

# WORKING ALONE

## A HANDBOOK FOR SMALL BUSINESS



**WORK SAFE BC**

WORKING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE  
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## **About WorkSafeBC**

WorkSafeBC (the Workers' Compensation Board) is an independent provincial statutory agency governed by a Board of Directors. It is funded by insurance premiums paid by registered employers and by investment returns. In administering the *Workers Compensation Act*, WorkSafeBC remains separate and distinct from government; however, it is accountable to the public through government in its role of protecting and maintaining the overall well-being of the workers' compensation system.

WorkSafeBC was born out of a compromise between B.C.'s workers and employers in 1917 where workers gave up the right to sue their employers or fellow workers for injuries on the job in return for a no-fault insurance program fully paid for by employers. WorkSafeBC is committed to a safe and healthy workplace, and to providing return-to-work rehabilitation and legislated compensation benefits to workers injured as a result of their employment.

## **WorkSafeBC Prevention Information Line**

The WorkSafeBC Prevention Information Line can answer your questions about workplace health and safety, worker and employer responsibilities, and reporting a workplace accident or incident. The Prevention Information Line accepts anonymous calls.

Phone 604 276-3100 in the Lower Mainland, or call 1 888 621-7233 (621-SAFE) toll-free in British Columbia.

To report after-hours and weekend accidents and emergencies, call 604 273-7711 in the Lower Mainland, or call 1 866 922-4357 (WCB-HELP) toll-free in British Columbia.

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## WorkSafeBC publications

Many publications are available online at WorkSafeBC.com, including searchable versions of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation and associated policies and guidelines, as well as excerpts and summaries of the *Workers Compensation Act*.

Some publications are also available for purchase in print:

Phone: 604 232-9704

Toll-free phone: 1 866 319-9704

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# Introduction

Employees who work alone or in isolation tend to be more vulnerable than those who have co-workers present, particularly if the lone worker is on shift during late night hours. If a lone worker is injured or an emergency occurs, how does the worker get help? What if the worker is unconscious? Even though such incidents aren't that common, when they do occur the consequences can be serious.

Employees who work alone or in isolation also face an increased risk of confrontations or even violence. For example, a lone retail worker may be more vulnerable when dealing with angry, difficult, or abusive customers. Even if an incident doesn't lead to a physical confrontation, it can still be stressful or emotionally traumatic for the worker.



*A simple person check procedure involving regular phone calls will help ensure that an employee working alone is safe on the job.*

### **Do you have employees who are assigned to work alone or in isolation?**

If the answer is “yes,” you must do the following:

- Identify hazards and assess risks, and tell workers about them. See pages 8–10.
- Eliminate or minimize the hazards. See pages 11–12.
- Develop and implement a written procedure for checking on the well-being of workers (a person check procedure). See page 13.
- Train workers in the person check procedure. See page 15.
- Review written procedures at least annually, or more frequently if there is a change in work arrangements or the procedures are not effective.

### **Who should use this handbook**

This handbook is for employers who have employees working alone or in isolation. For examples of employees who may be working alone or in isolation, see page 7.

The *Workers Compensation Act* (the *Act*) requires employers to provide a workplace that is as safe as possible for their workers. Specific requirements for working alone or in isolation are described in the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (the *Regulation*). This handbook explains these requirements, and describes how employers can meet their legal obligations to provide a safe working environment for employees.

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# What does working alone or in isolation mean?

According to the Regulation, to work alone or in isolation “means to work in circumstances where assistance would not be readily available to the worker (a) in case of an emergency, or (b) in case the worker is injured or in ill health.”

To determine whether or not assistance is “readily available,” ask the following questions:

- Are other people in the vicinity?
- Are those people aware of your worker’s need for assistance?
- Are they willing to provide assistance?
- Are they able to provide assistance in a timely manner?

## Examples of working alone or in isolation

- Retail (convenience store) employees
- Taxi drivers
- Truck and delivery drivers
- Home care and social services employees
- By-law officers and security guards
- Forestry workers (doing high-hazard work with no regular interaction with other people)
- Warehouse workers in cold rooms or freezers
- Night cleaners and custodians in private and public buildings
- Night-shift employees

## Working alone or in isolation does not include

- Independent realtors
- Owner-operators of trucks



### **Occupational Health and Safety Regulation**

See sections 4.20.1– 4.22 and 4.23.

### **Late night retail premises**

The Regulation includes specific requirements for late night retail premises that operate between the hours of 10:00 p.m. and 6:00 a.m. (late night hours). See section 4.22.1 and its associated guidelines for the most current requirements.

Late night retail premises means a retail location that is open to the public for late night hours, including the following:

- A gas station or other retail fueling outlet
- A convenience store or any other retail store where goods are sold directly to consumers

# Hazard identification and risk assessment

If you have an employee who is working alone or in isolation, it's your responsibility as an employer to tell the employee about any hazards in the workplace. This means you will need to identify hazards and assess the risks associated with them.

You can prevent most workplace injuries and illnesses by identifying hazards and taking steps to eliminate them. If you can't eliminate them, then implement controls to minimize the risk to your workers. Hazard identification doesn't have to be a complicated process. Start by going over each area of your workplace — look for hazards and think about what could possibly go wrong in a specific area or while a specific task is being carried out.

## Examples of potential hazards

You might find, for example, that a cluttered storage area is creating tripping hazards (hazardous area); or that workers are at risk of violence when they are making cash deposits (hazardous task).

### Other potential hazards

Hazard	Example of scenario
Motor vehicle accident	Driving alone on a rural road that is infrequently travelled
Falls	Using a ladder (even if it's a short stepladder)
Burns	Working around hot cooking oil
Sprains and strains	Lifting heavy boxes
Violence	Working alone during late night hours
Chemical exposures	Using cleaning products, paint products, or other potentially hazardous materials

## How to identify hazards

Follow these basic guidelines:

- Consider all aspects of your business — Think about the location, nature, and circumstances of your business or industry.
- Consider previous accidents — How many incidents have there been in your workplace and what happened? What about incidents at nearby businesses or previous work locations?
- Involve your employees — Ask for their input regarding current problems, concerns, and possible solutions.

