



**Guide to Workplace Safety  
for Golf Courses and Groundskeeping**



**Produced by the  
Workers Compensation Board  
PO Box 757  
Charlottetown PE C1A 7L7**

**Phone: 902-368-5680  
Toll free in Atlantic Canada: 1-800-237-5049  
Fax: 902-368-5696**

**[www.wcb.pe.ca](http://www.wcb.pe.ca)**

Revised (May, 2009)

## INDEX

Introduction: Occupational Health and Safety Law .....	2
Health and Safety Responsibilities .....	3
Health and Safety Policy.....	4
Working Alone Policy .....	4
Health and Safety Program .....	5
Hazardous Substances and WHMIS .....	6
First Aid .....	7
Equipment.....	9
Personal Protective Equipment.....	12
Hearing Conservation .....	13
Environmental Conditions .....	14
Resources .....	15

### *Purpose*

This Guide is for workers, employers, Joint Occupational Safety and Health Committees and Safety Representatives within golf course and groundskeeping operations. It is a practical tool to help all workplace parties understand the hazards and safety requirements specific to golf courses and other groundskeeping workplaces on Prince Edward Island.

### *Disclaimer*

The information in this Guide is intended to provide golf course and groundskeeping employers and workers with an overview of the occupational health and safety requirements in Prince Edward Island. The Guide refers to the Occupational Health and Safety Act and regulations made under the Act. It is not intended to be comprehensive nor to serve as a legal document.

# Occupational Health and Safety Law

The law governing the health and safety of Prince Edward Island workplaces is the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The Act sets out the rights and duties of workplace parties in the province of Prince Edward Island. Its main purpose is to protect workers against health and safety hazards on the job. The Act is also supported by the General Regulations, which state in greater detail what employers and workers are required to do under the Act.

Also referenced in this Guide are the WHMIS Regulations which are made pursuant to the Occupational Health and Safety Act for Prince Edward Island.

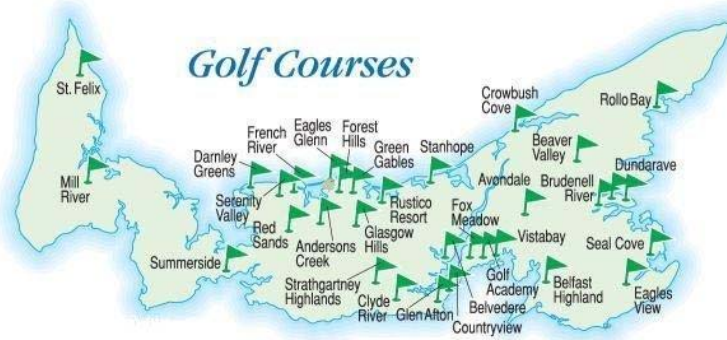
## *Enforcement*

Health and safety law (the Act and Regulations) is enforced by Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Officers from the OHS Division of the Workers Compensation Board. OHS Officers have the legal right to enter any workplace, at any reasonable time, without giving notice, though notice may be given where the Officer thinks it is appropriate.

During a routine inspection visit, an Officer would look at the workplace, the work activities, and the overall management of health and safety to ensure the workplace is in compliance with the law. The Officer may offer guidance, may talk to workers and their supervisors, and may issue orders and directives if there is a risk to the health and safety of workers.

## *Education*

The Occupational Health and Safety Division also has education staff that can help you understand the law and how it applies to your workplace. Education services include telephone inquiries, access to a video library, on-site presentations, and publications (such as this Guide).



# Health and Safety Responsibilities

The philosophical foundation of the OHS Act is the **Internal Responsibility System**. This means that every individual in a workplace has a direct responsibility for creating a healthy and safe workplace. The responsibility is shared, from owners/operators through a management team and to all workers.

