Occupational health and safety changes

Albertans would see an improved OHS system that better protects workers and ensures they have the same rights as other Canadians.

Overview

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (the act) establishes the minimum standards for healthy and safe workplaces in Alberta. These laws are supported through the internal responsibility system and enforced through compliance activities.

Alberta has not done a comprehensive review of the OHS system since it was enacted in 1976. Much has changed since then.

A comprehensive review of the OHS system was concluded in fall 2017. We received more than 1,300 survey responses and nearly 90 written submissions from Albertans and more than 200 stakeholders participated in 8 roundtable discussions across the province. Feedback was used to inform proposed changes to the act.

Bill 30: *An Act to Protect the Health and Well-being of Working Albertans* proposes changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Act that would better protect Albertans at work.

If passed, most of the changes would come into effect June 1, 2018.

Basic rights of workers

The proposed changes would enshrine the three basic rights of workers in Alberta's legislation:

- **The right to refuse unsafe work** protects workers from any form of reprisal for exercising this right, including loss of compensation or benefits.
- **The right to know** ensures workers are informed about potential hazards and have access to basic health and safety information in the workplace.
- **The right to participate** ensures workers are involved in health and safety discussions, including participation in health and safety committees.

Responsibilities of worksite parties

The OHS system is grounded on the principle that everyone in the workplace is responsible for health and safety in the workplace.

- Employers would be responsible for:
  - ensuring the health, safety and welfare of workers and the public
  - providing competent supervisors, training workers, and preventing violence and harassment