## How to assess risks

Once you've identified hazards, the next step is to assess the risks associated with them. A risk assessment will help you prioritize which hazards should be dealt with immediately and which ones can be dealt with later. When assessing risks, try to determine how likely an incident is and how serious it would be.

### How likely is it that the hazardous condition or situation will result in an incident?

- Have there been previous incidents at your location?
- Have there been similar incidents at nearby businesses?

### If an incident does occur, how serious would it be?

What were the outcomes of previous incidents? For example, did an incident result in a minor injury? Did it require a trip to the hospital? If it was a violent incident, were weapons used? Did it involve verbal abuse or threats?

If an incident is likely to happen or it could result in a serious injury, then you should deal with that hazard first, and you will probably need to develop written safe work procedures for it. If an incident is unlikely or it would only result in a minor injury, then that hazard should be placed further down the list, and there is probably no need to develop written procedures.



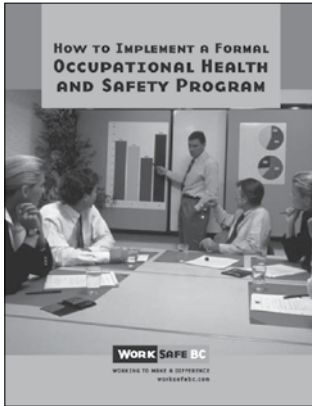
*Even a stepladder can be a serious potential hazard for workers who are working alone or in an isolated location.*



## Involve your employees

If your company is small, include all your employees in the risk assessment process. If your company is larger, gather as many employees as possible. Make sure at least one person from every site, section, and shift is present. Gather groups by division or job description, or include a representative from each. It is essential to involve the joint health and safety committee (or worker health and safety representative, if applicable).

In a very large organization, you may want to supplement this process by distributing a memo or form asking for employee input. The form can be anonymous, but it's a good idea to have employees list their job types, shifts, and locations (for example, "file clerk, afternoon shift, Surrey office").



### Reference

For more information on health and safety programs, see the WorkSafeBC publication *How to Implement a Formal Occupational Health and Safety Program*.

## Identify hazards during safety inspections

Hazard identification and risk control are key components of an occupational health and safety program. Your health and safety program should also include regular safety inspections. Besides being an employer requirement, a safety inspection provides a good opportunity to identify hazards. You might find it helpful to use an inspection checklist such as the sample on pages 22–25.

# Eliminating hazards or minimizing risks

Once you've identified hazards and assessed the risks associated with them, you need to find ways to control those risks. Risk control involves eliminating the hazard entirely, whenever possible; if that is unrealistic, risks must be minimized as much as possible.

## Engineering and administrative controls

If a hazard cannot be eliminated, there are two options for minimizing the risks associated with the hazard: engineering controls and administrative controls.

### Engineering controls

Engineering controls minimize risk by modifying the physical work environment. This may involve the physical arrangement, design, or alteration of workstations, equipment, materials, production facilities, or other aspects of the environment. For example, installing a protective barrier between an employee and the public is an engineering control.

### Administrative controls

Administrative controls minimize risk by modifying work processes or activities. This may involve the provision, use, and scheduling of work activities and resources in the workplace, including planning, organizing, staffing, and coordinating. For example, rearranging the work schedule so that more than one employee is always on shift is an administrative control.

## How to minimize risks

The following are some guidelines for minimizing risks:

- Modify equipment or the design of the workplace. For example, reduce the risk of falls by storing stock at lower heights so workers don't have to climb ladders to retrieve it.
- Select appropriate safety features when purchasing or replacing equipment. For example, minimize the risk of a "caught in machinery" accident by making sure a dough mixing machine has an effective safeguard.
- Modify work procedures. For example, minimize the risk of violence by telling employees to use main entrances, not secluded or rear exits, when leaving work.
- Develop and implement safe work procedures. Make sure workers follow the procedures.
- Make sure workers use personal protective equipment such as gloves, goggles, ear plugs, and safety footwear.
- Schedule deliveries when there is more than one worker to help with lifting.
- Make sure that only trained and experienced people perform hazardous tasks.

# Written safe work procedures

Some tasks require workers to follow a written safe work procedure to eliminate or minimize risks. For example, in your workplace you may have developed a procedure for locking out machinery before cleaning it. Here are examples of topics that require written safe work procedures:

- Lockout
- Fall protection
- Personal protective equipment
- Violence in the workplace
- Chemical spill clean-up
- Emergency evacuation
- Person check procedures

## Person check procedures

In addition to any other written safe work procedures, employers must develop and implement a procedure for checking on the well-being of employees who are working alone or in isolation. A person check procedure must include the following:

- The designated person who will establish contact and record results
- Time intervals between checks
- A check at the end of the shift
- A procedure to follow in case the employee cannot be contacted

The time intervals for checking the well-being of the employee must be developed in consultation with the employee assigned to work alone or in isolation. Time intervals should be based on the level of risk the employee is exposed to, with lower risks allowing for longer periods between checks. For example, an employee in a store that is located in a strip mall, with workers of other employers nearby, may not require checks as frequently as a worker who is working in an isolated premises.

The person assigned to check on the well-being of a worker must be trained in the written safe work procedures and what to do if they are unable to make contact with the worker.

### **Reference**

For a sample procedure for regular person checks, see page 27. For a sample check-in frequency worksheet, see pages 20–21.

### **Tip**

There are also monitoring services that you can hire to take care of the person check needs for your business. Search for “lone worker” or “working alone” on the web.

## Review written procedures

Written safe work procedures must be reviewed in all the following cases:

- At least once a year
- Whenever there is a change in work arrangements or the procedures are not effective
- Immediately following an incident related to the procedures

### Written procedures for handling money

Section 4.22.1 of the Regulation also requires employers to develop and implement a written procedure for handling money during late night hours if an employee is working alone and there is any risk of harm from a violent act. Here are some guidelines to follow when you're developing your own written procedures.

Follow these guidelines for handling money:

- Handle money at a location away from entrances and exits.
- Keep as little cash in the cash register as possible.
- Place large bills in a drop box, safe, or strongroom that is out of sight.
- Use only one cash register and leave the cash tray of the unused register open and visible

Follow these guidelines for making bank deposits:

- Avoid making bank deposits at night.
- Vary the time and route for making deposits.
- Don't carry money in bags marked with the company logo or that make it obvious that cash is being transported.
- Make deposits with a co-worker, where practicable. The co-worker should face away from the depository to keep an eye on other people in the area.