The Act clearly states the duties of employers, workers, and other persons in Sections 12 through 20. Below is a sample of OHS responsibilities for quick reference:

<b>Position</b>	<b>OHS Responsibilities</b>
Owner/Operator and Senior Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide policy direction and planning</li><li>• Review control information</li><li>• Delegate responsibility and authority</li><li>• Allocate budget</li><li>• Cooperate with safety committees and representatives</li><li>• Hold line managers accountable for safe production</li><li>• Make sure line managers have adequate resources and support</li><li>• Assist the health and safety committee or representative</li></ul>
Supervisors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Train operators and others</li><li>• Supervise workers to ensure safe work procedures are followed correctly</li><li>• Communicate hazard information and control procedures</li><li>• Consult with workers on matters of health and safety</li><li>• Provide feedback to senior executive</li><li>• Cooperate with the JOSH committee or representative</li><li>• Hold accountable those managers, supervisors, and workers reporting to them</li></ul>
All Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Comply with company rules and procedures</li><li>• Wear personal protective equipment as required</li><li>• Use machinery, equipment, and materials only as authorized</li><li>• Follow job procedures</li><li>• Report hazards, unsafe conditions or actions to your supervisor</li><li>• Report incidents</li><li>• Report all injuries for first aid, no matter how minor</li><li>• Cooperate with the JOSH committee or representative</li></ul>
JOSH Committees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hold monthly meetings; record and post minutes</li><li>• Make recommendations on health and safety issues</li><li>• Carry out inspections, investigations, and refer worker safety concerns to the appropriate person(s)</li><li>• Assist in developing the OHS program, policy, and safe work procedures</li></ul>
Health & Safety Representatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Make recommendations on health and safety issues</li><li>• Take worker health and safety concerns to management</li></ul>

The OHS responsibilities should be clearly stated to and understood by each individual to which they apply, and they must be set out in an OHS policy where a policy is required.

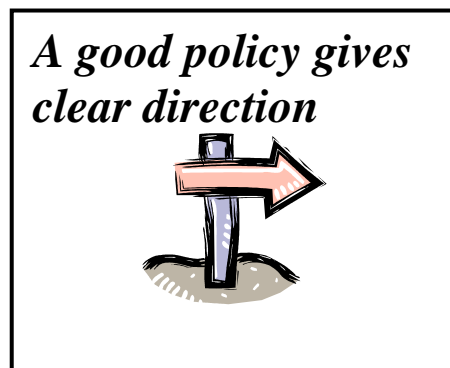
## Health and Safety Policy

A workplace with five or more regularly employed workers is required to have an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Policy. **If your workplace has 5 or more workers that work 12 or more weeks per year, the workplace must have a Health and Safety Policy.**

The OHS Policy is a statement that defines the employer's commitment to a healthy and safe workplace. It determines the level of health and safety in the workplace in the same way that commitment to quality determines the quality of the end product or service. It must be communicated to all workers and updated every year for true impact.

For more guidance on the requirements of an OHS Policy, please refer to the "Guide to Workplace Health and Safety Policy" which can be found here:

[http://www.wcb.pe.ca/photos/original/wcb\\_workplace.pdf](http://www.wcb.pe.ca/photos/original/wcb_workplace.pdf).



## Working Alone Policy

Does your workplace require workers to work alone? If so, what are the risks that a serious injury might happen to those workers? Are there procedures in place to help protect lone workers from possible injury?

A worker can be considered to be working alone in instances where a call for assistance will not or cannot be responded to and the worker's absence may not be noticed for some time. If that is the case in your workplace, the employer is required to establish procedures outlining an effective communication plan.

Workers who work alone must also be trained to recognize the risks and adhere to the employer's communication plan.

For more guidance on the requirements of a Working Alone Policy, please refer to the "Guide to Working Alone Regulations" which can be found here:

[http://www.wcb.pe.ca/photos/original/wcb\\_work\\_alone.pdf](http://www.wcb.pe.ca/photos/original/wcb_work_alone.pdf)

## Health and Safety Program

A workplace with 20 or more regularly employed workers is required to have an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Program. **If your workplace has 20 or more workers that work 12 or more weeks per year, the workplace must have a Health and Safety Program.**

An OHS Program is an organized, written action plan to identify and control hazards, define safety responsibilities, and respond to emergencies. The objective of a program is to integrate safety and health into all work practices and conditions.

Here are the components of an OHS program required for Prince Edward Island workplaces:

- ✓ Training and Supervision
- ✓ Written work procedures
- ✓ JOSH Committee or Safety Representative
- ✓ Hazard identification system
- ✓ Workplace inspections
- ✓ Investigations of incidents and injuries
- ✓ Keeping records and monitoring effectiveness



For more guidance on the requirements of an Occupational Health and Safety Program, please refer to the “Guide to Workplace Health and Safety Program” which can be found on our website at [www.wcb.pe.ca](http://www.wcb.pe.ca) or by following the link [http://www.wcb.pe.ca/photos/original/wcb\\_safety\\_prog.pdf](http://www.wcb.pe.ca/photos/original/wcb_safety_prog.pdf).

