questions they need to ask. It is important to put workers at ease and create an environment where they will feel free to ask questions. Emphasize and support the fact that questions can make all the difference in preventing an injury, illness, or even death.

Orientation

Develop an orientation plan for new or transferred workers. Ensure all employees receive the information and training necessary for their safety. Plan to provide the orientation for all new employees during their first week on the job (preferably on the first day).

Explain your commitment to safety when you bring someone into your operation. Orient your workers and use this time to find out what training they need. Make sure you train them to control the hazards within each task. Make it clear that they should not do a job until they know how to do it safely do not encourage risk taking. You should let all workers know that you have a disciplinary process for non-compliance; there are consequences for not following your health and safety standards. This should prompt everyone to ask for help before tackling unfamiliar or hazardous tasks.

Review critical health and safety topics with workers prior to them starting any tasks on the farm. The following topics should be on your orientation checklist. Ensure they are reviewed before an employee starts the job.

CRITICAL HEALTH AND SAFETY TOPICS

- Organization rules/enforcement
- Right to refuse unsafe work
- Emergency response
- Accident/incident notification
- Critical hazards

Orientation Day

Do you remember your first day on the job? The excitement or anxiety in starting a new job can mean that new workers may arrive nervous, tense or tired from a poor night's sleep. Orientation day can be overwhelming with meeting new people, learning new surroundings and remembering new rules and procedures. You are sharing vitally important information, yet new and young workers may be less likely to ask questions or speak up if they're feeling overwhelmed.

Over half of all workplace incidents involving young workers occur during the first six months on the job. Pace the orientation and seek to continuously monitor and orient the worker during the first weeks. An employer and new employee should only sign the orientation checklist when everyone is confident the task is complete – not just to get the paperwork out of the way.

EMPLOYMENT SCREENING TOOLS

- Formal application forms
- Interviews
- Competency testing
- Reference checks
- Driver's abstract
- Valid driver's license

Record Keeping

Maintain records of training, including worker orientations, and note when training updates or refresher courses are required. Good records are a valuable tool for supervisors.

- Records must include the training given, to whom, by whom, and when.
- Review the orientation and training programs on a regular basis to ensure training is kept up-to-date and new needs are met.

It is important to keep a record of training events, trainers and participants. Include participants' signatures to prove they did receive the training and understood what was taught.

Why Train?

Proper orientation and training of new employees is one part of good human resource management in your operation. With good training the employee should:

- know the reason for the job they are doing,
- know more about the process than they did before,
- understand something not previously understood,
- develop new skills,
- know where to go for assistance if required,
- know how to do the job safely and correctly, and
- understand the consequences of not following a process.

Training is not a one-time event. Training should be ongoing with regular follow-up evaluation of performance. It should cover all relevant operating and handling information, including emergency procedures, first aid facilities, any restricted areas, precautions required to protect workers from hazards, and any other health and safety procedures, plans, policies or programs applicable to the worker.

- Organization rules/enforcement
- Right to refuse unsafe work
- Emergency response
- Accident/incident notification
- Critical hazards



Goal of Training

The goal of training is to ensure workers can do the job safely and without risk to health. In order to do this, workers must be competent – adequately qualified, suitably trained and with sufficient experience to perform the work safely.

Qualified + Trained + Experienced ➡ Competency

Training is more than providing information. Successful training requires a physical demonstration that the worker has the required knowledge or skills and can do the job safely. It's your responsibility to establish and communicate safe work practices for each task that an employee or family member is expected to perform.



Build Your Own Job-Specific Training Checklist

Use this worksheet to brainstorm training that may be useful for specific activities on your farm or ranch. Training could be formal or informal, on-site or off-site, provided on-the-job or online, and more! There are many options.

Activities	What Training Will Be Provided?

To help you determine training needs, consider:

- hazards identified in a hazard identification and assessment process,
- safe work practices and procedures that have been developed for hazardous tasks, and
- legal requirements for training (in most instances, training for performing dangerous tasks is required by legislation).