*Keep larger amounts of money locked out of sight in a safe or strongbox to make the register a less desirable target for robbery.*



# Training

All workers need supervised, hands-on training in the written safe work procedures that apply to their jobs. For example, if an employee is required to operate a tool or machine, that employee has to be properly trained in the written procedures for using the equipment safely. Employees must be properly trained before they start a job.

## What should employee training include?

Training should include how to:

- Perform tasks safely
- Operate machines and equipment safely
- Use and maintain any required personal protective equipment such as gloves or goggles
- Identify and report hazards

Employees who work alone must also be trained in the written person check procedures for your workplace. Employees who work alone in late night retail premises must be trained in cash handling procedures (see page 14).

You may need to explain what tasks employees should not do without specific training or qualifications, such as operating a forklift or handling chemicals. Make employees aware of any restricted access areas, such as confined spaces.

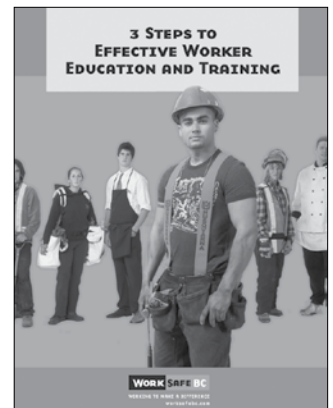
## Identifying and reporting hazards

During training or orientation, discuss or point out hazards in the workplace. Discuss past accidents and near misses that have occurred and how they might have been avoided. Explain what has been done to prevent these incidents from recurring.

Explain what workers should do when they see an unsafe condition or hazard. They should eliminate the hazard if they are able to do so safely (for example, clean up a spill). If they cannot eliminate the hazard, they should immediately report it to their supervisor, who will ensure that corrective action is taken.

### Young and new workers

Young and new workers need special attention because they are at more risk of injury than their older or more experienced counterparts. Sections 3.22 to 3.25 of the Regulation specify requirements for the training and orientation of young and new workers.



### Reference

For more information on training employees, including an orientation checklist and a list of orientation and training topics, see the WorkSafeBC publication *3 Steps to Effective Worker Education and Training*.

# Workplace violence

## What is workplace violence?

Workplace violence is the attempted or actual exercise by a person, other than a worker, of any physical force so as to cause injury to a worker. Violence doesn't have to be a physical act — it can include any threatening statement or behaviour that gives a worker reasonable cause to believe that he or she is at risk of injury.

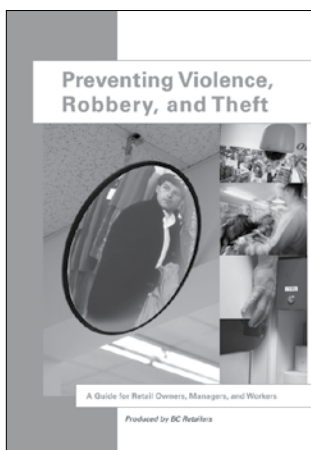
There are many potential hazards in a typical workplace, but the most common hazard in retail operations is violence. The following scenarios all carry a risk of violence, particularly if an employee is working alone:

- Robbery and assault
- Theft (shoplifting)
- Irate or abusive customers or clients
- Unwelcome members of the public (loiterers)

Whenever there is direct interaction between employees and the public, there is a potential for violence to occur. According to the Regulation, if experience in a specific workplace or in similar workplaces indicates that a potential for violence exists (for example, in the retail industry), you are required to identify hazards, assess the risks, and eliminate or control those risks.

## What if a violent incident occurs?

If an incident occurs, the employee involved should fill out a Violent Incident report (see pages 30–31) and a Suspect and Vehicle Identification sheet (see page 29) as soon as possible, while the details are still fresh in the employee's mind. The employer must ensure that an incident investigation takes place. Fill out Form 52E40 — Incident Investigation Report (see page 32) and submit a copy to WorkSafeBC.



### Reference

For more information on workplace violence and how to prevent it, see the WorkSafeBC publication *Preventing Violence, Robbery, and Theft: A Guide for Retail Owners, Managers, and Workers*.

## Violence prevention tips for retail employees

Minimize the risk to employees by following these guidelines:

- Keep all outside areas well lit.
- Designate a well-lit parking spot close to the building for those who work alone after hours.
- Ensure that back doors are locked from the outside when not in use (but don't violate local fire codes).
- Keep doors and windows free of posters to ensure a clear line of sight.
- Lower shelving units so workers have a clear line of sight to all parts of your business.
- Install overhead mirrors so workers can see all parts of the store from the cash register area.
- Raise the area where your cash register is located. Keep counter-top displays to a minimum.
- Build the counter high and deep enough to provide some physical distance from threatening individuals.
- Install a panic or emergency alarm for workers.
- Regularly check on workers who are working alone. Consider providing workers with an automatic warning device that triggers if movement or signals are not detected within a set time.
- Post signs that state there is no cash or minimal cash less than \$20 on the premises, or that it is locked in a safe.
- Install security cameras and advertise their presence.
- Identify areas where workers can safely retreat and call for help.
- Train workers to check that all the doors and windows are locked and that no one is in the washroom or storage room before one person is left to work alone.
- Train workers not to resist if they are threatened with violence.
- Organize specific work tasks that may place a worker at risk of injury from violence so those tasks will be completed when there is more than one employee working.



*Overhead mirrors allow workers to see other parts of the store from the cash register.*

## Violence prevention tips for delivery drivers

Minimize the risk to delivery drivers by following these guidelines:

- Provide drivers with a communication system such as cellular phone or two-way radio that is in functional range wherever they might be required to drive.
- Maintain delivery vehicles in good running order, and ensure that drivers know how to perform basic emergency repairs, such as changing tires.
- Encourage drivers not to wear expensive jewelry.
- Require drivers to cash out on each delivery, by depositing all cash from a delivery before leaving the store again.
- Remove signage from the tops and sides of cars.
- Encourage drivers to use a bright flashlight to find addresses or check the perimeter.
- Train drivers not to take unnecessary risks. For example, if they feel a situation is unsafe they should use a cell phone to call and ask the customer to meet them out front; or they should wait until the dispatcher can confirm safe delivery (for example, the porch lights are turned on).