***Safety starts with attitude.  
A positive attitude toward safety in  
your organization will contribute to  
the success of your safety program.***

## Hazardous Substances

Golf course and groundskeeping workers can be exposed to a wide range of hazardous substances in the course of their work, including:



- fuel, oil and grease
- pesticides, fertilizers
- cleaning materials and disinfectants
- paint and wood preservatives
- dust and vapours
- fumes, from engine exhausts, battery charging and welding
- contact with dead animals or animal waste
- contact with poisonous plants

These substances may have an adverse effect on health, rather than affect general safety. Some of those effects include skin irritation, asthma, loss of consciousness, cancer, and infection.

To protect workers from these hazardous substances, the employer must:

- ✓ Make workers aware of these types of hazards as they exist in the workplace
- ✓ Eliminate the hazard if possible
- ✓ Instruct workers on how to best protect themselves if the hazard cannot be eliminated, including the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE).

### **WHMIS**

***(Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System)***

Under s. 4 of the Prince Edward Island Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System Regulations, employers must ensure that workers receive appropriate training on how to work safely around controlled products. This applies to workers who work *directly* with these products as well as those who work *in proximity* to the products.

Although a generalized WHMIS training course is helpful for making workers aware of the hazards and symbols of controlled products, training must also be specific to each individual workplace. This means hands-on training for the controlled products in your workplace. Be sure to document all training in case an OHS officer asks for it, and especially for your OHS program, if applicable.

Here are things that trained workers need to demonstrate knowledge in:

- ✓ Hazards related to exposure to controlled products
- ✓ Supplier and workplace labels
- ✓ MSDS
- ✓ Storage, handling, and disposal
- ✓ Appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)



## First Aid

To save precious seconds in an injury emergency, adequate first aid supplies and trained workers should be readily available. Ensure that your workplace meets the first aid requirements to help treat workers in the event of minor or major injuries on the job.

Section 9 of the PEI Occupational Health & Safety General Regulations outlines an employer's requirements, depending on the number of workers present during any given shift. The table below summarizes your workplace requirements at a glance.

Requirements at a Glance

<i># workers per shift</i>	<i># First Aid Attendants required</i>	<i>Level of Training required</i>	<i>First Aid Kit(s) required</i>	<i>First Aid Room Required?</i>
<5	0	n/a	Kit No. 1	no
5-15	At least 1	Emergency First Aid + CPR Certificates	Kit No. 2	no
16-100	At least 1	Standard First Aid + CPR Certificates	Kit No. 3	no
> 100	At least 1	Advanced First Aid + CPR Certificates	Kit No. 3	yes

### *Keeping records*

Record keeping may not be foremost in the mind of an employer or worker during an emergency situation, but it is important. Section 9.10 of the PEI Occupational Health and Safety General Regulations states that injuries must be recorded in a first aid record book. Here are some items to consider recording:

- Date and time the injury/illness occurred and when it was reported
- Where the injury occurred
- The cause of the injury/illness
- The worker's full name, age, and position
- A brief description of the injury/illness and first aid rendered (if any)
- Transportation arrangements made (if any) to treat the worker
- Names of any witnesses
- Name and signature of the first aid attendant



## *First Aid - Communication*

It is critical that workers know where to go for first aid in case they suffer an injury or illness. Section 9.3 of the OH&S General Regulations state that signs showing the location of first aid supplies and services must be posted in conspicuous areas of the workplace.

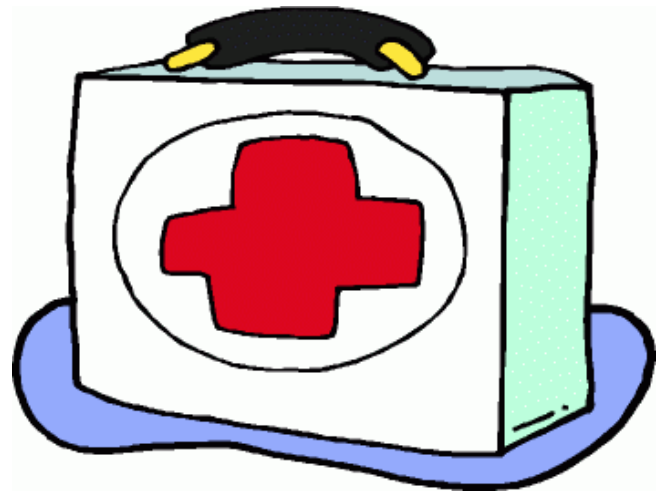
Ensure your workers are aware of the:

- Location of first aid kits (and first aid rooms, if any)
- Names and locations of certified first aid attendants
- Emergency procedures
- Emergency phone numbers

Post this information in a conspicuous area such as break room, cafeteria or restrooms, and follow up with verbal communication as often as is necessary.

