Supervisor Health and Safety Responsibilities

Supervisors are an important part of the Internal Responsibility System [1] and the employer-worker partnership in maintaining a safe workplace. Given the diverse nature of the University, they have an essential role in maintaining health and safety in the workplace and specifically the work areas under their supervision.

Who is a Supervisor?

A supervisor is anyone who has either charge of a workplace or authority over a worker. This broad definition given in the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act [2] (OHSA) is applicable in both the academic and administrative units of the University.

In academic departments, individual faculty members or principal investigators often have charge of a workplace (e.g., a laboratory) or have some authority over graduate students, teaching assistants, administrative staff, or other University employees. In such a case they are supervisors as defined in the OHSA.

Among the administrative staff of the University the supervisory role is generally more clearly defined and outlined in position descriptions.

Note: all Supervisors must complete the mandatory EHS Supervisor Health and Safety Awareness and Due Diligence Training [3] required by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training & Skills Development (MLITSD). Likewise, Supervisors need to confirm that their employees have completed the MLTSD mandated EHS Worker Health and Safety Awareness Training [4].

To continue to keep Supervisors engaged and informed of best practices in their supervisory role, it is recommended that Supervisors complete the EHS Supervisor Refresher – Health, Safety and Due Diligence Training [5] periodically as a compliment to the mandatory course that must be completed upon hiring and/or when progressing into a Supervisory role.

Supervisor Responsibilities

Supervisors have several duties under the OHSA. In general, Supervisors have a legal duty to take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances to protect workers.
Additionally, they have the following specific duties:

1. Supervisors must be familiar with the provisions of the OHSA and Regulations, and the University's health and safety policies and procedures, as they apply to the workplace under their control.
2. Supervisors must be knowledgeable about potential or actual health and safety hazards in their workplace and advise workers about these hazards.
3. Supervisors must provide to workers and maintain in good condition equipment, materials and protective devices required by the University or by any applicable regulations.
4. Supervisors must confirm that workers follow workplace procedures and use personal protective equipment required by the University or by any applicable regulations.
5. Supervisors must provide information, instruction, and supervision to a worker to protect the health or safety of the worker.

- All employees must receive safety orientation prior to the commencement of work. Likewise, students who perform activities as part of their academic programs that may expose them to hazards must be provided with safety orientation and training specific to the hazards and control measures of the activity.
- Safety orientation consists of generic training applicable to all employees and workplace specific training which focuses on the hazards and control measures in a particular job or activity. **Note:** EHS provides

generic safety orientation and generic refresher training on a variety of health and safety topics.
- Academic departments and administrative units are responsible for providing workplace specific/appropriate safety orientation and training prior to the task/activity being performed. All such training must be documented, and the records maintained in the department.

6. Supervisors must maintain an up-to-date inventory of all hazardous materials and agents present in their work area. For example, chemical substances, noise hazards, confined spaces, etc.
7. Supervisors must identify and label all hazardous materials present in the workplace, in the manner prescribed by regulations such as the WHMIS Regulation.
8. Supervisors must make safety data sheets (SDS) [6] readily available for all hazardous materials present in the workplace. SDSs are available at: https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/hr-services-environmental-health-safety-portal/safety-data-sheets
9. Supervisors must provide and/or arrange for workers that may be exposed to a hazard to receive and participate in prescribed instruction and training.
10. Supervisors must arrange for the appropriate disposal of all hazardous materials present in the workplace, in the manner prescribed by University procedures and applicable regulations.
11. Supervisors who are notified by a worker of a workplace injury must support the worker in receiving first aid or medical aid as needed and prevent additional injuries by investigating the cause of the incident and implementing preventative measures as needed. All workplace injuries and incidents must be reported to Occupational Health and Wellness (OHW) within 24 hours by completing and submitting the Incident Report form [7], in accordance with the University's Incident and Injury Reporting Process [8].

Additional University Resources include:

Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) **[9]:** An EHS team of Safety Professionals as Resources [10] to the University community

1. Environmental Health & Safety Training [11]
2. Health and Safety Policies, Programs, Guidelines and Forms [12]

Occupational Health and Wellness (OHW):

1. Occupational Disability - A Workplace Injury or Illness - Manager/Supervisor Responsibilities [13]

For more health and safety resources, please follow the links below:

- Workplace Safety and Prevention Services: Safety Tips: What are the responsibilities of a supervisor under the Occupational H &S Act in Ont? [14] (Video)
- Workplace Safety and Prevention Services: OHS for Supervisors – Everything You Need to Know [15] (Article)
- Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development: Supervisors under the Occupational Health and Safety Act [16] (Article)
- Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development: Prevention Starts Here: Supervisor Health and Safety Awareness in 5 Steps [17] (Workbook)

If you have further inquiries, please direct them to EHS at ehs@uoguelph.ca [18] or (519) 824-4120 ext. 53282 or to the appropriate member of the EHS team [10].

Source URL:https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/supervisor-health-and-safety-responsibilities

Links

[1] https://www.ontario.ca/document/guide-occupational-health-and-safety-act/internal-responsibility-system#:~:text=Supervisors%20are%20responsible%20for%20making,the%20protection%20of%20a%20worker. [2] https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o01 [3] https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/ehs-training/course-descriptions/supervisor-health-and [4] https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/ehs-training/course-descriptions/worker-health-and-safety [5] https://ehs.opened.uoguelph.ca/index.cfm?act=view&event_id=2519 [6] https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/hr-services-environmental-health-safety-portal/safety-data-sheets [7] https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/system/files/2024.03.18%20-Incident%20Report%20Form%20-%20CURRENT_1.pdf [8] https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/incident-and-injury-reporting/injury-reporting-process [9] https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/hr-services/welcome-environmental-health-safety [10] https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/ehs-team [11] https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/environmental-health-safety-training [12] https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/environmental-health-safety-ehs/ehs-programs-policies-guidelines-and-forms [13] https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/about-hr/occupational-health-and-wellness-ohw/occupational-disability-workplace-injury-or-illness-mangersupervisor-responsibilities [14] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nUwKutbxYOM [15] https://www.wsps.ca/resource-hub/articles/ohs-for-supervisors-everything-you-need-to-know [16] https://www.ontario.ca/page/supervisors-under-occupational-health-and-safety-act [17] https://www.ontario.ca/document/supervisor-health-and-safety-awareness-workbook [18] mailto:ehs@uoguelph.ca