- Work with local police to determine high crime areas to be avoided. Restricting delivery to a whole area may result in a loss of business, so other restrictions may be useful (for example, deliver only to the supervisor's suite in an apartment building or only during safe hours). Some companies have a policy of telling customers in high-risk areas to come out to the vehicle, cash in hand, so the driver can leave quickly if necessary.

*Delivery drivers should travel with a cell phone or two-way radio, and cash out at the store before leaving on another delivery.*

# Forms and checklists

This part includes the following forms and checklists:

- Sample check-in frequency worksheet
- Inspection checklist
- Action plan
- Sample action plan
- Sample procedure for regular person checks
- Sample training record for working alone
- Suspect and vehicle identification sheet
- Violent incident report
- Form 52E40 — Incident investigation report

# Sample check-in frequency worksheet

Use this sample to help you develop a check-in frequency worksheet that is specific to your own workplace. The minimum check-in requirement for low-risk activities is at the start and end of each shift for all workers.

## Instructions

1. Complete a worksheet with a worker for each situation and location where the worker is working alone and may be at risk of an injury that would prevent him or her from getting help.
2. Consider which of the common hazards from column A might apply. In column C, identify the injury that would result. Identify additional hazards and injuries as necessary.
3. Use Table 1 to assess the likelihood of the accident (Column D).
4. Use Table 2 to assess the likelihood that the accident would result in an injury serious enough to be disabling (Column E).
5. Use Table 3 to assess the likelihood of help being available to an injured worker (Column F).
6. Calculate the frequency rating (Column G) by multiplying the numbers in Columns D, E, and F.

250 or less	low check-in frequency (every 4–8 hours)
251–400	moderate check-in frequency (every 2–5 hours)
401 or more	high frequency (every 3 hours to 30 minutes)

A	B	C	D	E	F	G
Hazard (based on history)	Examples	Worst probable injury	Likelihood of accident happening	Likelihood of disabling injury	Likelihood of help available	Frequency rating (D x E x F)
Slip, trip, or fall	Falls from steps or ladders, tripping while carrying items					
Burns	Contact with hot equipment when cooking or baking					
Struck by items	Items falling from shelves or displays					
Sprain or strain	Straining back while lifting items or reaching					
Cut, struck by, or caught in equipment	Working with large equipment or tools such as mixers or saws					
Chemical spill	Cleaning products or paint supplies					
Threat of violence	Robberies or dealing with angry or irate individuals					
Other						

<b>Table 1: What is the likelihood of an accident occurring in this situation or location?</b>	<b>Value</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Most likely	10.0
<input type="checkbox"/> Very high likelihood	8.0
<input type="checkbox"/> Quite possible, would not be unusual	6.0
<input type="checkbox"/> Unusual, not likely	4.0
<input type="checkbox"/> Remote possibility	2.0
<input type="checkbox"/> Extremely remote possibility but conceivable	0.5
<input type="checkbox"/> Practically impossible, "one in a million" chance of happening	0.1

<b>Table 2: What is the likelihood of a disabling injury resulting from this type of hazard or accident?</b>	<b>Value</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Expected result	10.0
<input type="checkbox"/> Probable result	8.0
<input type="checkbox"/> Unusual, not expected	6.0
<input type="checkbox"/> Remotely possible result	4.0
<input type="checkbox"/> Practically impossible to result in disabling injury	2.0

<b>Table 3: What is the likelihood of help being available?</b>	<b>Availability</b>	<b>Value</b>
<input type="checkbox"/> Isolated areas where no one is likely to pass by or see the worker Examples: Warehouse or storage area; cold room or freezer	Never	12.0
<input type="checkbox"/> Areas where people pass by infrequently Example: Retail stores in rural areas	Rare	8.0
<input type="checkbox"/> Areas where some people pass by regularly Example: Retail stores in suburban areas, or in malls near closing or late at night	Occasionally	6.0
<input type="checkbox"/> Areas where the worker is not in constant view of others, but if the worker was unexpectedly gone for any length of time, someone would notice and take action Example: Retail store in a mall or busy street	Usual	4.0
<input type="checkbox"/> Areas where people pass by often enough that there is a high likelihood of someone witnessing the incident Example: Retail stores in high traffic malls	Frequently	2.0
<input type="checkbox"/> Areas surrounded by potential witnesses Example: Mall kiosks	Continuous	1.0

# Inspection checklist

Use this checklist when conducting your regular safety inspections. Go over every aspect of your workplace to identify possible hazards. Check “Yes” or “No” to indicate whether or not items are available or present in your workplace, or “N/A” for items that do not apply to your workplace.

Add or delete items as necessary for your particular workplace. If during your inspection you notice any other risks to workers that are not listed here, write down those risks on a blank page and include it with this checklist.

<b>Worker training and safety</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Have young or new workers been provided with orientation as specified in sections 3.22–3.25 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation?			
Do workers understand the hazards and risks of the workplace as specified in section 4.30 of the Regulation?			
Have workers been instructed on how to handle potentially violent incidents as specified in section 4.30 of the Regulation and as specified in your workplace violence policies and procedures?			
Have workers been provided with phone numbers and a procedure in the event of an emergency or violent encounter as specified in section 4.29 of the Regulation?			
Are workers aware of their responsibilities under Section 116 of the <i>Workers Compensation Act</i> ?			
Have workers been provided with propane training if pertinent?			
Have workers been provided with high visibility safety vests, and do they understand that they must wear them at all times when outside in proximity to moving vehicles? See section 8.24 of the Regulation.			
Are workers aware of a process for reporting and correcting unsafe work situations?			
Are workers aware of the process for refusing unsafe work?			
Are workers aware of the location of a copy of the <i>Act</i> and the location of a notice advising where the copy is available?			
Are workers aware they must cooperate with WorkSafeBC and its officers?			