### *In summary*

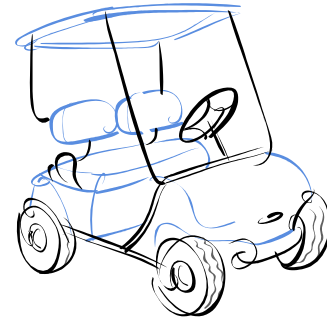
1. Ensure that the appropriate number of workers hold valid emergency, standard, or advanced First Aid certificates from recognized training agencies.
2. Keep a record of all injuries - even minor ones - and note any First Aid care that was given.
3. Ensure that First Aid service is accessible to all workers during all working hours.
4. Ensure that transportation is available at all times to transport an injured worker.
5. Ensure workers understand the need for First Aid kits; that the kit is adequate for the number of workers and located in the current work area.



# Equipment

Golf course and groundskeeper workers may use a wide range of equipment in the course of work, including:

- Golf cars
- Commercial mowing equipment, push mowers
- Leaf blowers, edgers, trimmers
- Chainsaws
- Aeration and irrigation equipment
- Powered and non-powered tools



Powered machinery and equipment is often designed to move fast and be powerful enough to cut, crush and alter many kinds of materials. Naturally, the human body is no match for this type of machinery and equipment. Workers need to know the hazards and be trained to recognize and avoid the dangers for each piece of equipment and machinery.

### Employers need to ask the following questions:

Are workers aware of hazards of all equipment and machinery they are using?	Do I have safe work procedures in place? Are they being followed and enforced?
Is all equipment and machinery maintained in safe working condition? Are all safety features working properly and not being	Are workers trained in the safe operation of the equipment and machinery? Can they demonstrate their knowledge?
Do workers inspect the tools, equipment, or machinery before each use?	Do workers report any concerns regarding defective or unsafe tools, equipment or machinery?

### What about ROPS?

ROPS (Roll Over Protective Structure) is a cab or frame that provides a safe environment for the driver of a vehicle or other powered mobile equipment (ie. Tractor) in the event of a rollover. ROPS must pass a series of crush tests and meet CSA standards\*. Having a homemade bar attached to the vehicle's axle, or simple sun shades, is not adequate to protect the operator if the vehicle overturns.



Mower equipped with ROPS

\*B352.0-95; B352.1-95; B352.2-95

Section 33.3 of the OHS Regulations states that ROPS are required for the following equipment:

Agricultural, construction, earthmoving, forestry and industrial machines including:

- crawler tractors, loaders, tree harvesters, skidders and forwarders;
- wheeled dozers, loaders, skidders and forwarders;
- motor graders, tandem rollers and compactors;
- self-propelled wheeled scrapers;
- agricultural and industrial tractors; and
- off-highway equipment;
- any other equipment designated by the Director of OHS as requiring ROPS.

If your workplace uses powered mobile equipment or vehicles that meet this description, they must be equipped with ROPS, in a way that meets the CSA standards referenced in s. 33.3 of the Regulations. Always refer to the manufacturer's specifications to be sure.

### *Seatbelts*

Additionally, any vehicles or equipment in your workplace that is required to have ROPS must also be equipped with seatbelts for operators and passengers that meet the recommendations of the Society of Automotive Engineers (s. 33.8[1]).

However, it is not enough to simply equip the vehicles – seatbelts must actually be worn! This further ensures that operators and passengers are fully protected in the event of a rollover.

### *Cages*

When workers are exposed to the danger of being struck by airborne golf balls, the employer is required to provide appropriate protective equipment. Oftentimes, the most appropriate protective equipment is a caged barrier around the operator of equipment that is being used on the fairway. The cage must be designed so that a speeding golf ball will not pass through, yet without affecting the operator's visibility.