Organizing Your Orientation and Safety Training Program

Training new employees will be much more efficient and less time consuming if the basic outline is down on paper. This will also help to show due diligence if you ensure that every new employee receives the same training even if different managers are in charge.

Training programs will vary in complexity depending on the nature and size of the operation. For some operations, a signed and dated checklist kept on file may suffice, while others will need a more complex plan. It may seem difficult to find enough time to orient and train new workers and tempting to let it slide. Yet, job training is recognized as being fundamental in reducing the risk of accidents and injuries in the workplace.

CREATING A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

When developing your orientation and training plan for your employees, keep the following in mind in order to create a positive learning environment:

- Value and recognize existing training, skills and experiences.
- Workplace training is not limited to a 'traditional' classroom setting; think outside the box.
- Encourage conversation, opportunities to practice, support, and guidance.
- Provide clear feedback on errors privately, with tact.
- Involve workers in planning for training.
- Communicate as many details about the learning as you can, including expectations, what will be covered, estimated time to complete, if there's a test, etc.
- Learning should be logical and sequential, building from basic skills towards more complex skills.
- Time is valuable; select training that is relevant to the job or tasks being performed.
- Seek feedback on training provided (on the job, on-site, off-site)—would workers recommend the same training in the future?
- Value the time spent in learning and maintain a record of training regardless of how it was delivered: on the job, on-site, off-site, online, mentorship, etc.



Making Safety Part of the Plan

Every year, too many new and young employees are injured on the job. Many of the injuries can be directly linked to a lack of worker knowledge. Never assume that a worker knows what to do; it could prove fatal. When a worker is trained and competent to perform a task in the correct manner, benefits include less frustration, improved morale, increased productivity, and a safer workplace.

All workplaces need to have a safety policy, which is a simple statement of intent to provide a safe workplace. The safety policy communicates your views on safety as a priority and should be discussed with all new, seasonal, temporary, and existing workers. Using an orientation and safety training checklist as the basis you can expand your written safety policy to include a written safety plan. Hazard identification and safety control information will help to complete your plan. Visit the resource list at the back of this book for ideas on how to get started.

HOW DOES A PERSON LEARN?

Humans tend to learn and remember based on their involvement. It is not enough to give verbal instructions and expect that a worker will understand and remember when it comes time to do the task.

A learner tends to remember:

- 20% of what they hear (your verbal instructions)
- 30% of what they see (while they watch the task demonstrated)
- 50% of what they see and hear (having the task explained and demonstrated at the same time)
- 70% of what they say (verbally repeating steps of the task)
- 90% of what they say and do (telling you the steps while performing the task themselves)

Sample Orientation and Safety Training Checklist

Before the new employee arrives on the worksite:

- Meet with the new employee before their first day to answer questions. You may have some written information on the operation that they can familiarize themselves with prior to starting work.
- Let them know what information is required for your records and payroll so they can bring it with them on the first day.
- Discuss dress code requirements and any safety gear they need to purchase before starting (e.g. work boots).
- Tell them where to park their vehicle when they arrive and where they can find you or the supervisor in charge.
- Inform other employees of the new hire so they can be prepared to welcome the new person and assist with orientation and training as necessary.

Once the new worker arrives:

- Give a tour of the farm and facilities – including introductions to other employees.
- Show emergency exits, muster point and discuss what to do in an emergency.
- Show location of all fire extinguishers and training on how to use a fire extinguisher.
- Show where first aid kits are kept and introduce worker to trained first aiders.
- Show locations of sinks, clean work gear, laundry hampers, sharps disposal, garbage cans, and rag disposal.
- Provide hands-on training on the equipment the worker will use.
- Review operator manuals.
- Outline machinery and personal vehicle safety rules.
- Discuss speed regulations, pre-operational checks, operating license, parking, etc.
- Discuss specific hazards in the work environment and how you control the risks of exposure:
 - Expectation to keep all guards in place and that short-cutting is not permitted.
 - Training required before operating any equipment, machinery, implement, or too.l
 - General housekeeping rules like putting tools away, cleaning up spills, wrapping up cords and hoses, and inspecting tools prior to use.
 - General safety rules and reasons for each.
 - How to recognize unsafe conditions and how to refuse unsafe work.
 - Training that will be provided like WHMIS, fall prevention, and standard first aid.
 - Workplace hygiene like washing hands before and after working with livestock.
 - Expectation for using the personal protective equipment (PPE) supplied. Show worker where to find, select, and inspect PPE for the task.
- Ensure worker knows who receives reports of injuries, damages, and near-misses.
- Discuss expectations for personal work habits (e.g. no horseplay, smoking in designated area, no short-cutting or inattention, cell phone use on the job).
- Review disciplinary action.

Employee Name: _____

Employer Name: _____

Employee Signature: _____

Employer Signature: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

Sample General Orientation Checklist

_____ [Farm Name] _____'s General Orientation Checklist. Keep a copy of this form in the employee's record of training.

Orientation Instructions

1. Use this checklist to orient all new employees on or before the first day of employment.
2. Only check off each subject when you are sure that the employee fully understands it.
3. This orientation should take approximately two hours.
4. Once finished, have the employee sign the bottom to indicate he/she has received the orientation.
5. The safety coordinator will also sign the bottom to indicate the orientation has been given.
6. Once the orientation is completed, a copy will go to the appropriate supervisor and the original to the employee file.
7. Provide refresher sessions as tasks change on the farm.

Employee Name: _____

Supervisor: _____

Date of Hire: _____

Orientation Date: _____

- Organizational rules/enforcement
- Right to refuse unsafe work
- Emergency response
- Accident/incident notification
- Critical hazards
- Health and safety policies
- Controls and safe work procedures
- Employee responsibilities
- Employer responsibilities
- Personal protective equipment
- Training requirements
- Enforcement policy

Safety Coordinator: _____

Employee: _____

Date: _____

Sample Training Record

Employee Name	Date Hired	New Hire Orientation (General)	New Hire Orientation (Work Area)	First Aid	Pesticide Application	WHMIS	Machine Operation
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							
6							
7							
8							
9							
10							
11							
12							

Resources

There are many great resources available to employers looking for information on safety training for new workers. The resources listed below are a sample of what is available.

ONLINE

Alberta Farm Safety Program | <http://www.agriculture.alberta.ca/farmsafety>

- Support, information, publications, checklists, planning templates

Alberta Green Certificate Program | <http://www.agriculture.alberta.ca/greencertificate>

- Agricultural apprenticeship-style training program

Alberta Ministry of Labour | <http://employment.alberta.ca>

- Occupational health and safety information, publications, OHS contact centre

AgSafe Alberta | <http://www.agsafeab.ca>

- Courses, resources, on-farm safety consultations, audits and assessments

Ontario Farm Safety | <http://www.wsps.ca/farmsafety>

- Information, fact sheets, e-courses

Canadian Agricultural Safety Association | <http://www.casa-acsa.ca/>

- Information, fact sheets, e-courses, toolbox talks

Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety | <http://www.ccohs.ca/>

- Information, posters, e-courses, webinars

AgSafe B.C. | <http://www.agsafebc.ca/>

- Information, publications, checklists, fact sheets

Alberta Agriculture and Forestry Training Opportunities

FarmSafe Alberta – A planning guide to help farmers develop their own health and safety management systems on their farm. Designed to be completed with assistance from a FarmSafe Advisor, and in compliance with the Certificate of Recognition (COR) program. For more information or to organize a workshop, visit www.agriculture.alberta.ca/farmsafety.

Alberta Green Certificate Program – An apprenticeship-style farm training program that provides an opportunity for high school students to gain hands-on experience in the agriculture sector of their choice. It is recognized by Alberta Education as an approved complementary 16-credit program, and is available to all Alberta high schools. For more information visit www.agriculture.alberta.ca/greencertificate.