<b>Employees working alone</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<p>Is there a person check procedure in which someone contacts lone workers regularly or they contact someone to ensure they are okay? Check times may be based on variables specific to the location, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Station in a secluded area</li> <li>• Near a forest</li> <li>• In a residential area with nearby houses</li> <li>• Near other businesses open late at night</li> </ul> <p>Types of person checks could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call services</li> <li>• Secondary gas stations</li> <li>• Nearby businesses</li> </ul>			
Is there a plan if the worker does not respond to a person check such as a phone call?			
Is there adequate supervision of the day and night shifts to ensure workers are following procedures? For example, checking periodically to make sure they have locked the doors or are wearing their necklace alarms. What does this supervision involve? (Answer in the space below.)			
Are back doors ever open or unlocked when a worker is alone?			
Do workers take out garbage alone at night?			
Is the garbage bin in a well-lit place?			
Do the workers follow your working alone procedures?			
<b>Building layout and design</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Is it easy to distinguish public areas from private areas such as offices?			
Is access to worker-only areas controlled with locks?			
Is the cash-handling area separate from the general workplace?			
Do counters have an elevated place for cash registers?			
Are anti-jump barriers fitted in front of cash-handling devices?			
Is alternative access to the building blocked (aside from fire exits)?			
Is public access to washrooms controlled?			
Are there bushes, or unlit or overgrown areas, where someone could hide?			
Are any areas not visible to workers?			
Are unoccupied rooms locked?			
Is the designated smoking area located in a well-lit, safe outdoor location?			

<b>Visibility and lighting</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Can workers see in and out of the store, or do posters, signs, and bushes block their view?			
Are workers visible to potential witnesses outside?			
Do mirrors help workers see the whole store?			
Does lighting ensure that would-be thieves or robbers will be recognizable?			
Do tinted windows prevent workers from seeing would-be aggressors outside at night?			
<b>General store impression</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Does the workplace look cared for? Is there graffiti or vandalism?			
Are fences and other security measures well-maintained?			
Are workers dressed to suit the general appearance of the store?			
<b>Signage and emergency information</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Are emergency numbers posted in a prominent place or on phones?			
Are robbery-prevention signs prominently displayed? (For example, "Area monitored by video camera," "Store has less than \$40 after dark," and "Time-Lock Safe—Clerk Cannot Open.")			
Is there a coloured height chart next to the entrance?			
<b>Tools and equipment</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Are knives and other sharp objects kept out of sight and reach of customers?			
Can anyone grab and use tools or other items as weapons against workers?			
<b>Handling money and deposits</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Are cash-handling areas positioned away from entries and exits?			
Is it standard practice to keep as little cash in the till as possible?			
Are large bills put into a drop box, safe, or strongroom that is out of sight?			
If there are counter safes, are they fitted with time-delay locks?			
Do workers make deposits at night or alone?			
When workers make deposits together, do they face in opposite directions to keep an eye on the surroundings?			
Does the time and routine for making deposits vary from day to day to make it less predictable?			
Do workers transport cash in a bag that has the company logo or otherwise makes it obvious they are carrying cash?			

<b>Opening and closing</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Do workers work in pairs at opening and closing, especially when doing the rounds at the end of a shift?			
Do the written procedures for opening and closing emphasize personal safety? For example, "Don't count the cash from the till at the sales counter."			
<b>Travelling to and from work</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Do workers have the option of asking for an escort to walk to their cars or the bus stop?			
Can workers park nearby and within sight of the station, especially at night?			
Is evening or night parking available for workers in nearby spaces normally reserved for customers?			
<b>Security guards and equipment</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Are there door alarms to alert workers that someone is entering the store?			
Are security guards or buddy systems available at the location?			
Is a closed-circuit television or surveillance camera installed?			
Is a silent, centrally monitored holdup alarm installed?			
Do workers wear personal alarms all the time, if provided?			
<b>Regular checks</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Do you conduct risk assessments for violence annually or whenever there are significant changes in the workplace?			
Do you conduct an incident investigation whenever there is an accident or violent incident?			
<b>Employer and supplier responsibilities</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>N/A</b>
Are copies of the risk assessment available for the licensee and supplier?			
Are there supporting materials for the risk assessment or policies and procedures?			
Is there any training or instruction on performing a risk assessment and creating site-specific policies and procedures?			
Is there regularly submitted documentation to the effect that an assessment has been performed and policies have been reviewed?			
Are work environment alterations supported by both the licensee and the supplier following a risk assessment?			
If not, has there been some consideration of alternatives?			
Is there monitoring of the licensee?			
Does the supplier review the licensee's policies and procedures?			
Are the risk assessments and policies and procedures discussed between the licensee and the supplier?			

## Action plan

Action required	Timeline for completion	Completion date

## Sample action plan

The sample table below lists items from a completed inspection checklist that require action.

Action required	Timeline for completion	Completion date
Provide workers with phone numbers and a procedure in the event of an emergency or violent encounter	August 2007	August 10, 2007
Make workers aware of working alone procedures	August 2007	August 30, 2007
Add mirrors to help workers see the whole store	September 2007	
Add a a coloured height chart next to the entrance	August 2007	August 15, 2007
Install closed-circuit television system	October 2007	
Provide orientation to young or new workers as specified in sections 3.22-3.25 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation	August 2007	
Add locks to worker-only areas	September 2007	
Establish a check-in procedure for employees working alone	September 2007	

# Sample procedure for regular person checks

This section describes procedures for checking on the well-being of an employee working alone.

You will be contacted by: \_\_\_\_\_

They will contact you:  in person     by telephone     other method \_\_\_\_\_

They will contact you:  every 30 minutes     every hour     every 2 hours     at end of shift

You will attempt to call the contact person within five minutes if you were not available at the predetermined person-check time.

If your contact person cannot reach you at one of these predetermined times, he or she will make another attempt within five minutes. If your contact person still cannot reach you after the second attempt, he or she will do the following:

1. Call the neighbouring store (if there is one) and have someone check on you.
2. Call the owner or manager of your store, and send someone to your work location if there are no neighbours.
3. If necessary, call 9-1-1 and request help at your location.

