

Suggested article for association newsletters

Best practices series helps employers and workers understand OHS principles

The final installments in a series of best practice guidelines for improving health and safety in the healthcare industry have been released. *Best Practices for the Assessment and Control of Psychological Hazards* and an interactive eLearning awareness program complete the series, which is aimed at helping employers and workers in healthcare settings understand the basic principles of occupational health and safety and requirements of the OHS legislation.

Though the number of healthcare workers being injured on the job has dropped in recent years, the lost-time claim rate for Alberta's healthcare industries remains a concern at double the provincial average. In 2010, healthcare industries saw a lost-time claim rate of 2.89 injuries for every 100 full-time jobs, compared to 2.94 in 2009. The average lost-time claim rate for workers in all sectors in 2010 was 1.41.

Healthcare workers often work in fast-paced and high-stress environments and may come into contact with a variety of hazards, from slippery floors and contaminated needles to heavy lifts and violence. Ultimately, the guides and eLearning program, which is based on the entire series, will help employers and workers identify these hazards and understand and promote best practices in their workplaces.

The series was developed by Human Services through its Work Safe Alberta strategy and the Healthcare Industry Health and Safety Initiative. Along with government, numerous industry and labour associations contributed to the series.

The complete package, including an overview, best practices for biological, chemical, physical and psychological hazards, and eLearning awareness program, is available at www.employment.alberta.ca/ohs-healthcare. For printed copies, call the Occupational Health and Safety Contact Centre at 1-866-415-8690 (toll free in Alberta).