**Driving Range  
Ball Picker Cage**

### *Mechanical Safety*

Unintended contact with moving machinery continues to cause terrible injuries in the workplace. Do not underestimate the power behind a machine or equipment such as mowing equipment, a chainsaw, or trimmer. Section 30 of the Occupational Health & Safety General Regulations outlines requirements with respect to mechanical safety in the workplace, including:

- Safeguarding the moving parts of machinery, properly and at all times. Do not tamper with the safeguards!
- Ensuring the operator is competent in operating the machinery or equipment (see s. 1.4(f) of the General Regulations for the definition of a “competent person”), including lockout/tagout for cleaning, repairs and service.
- Ensuring workers do not wear loose-fitting clothing or jewelry which can become entangled in moving equipment.

Always know and follow the **manufacturer’s specifications** of any tool, equipment, or machine, with respect to proper use, training, PPE, and service and maintenance requirements. Be able to provide evidence of training for individual workers, and produce a copy of the operator’s manual if asked by an OHS Officer.

#### **EXAMPLE: Chainsaw Operation**

Chainsaws are responsible for many serious injuries and fatalities. Give chainsaws the respect they deserve. Here are some things to consider before picking up a chainsaw:

- \_ Have you received formal training for safe chainsaw use?\* Have you received workplace-specific instructions on how to use the chain saw safely?
- \_ Is it clean and in good repair?
- \_ Are you wearing PPE, ie. Gloves, hard hat with shield, chainsaw pants, neck guard, chainsaw boots? Don’t forget to protect your hearing and cover your ears!
- \_ Have you visually inspected it for defects before and after each use?
- \_ Is it in a stable position for starting? (Never start it while holding it off the ground!)
- \_ Have you tested the saw before actually cutting anything?
- \_ Are you familiar with chainsaw kickback and how to maintain control when this happens?
- \_ Are other workers protected from flying debris?
- \_ Are other workers nearby in case you get injured?

If you answer ‘no’ to any of those questions, do not operate the chain saw until you can answer ‘yes’.

\*Formal training for chainsaw safety is offered periodically by the P.E.I. Department of Forestry  
**Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**

When it is impossible to eliminate a hazard entirely (this is always the desired course of action), an employer needs to ensure workers are well protected through the use of appropriate Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). It is the responsibility of the employer to assess each task to determine the correct PPE to be worn by workers. It is then the worker's responsibility to follow the employer's directive and wear the required PPE. Examples of PPE include:

- Hearing protection
- Eye/face protection
- Head protection
- Hand and foot protection
- Respiratory protection



Workers using PPE must be given pre-job instruction by the employer to understand its use, limitations, and its maintenance requirements. Always refer to the operator's manual for equipment and machinery to be sure. Workers wearing or using PPE need to test/inspect the equipment before each use, and must not wear it if it is defective.

Here are some general guidelines to follow (refer to the OH&S Act & Regulations for specific requirements):

- Properly fitting, long- or short-sleeved shirts and long pants are best to prevent injury from the sun as well as scratches and bites.
- High-top, lace-up shoes and boots with traction soles and steel-reinforced toes provide support and protection to the workers' toes, feet and ankles.
- Face shields or goggles protect eyes from dust and flying particles when using chainsaws or brush cutters.
- Wraparound sunglasses with UVA and UVB protection to reduce the risk of cataracts from sun exposure.
- Appropriate hearing protection devices (ear muffs, ear plugs) provide protection from noise produced by equipment.
- Proper respiratory protection may be necessary in extremely dusty conditions or when working with or around chemicals.
- Appropriate head protection is indicated when working under low branches or where there may be a hazard from falling objects (eg. Cages around mowing equipment to protect from airborne golf balls)
- Gloves should be selected based upon the task to be performed. Various glove styles provide hand protection from hazards such as cuts, scrapes, chemical / thermal burns and vibrating equipment.

## Hearing Conservation

According to the World Health Organization, noise-induced hearing impairment is the most common irreversible (and preventable) occupational hazard world-wide. Additionally, Noise creates other safety concerns. It interferes with communication, can mask the sound of alarms (eg., back-up alarms, smoke alarms), and can increase fatigue and decrease mental alertness especially during prolonged exposure.