## Emergency information

In case of an emergency (for example, fire, earthquake, flood, or a bomb threat) call the following person:

Contact name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact phone number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Record of checks

Date	Time	Initials	Comments or issues

## Sample training record for working alone

Date of training: \_\_\_\_\_

Employee name: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Duties: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor name: \_\_\_\_\_

Supervisor contact information: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of written work procedures: \_\_\_\_\_

The trainer must ensure that training includes the following procedures. Both the trainer and the employee should initial each item to indicate that it has been covered during training.

Procedure	Initials (trainer)	Initials (employee)
Opening and closing the store		
Handling money and making bank deposits		
Taking out garbage		
Person-check procedure (see sample procedure on page 8)		
Dealing with robberies		
Dealing with shoplifting, dine and dash, or gas and dash		
Dealing with irate or abusive customers		
Emergency procedures		
Other		

# Suspect and vehicle identification sheet

<p><b>Facial appearance</b></p>	Write below specific facial details that you definitely remember.			
	What did the suspect say?			
	Describe any tool or weapon seen.			
<p><b>Vehicle</b></p>	Colour	Make	Model	Licence number
	Body style		Damage or rust	
	Antenna	Bumper sticker	Wheel covers	
	Direction of travel			

SEX <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	AGE	HEIGHT	WEIGHT	RACE
<p><b>General appearance</b></p>				HAT (colour and type)
				COAT
HAIR (colour and style)				SHIRT/BLOUSE
EYES (glasses)				PANTS/SKIRT
COMPLEXION				SHOES
JEWELLERY				TIE
SCARS/MARKS				
TATTOOS				

# Violent incident report

## General information

Your name:

Today's date:

Workplace branch or location:

Witness information (names and contact numbers):

## The incident

Date of incident:

Time of incident:

Where did the incident happen (for example, the sales counter, stockroom, or hallway)?

What type of incident was it (for example, verbal abuse, physical threat, pushing, slapping, or robbery)?

Describe what happened. Include factors that led up to the incident.

Did you receive first aid or other medical attention?  Yes  No

Has this incident been reported to the police or security?  Yes  No  Don't know

If available: Police file #



### The incident cont.

How has this incident affected you (for example, missed work, emotional trauma, or physical injury)?

### The offender

Offender's name (if known):

Offender's relationship to you (for example, a customer, co-worker, spouse, ex-girlfriend, or ex-boyfriend):

Describe the offender:

Male    Female   Age: \_\_\_\_\_   Height: \_\_\_\_\_   Weight: \_\_\_\_\_   Complexion: \_\_\_\_\_

Any other information (for example, accent, hair colour, skin colour, tattoos, clothing, or footwear):

Has the offender been involved in any previous violent incidents that you know of?    Yes    No

Describe any other relevant information, including suggestions for preventing a similar incident:

**Please present this completed report to your employer or supervisor.**

For confidential, free help in dealing with the after-effects of this incident, we encourage you to use the Critical Incident Response program. WorkSafeBC coordinates this program for work-related traumatic events.

You can call a Critical Response Liaison at 604 233-4052 in the Lower Mainland or 1 888 621-7233, local 4052, toll-free in B.C. Or call the after-hours line, seven days a week, at 1 888 922-3700.

## INCIDENT INVESTIGATION REPORT

*Worker and Employer Services Division*

This form is provided to employers for the purpose of documenting the employer's investigation into a workplace incident. Please attach a separate sheet if necessary.

Employer name	Employer number
Employer head office address	

**Incident occurred** *ref: s. 3.4(a) Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHS Regulation)*

Address where incident occurred <i>(including nearest city)</i>	
Date <small>yyyy-mm-dd</small>	Time a.m. <input type="checkbox"/> p.m. <input type="checkbox"/>

**Injured person(s)** *ref: s. 3.4(b) OHS Regulation*

Last name	First name	Job title	Age	Length of experience with this employer	Length of experience at this task/job
1)					
2)					

**Nature of injury/injuries**

1)	
2)	

**Witnesses** *ref: s. 174(4) WCA and s. 3.4(c) OHS Regulation*

Last name	First name	Address	Telephone
1)			( )
2)			( )
3)			( )

**Incident description** *ref: s. 3.4(d)-(e) OHS Regulation*

Briefly describe what happened, including the sequence of events preceding the incident.
--

**Statement of causes** *ref: s. 174(2)(a)–(b) WCA and s. 3.4(f) OHS Regulation*

List any unsafe conditions, acts, or procedures that in any manner contributed to the incident.

**Recommendations** *ref: s. 174(2)(c) WCA and s. 3.4(g) OHS Regulation*

Identify any corrective actions that have been taken and any recommended actions to prevent similar incidents.

Recommended corrective action	Action by whom	Action by date
1)		
2)		
3)		
4)		

**Persons conducting investigation** *ref: s. 3.4(h) OHS Regulation*

Name	Signature	Type of representative			Date
		Employer <input type="checkbox"/>	Worker <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Employer <input type="checkbox"/>	Worker <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	
		Employer <input type="checkbox"/>	Worker <input type="checkbox"/>	Other <input type="checkbox"/>	

For additional information on WorkSafeBC (Workers' Compensation Board of B.C.) and on the requirements for incident investigations, please refer to WorkSafeBC's web site: [WorkSafeBC.com](http://WorkSafeBC.com)

**Mailing address** WorkSafeBC  
PO Box 5350 Stn Terminal  
Vancouver BC V6B 5L5

Fax number: 604 276-3247

**Telephone information**

**Call centre:** 604 276-3100 or toll free within B.C. 1 888 621-SAFE (7233)

**After hours health and safety emergency:** 604 273-7711 or toll free 1 866 922-4357 (WCB-HELP)

## A GUIDE TO INCIDENT INVESTIGATION

Use this guide in conjunction with the requirements of the *Workers Compensation Act (WCA)*, Part 3 Division 10, and the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHS Regulation), section 3.4.

### When is an investigation required?

Employers are required to immediately undertake an investigation into any accident or other incident that:

- Is required to be reported under section 172 of the *Workers Compensation Act*, or
- Resulted in injury requiring medical treatment, or
- Did not involve injury to a worker or involve a minor injury that did not require medical treatment but had the potential for causing serious injury, or
- Was an incident required by regulation to be investigated.

