

Module 14 – Part D: The Board’s Role in Health and Safety

[Health and Safety of Employees]

Employers are required to have policies and systems in place to ensure the health and safety of all employees. Their rights are protected under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the Workers Safety and Insurance Act, the Human Rights Code and the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act which apply to all employees of a school board.

[Health and Safety Duties of Employers]

The Occupational Health and Safety Act places a range of obligations on employers to protect workers’ safety including adequate training, precautions and protective equipment. A complete list is set out in the Act.

[Health and Safety Officers and Committees]

Health and Safety Committees are mandated under the Act. Their membership comprises all employee groups within the board as well as employer representatives.

[Workplace Safety and Insurance Act]

Obligations required by this Act are very strict. The employee must report an incident to the employer promptly. The employer is required to report the incident to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board within 48 hours or incur the assessment of a late fee.

[Employee Assistance Program]

Most progressive employers offer an Employee Assistance Program. This confidential counselling service is designed to help promote employee well-being.

[Accommodations]

Employers provide accommodation to support the return to work of employees who have been ill or injured. Accessibility legislation also contains provisions obligating employers to create individual accommodation plans to facilitate the employment of people with disabilities.

[Attendance Management]

School boards deliver a wide range of wellness programs and strategies to support employees. The goal is to ensure that students are learning in an environment where staff feel healthy and engaged. Consistency is vital and all school boards strive to reduce absenteeism among all employee groups.