The Occupational Health and Safety General Regulations for Prince Edward Island require employers to implement a noise conservation program where its workers are exposed to excessive noise levels\*. If the employer cannot eliminate the noise hazard entirely, efforts must first be made to reduce the noise hazards as much as possible, and finally to provide CSA-approved hearing protection to exposed workers. Be sure to train workers on proper use and care of PPE and appropriately supervise workers to ensure PPE is being properly used.

- The hearing conservation program must consider:
  - how noise levels will be measured
  - how workers will be educated and trained in the program and safe work procedures
  - what types of engineering control are considered and/or used
  - what areas in the workplace are at risk and therefore require warning signs
  - annual hearing tests for workers at risk; how administered and by whom
  - an annual review of the program for changes/updates.

### ***What can workers expect?***

- Workers have the right to know about the hazards in their workplace; if they may be exposed to excess noise levels at work, they need to be informed.
- Where hearing protection is required, workers are required to wear it properly.
- Also, workers who are exposed to excessive noise are required to have their hearing tested annually.

### **\*Excessive Noise Levels**

Exposure level (dBA)	Exposure duration
80	24 hours
82	16 hours
85	8 hours
88	4 hours
91	2 hours
94	1 hour
97	30 minutes
100	15 minutes
103	7.50 minutes
106	3.75 minutes
109	1.88 minutes
112	0.94 minutes
115 and greater	0

## Environmental Conditions

Working outdoors may expose a worker to serious hazards that are not normally considered in an indoor work area.

### *Hot weather work – Heat Stress and Sun Safety*

Heat stress - Although the human body is very resilient and adaptable, working in a hot work environment can be dangerous. Heat, humidity, and physical exertion are factors that, when combined, can create a hazard to workers. Heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke can result.

Sun safety - Workers need to protect themselves from sunburn and possible skin cancer by covering up with lightweight clothing and using sunscreen. Also wearing sunglasses with UVA/UVB protection is important.

For information on preventing heat stress illnesses and sun protection, please refer to the Guide to Prevention of Heat Stress at Work on our website:

[http://www.wcb.pe.ca/photos/original/wcb\\_heat\\_stress.pdf](http://www.wcb.pe.ca/photos/original/wcb_heat_stress.pdf)

### *Bites and stings*

Working outdoors in the summer months means having to fend off bees, wasps, stinging ants, mosquitoes and other pests on occasion. While most of these creatures can be simply a nuisance, a few are capable of delivering painful and even fatal stings or bites. Wearing protective clothing or insect repellent will help prevent stings and bites from insects. Take every precaution possible if a worker is especially sensitive to stings and bites, and ensure that all incidents get reported, no matter the severity of a worker's reaction.

Additionally, there are biological hazards that exist for workers who come in contact with animals. Animal bites or attacks can cause injury and transfer bacteria from the animal to a worker. If a worker is required to remove a dead animal or bird from the workplace, the employer must ensure that safe and non-hazardous removal procedures are in place and that they are properly followed.

### *Lightning*

Severe weather can be a safety risk to workers who work outdoors. When you see lightning, or think a thunderstorm is on the way, get indoors. If you can't get inside a building quickly enough, find a low spot and crouch down. Never take shelter under a tall tree.

Victims struck by lightning get a bad electrical shock and maybe burns, but they carry no electrical charge and can be moved safely. A person struck by lightning can often be revived by prompt administration of CPR (CardioPulmonary Resuscitation) and oxygen. Employers must ensure their workers receive lightning safety training.

## RESOURCES FOR MORE INFORMATION

There are many specific health and safety resources on the WEB. Below are some non-profit sources. They will have references to further information as well. The Occupational Health and safety sites in each province have resources also (CCOHS has links to all these.)

### **Canadian Council for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS)**

Phone: 1-800-263-8466

Fax: 906-572-4500

[www.ccohs.ca/ohsanswers/](http://www.ccohs.ca/ohsanswers/)

### **Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA)**

[www.iapa.on.ca/](http://www.iapa.on.ca/)

### **National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)**

[www.cdc.gov/niosh/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/)

### **Workers Compensation Board of PEI**

Phone: 902-368-5697

[www.wcb.pe.ca](http://www.wcb.pe.ca)

### **Workers Compensation Board of B.C.**

<http://www.wcb.bc.ca>

Worksafe bulletins provide health and safety details for different sectors.

### **Canada's National Occupational Health and Safety website**

<http://www.canoshweb.org/en/topics.html>