### Who should conduct the investigation?

- Incidents must be investigated by people knowledgeable about the type of work involved at the time of the incident.
- If reasonably available, investigations must be carried out with the participation of one employer representative and one worker representative.

### What is the purpose of an investigation?

The purpose of an investigation is to determine the cause or causes of the incident, to identify any unsafe conditions, acts, or procedures that contributed to the incident, and to recommend corrective action to prevent similar incidents.

### Who receives copies of the report?

Incident investigation reports required by the *WCA* must be provided to the joint health and safety committee or worker representative as applicable, and to WorkSafeBC.

### What follow-up action is required after an incident investigation?

After an investigation, the employer must without undue delay undertake any corrective action required to prevent recurrence of similar incidents and must prepare a report of the action taken. The report must be provided to the joint health and safety committee or worker representative as applicable. The follow-up report does not have to be provided to WorkSafeBC unless requested by a WorkSafeBC officer.

### What information should be included in the investigation report?

An incident investigation report should answer the **WHO, WHERE, WHEN, WHAT, WHY, and HOW** questions with regard to the incident.

- WHO** Employer, injured person(s), other person(s) involved in the incident, witnesses, and persons carrying out the investigation
- WHERE** Place, location where incident occurred
- WHEN** Date and time of the incident
- WHAT** A brief description of the incident, including the sequence of events that preceded the incident
- Before the incident occurred:*
- What were the events that led up to the incident?
  - What process(es) was/were occurring immediately prior to the incident?
  - What was/were the worker(s) doing immediately prior to the incident?
  - What was the last event before the incident occurred?
- At the time of the incident:*
- What happened at the time of the incident?
  - What process(es) was/were occurring at the time of the incident?
  - What was/were the worker(s) doing at the time of the incident?

- What hazard(s) was/were the worker(s) exposed to?
- What hazards may have contributed to the incident occurring?
- What hazards did the worker(s) encounter?
- What personal factors may have contributed to the incident occurring?

*Other information:*

- Other observations
- Other related information

**WHY** From the answers to “what,” identify any unsafe conditions, acts, or procedures that in any manner contributed to the incident. Why did the unsafe conditions, acts, or procedures occur? Why were the personal factors not identified and/or addressed before the incident occurred?

**HOW** An investigation report should recommend corrective actions to prevent similar incidents from occurring. Once it is known why an incident occurred, determine how to prevent recurrence. For example:

- Improve workplace inspection and maintenance programs
- Repair or replace equipment/building
- Install safeguards
- Establish or revise safe work procedures
- Train/retrain person(s)
- Improve supervision

**Additional information for determining why an incident happened**

To determine the most probable cause(s) of an incident, consider all details of the investigation, including witness statements and, where possible, the injured worker’s statement.

Determine if the incident was due to an unsafe act, an unsafe condition, unsafe or inadequate procedures, or a combination of these. Consider whether the accepted/current procedures adequately address safety concerns associated with the activity that was taking place when the incident happened. Consider training, supervision, equipment controls, safeguards, and lock-out.

**Unsafe acts** – An unsafe act is a specific action or lack of action by an individual that is under the individual’s control. Examples of unsafe acts include: knowingly not following established rules, knowingly not following established procedures, knowingly disregarding a hazard, willful misconduct, abusing equipment, knowingly using equipment incorrectly, choosing not to use personal protective equipment, and not locking out when required. Generally, violating a safety rule, not following a safe work procedure, or disregarding a hazard are considered unsafe acts.

**Unsafe conditions** – Examples include poor housekeeping, congested areas, deficient equipment, equipment lacking safeguarding or having ineffective safeguarding, lack of personal protective equipment, poor visibility, poor weather conditions, and lack of or inadequate training. Inadequate training should be considered an unsafe condition as opposed to a deficiency in skill or ability (personal factors).

**Inadequate procedures** – Indications that procedures are inadequate include:

- Procedures are not available in written form
- Procedures do not identify inherent hazards
- Procedures do not identify hazard control methods
- Procedures do not identify safeguards that must be in place
- Procedures do not address pre-operation inspection requirements
- Procedures do not address lock-out requirements
- Procedures direct improper use of equipment or tools

**Personal factors** – A personal factor is a deficiency in skill or ability, a physical condition, or a mental attitude. It is a factor inherent in an individual at the time of the incident. Examples include work fatigue due to manual exertion, distress due to emotional problems, the influence of alcohol or drugs, or illness. A condition causing an allergic reaction in some but not most workers should be considered a personal factor, not an unsafe condition.

# Resources

## WorkSafeBC

WorkSafeBC produces many pamphlets, booklets, and videos on safe work practices that can help you deal with specific hazards in your workplace. The following are a few of the publications that you may find helpful.

***Preventing Violence, Robbery, and Theft: A Guide for Retail Owners, Managers, and Workers***

Describes how to prevent violent incidents in the workplace and how to deal with incidents that do occur.

***Handbook for Employers: Working Alone, Late Night Retail, and Prepayment of Fuel***

Describes requirements for violence prevention and young and new worker training.

***Take Care: How to Develop and Implement a Workplace Violence Prevention Program***

Explains how to set up a violence prevention program to eliminate or minimize violence in your workplace.

***Your Retail Business Series Safety Tip 1: Working Alone (StartSafe poster)***

Describes basic safe work practices that employers can implement and employees can follow when working alone.

***Your Retail Business Series Safety Tip 2: Dealing with Shoplifters (StartSafe poster)***

Describes safe work practices for preventing shoplifting and dealing with it if it does occur.

***Where to find WorkSafeBC publications and videos***

The resources mentioned throughout this guide are available at WorkSafeBC.com for online viewing or downloading. The web site also includes searchable versions of the Regulation and excerpts from the *Workers Compensation Act*.

If you want to order print publications, see the ordering information in the front of this handbook, under "WorkSafeBC publications."

## Industry associations

For more information on working alone and violence prevention, contact the following industry organizations or your local police.

Industry	Association
Agriculture	<p><b>Farm and Ranch Safety and Health Association (FARSHA)</b></p> <p>Tel: 604 881-6078</p> <p>Toll-free: 1 877 533-1789</p> <p>E-mail: farmsafe@farsha.bc.ca</p> <p>Web: www.farsha.bc.ca</p>
Construction	<p><b>Construction Safety Association of BC</b></p> <p>Tel: 604 434-3222</p> <p>Toll-free: 1 877 434-3222</p> <p>E-mail: info@csabc.ca</p> <p>Web: www.csabc.ca</p>
	<p><b>BC Road Construction and Maintenance Safety Network</b></p> <p>Tel: 604 436-0232</p> <p>Toll-free: 1 866 860-0232</p> <p>E-mail: info@safetynetwork.bc.ca</p> <p>Web: www.safetynetwork.bc.ca</p>
Film, television, and live performance	<p><b>Safety and Health in Arts Production and Entertainment (SHAPE)</b></p> <p>Tel: 604 733-4682</p> <p>Toll-free: 1 888 229-1455</p> <p>E-mail: info@shape.bc.ca</p> <p>Web: www.shape.bc.ca</p>
Fishing	<p><b>FishSafe</b></p> <p>Contact FishSafe for safety-related information.</p> <p>Tel: 604 261-9700</p> <p>E-mail: fishsafe@telus.net</p> <p>Web: www.fishsafebc.com</p>

<b>Industry</b>	<b>Association</b>
Food processing	<p><b>BC Food Processors Health and Safety Council</b></p> <p>Tel: 604 701-0261</p> <p>E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@bcfphsc.com">info@bcfphsc.com</a></p> <p>Web: <a href="http://www.bcfphsc.com">www.bcfphsc.com</a></p>
Forestry	<p><b>BC Forestry Safety Council</b></p> <p>Web: <a href="http://www.bcforestsafe.org">www.bcforestsafe.org</a></p> <p><i>Vancouver</i></p> <p>Tel: 604 632-0211</p> <p>Toll-free: 1 888 632-0211</p> <p><i>Nanaimo</i></p> <p>Tel: 250 741-1060</p> <p>Toll-free: 1 877 741-1060</p> <p><i>Prince George</i></p> <p>Tel: 250 562-3215</p> <p>Toll-free: 1 877 324-1212</p>
Healthcare	<p><b>Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare (OHSAH)</b></p> <p>Tel: 778 328-8000</p> <p>Toll-free: 1 877 328-7810</p> <p>E-mail: <a href="mailto:info@ohsah.bc.ca">info@ohsah.bc.ca</a></p> <p>Web: <a href="http://www.ohsah.bc.ca">www.ohsah.bc.ca</a></p>
Hospitality and tourism	<p><b>go2 — The Resource for People in Tourism</b></p> <p>Tel: 604 633-9787 (for go2)</p> <p>604 633-9798 (for Serving it Right)</p> <p>Web: <a href="http://www.go2hr.ca">www.go2hr.ca</a></p>
Marine	<p><b>BC Maritime Employers Association</b></p> <p>Tel: 604 688-1155, ext. 422</p> <p>Mobile: 778 229-6390</p>



Industry	Association
Municipalities	<b>BC Municipal Safety Association</b> Tel: 778 278-3435 (administrative assistant) Web: www.bcmsa.ca
Oil and gas	<b>Enform</b> Tel: 403 250-9606 Toll-free: 1 800 667-5557 Web: www.enform.ca

**B.C. Crime Prevention Association**

Tel: 604 291-9959  
 Toll-free: 1 888 405-2288  
 E-mail: info@bccpa.org  
 Web: www.bccpa.org



## WorkSafeBC offices

Visit our web site at [WorkSafeBC.com](http://WorkSafeBC.com).

### Abbotsford

2774 Trethewey Street V2T 3R1  
Phone: 604 276-3100  
Toll-free: 1 800 292-2219  
Fax: 604 556-2077

### Burnaby

450 – 6450 Roberts Street V5G 4E1  
Phone: 604 276-3100  
Toll-free: 1 888 621-7233  
Fax: 604 232-5950

### Coquitlam

104 – 3020 Lincoln Avenue V3B 6B4  
Phone: 604 276-3100  
Toll-free: 1 888 967-5377  
Fax: 604 232-1946

### Courtenay

801 30th Street V9N 8G6  
Phone: 250 334-8765  
Toll-free: 1 800 663-7921  
Fax: 250 334-8757

### Kamloops

321 Battle Street V2C 6P1  
Phone: 250 371-6003  
Toll-free: 1 800 663-3935  
Fax: 250 371-6031

### Kelowna

110 – 2045 Enterprise Way V1Y 9T5  
Phone: 250 717-4313  
Toll-free: 1 888 922-4466  
Fax: 250 717-4380

### Nanaimo

4980 Wills Road V9T 6C6  
Phone: 250 751-8040  
Toll-free: 1 800 663-7382  
Fax: 250 751-8046

### Nelson

524 Kootenay Street V1L 6B4  
Phone: 250 352-2824  
Toll-free: 1 800 663-4962  
Fax: 250 352-1816

### North Vancouver

400 – 224 Esplanade Ave. W. V7M 1A4  
Phone: 604 276-3100  
Toll-free: 1 888 875-6999  
Fax: 604 232-1558

### Prince George

1066 Vancouver Street V2L 5M4  
Phone: 250 561-3700  
Toll-free: 1 800 663-6623  
Fax: 250 561-3710

### Surrey

100 – 5500 152 Street V3S 5J9  
Phone: 604 276-3100  
Toll-free: 1 888 621-7233  
Fax: 604 232-7077

### Terrace

4450 Lakelse Avenue V8G 1P2  
Phone: 250 615-6605  
Toll-free: 1 800 663-3871  
Fax: 250 615-6633

### Victoria

4514 Chatterton Way V8X 5H2  
Phone: 250 881-3418  
Toll-free: 1 800 663-7593  
Fax: 250 881-3482

### Head Office/Richmond

Prevention Information Line:  
Phone: 604 276-3100  
Toll-free: 1 888 621-7233 (621-SAFE)

Administration:  
6951 Westminster Highway  
Phone: 604 273-2266

Mailing Address:  
PO Box 5350 Stn Terminal  
Vancouver, BC V6B 5L5

After Hours Health & Safety Emergency:  
Phone: 604 273-7711  
Toll-free: 1 866 922-4357 (WCB-HELP)

