

Chapter 13: Safety Awareness, Training and Competency

Introduction

Safety awareness and training are an essential part of the BCTS OHS program. All employees need to show competency in performing their jobs in a safe manner and without risk to their health or that of their fellow workers. A complete training program or process provides several competency building elements. BCTS will utilise the following steps to build worker competency.

- Checking on an employee's initial qualifications at the hiring phase. Employees who do not meet the minimum training or certification for the work undertaken must be provided this training at the earliest possible time.
- Orientation of new employees and ongoing instruction to all employees on how to perform specific tasks safely.
- Ensuring needed certifications and training courses are maintained and renewed as specified by the certifying body.
- Ensuring employees attend safety meetings, informal discussions and refresher training and on the job training periodically to confirm good work practices and to review on the job hazards.

Ongoing verification of an employees safety awareness, training and work practices is a key component in ascertaining the competency of a worker. Certificates may be obtained through the process of education and/or training, but until the employer can verify worker practices first hand, competency cannot be confirmed.

Roles and Responsibilities in the BCTS Training Process

Each employee plays a critical role in health and safety management.

Management will foster a safety culture and develop competent workers by:

- Ensuring that safety awareness, safety training and the competency of their employees is a priority;
- Providing resources and time to ensure on site supervisors and workers are adequately oriented and monitored in the course of their duties;
- Ensuring training needs are tracked and records kept of training or certification needs so that education courses are offered in a timely manner;
- Ensuring workers understand what levels of training or certification are required for each job;
- Ensuring orientation of new workers and re-orientation of existing workers returning after absences; and
- Providing immediate response to safety problems brought to their attention.

Supervisors are responsible for:

- Orientation of new workers and re-orientation of existing workers returning after absences.
- Providing immediate response to safety problems brought to their attention.
- Pre-work and on the job training including documentation.
- Monitoring of employees and worksites to ensure a high level of conformance with the safety program and competence of employees.

Workers are responsible for:

- Identifying awareness or training needs.
- Attending training.
- Remaining competent in the functions and roles they are assigned.

Joint Safety Committees are responsible for:

- Reviewing worker training needs and recommending appropriate worker training to BCTS management.

Safety Training

Safety Awareness

The intent of awareness training is to:

- Make workers aware of the BCTS OHS program, the manual, the field guidebook and other resources available, and
- Increase the ability of the worker to identify, communicate and control hazards in the work the employee encounters during the regular course of assigned duties.

Each BCTS business area and headquarters is responsible to provide staff with:

- Awareness training to all existing and new staff on the content of the BCTS OHS manual including roles and responsibilities.
- Dedicated bulletin board space in each office devoted to Joint Occupational Health and Safety publications. As guided by the JOHSC, the Business Area Co-ordinator will select items to be included and will monitor this section in order to maintain it up to date.
- Regular section safety meetings will be part of each work group's active participation in the BCTS safety program. The Section meeting report handed in by each group will be reviewed and acted on where problems are still outstanding.

Orientation and Re-orientation Training

New workers experience the highest rate of injuries usually with the first six months of employment. Orientation training is an important opportunity to convey existing and potential hazards along with control measures to keep them in check. There are three distinct occasions when an orientation should occur:

1. A new worker starts his/her job (new to BCTS);
2. A worker is in a new role/job; or
3. A worker is returning to work after an absence of 6 weeks or more.

Orientations are provided to familiarize the worker with the general process and the step-by-step procedures required for safe completion of the job.

Critical issue orientation requirements must be reviewed on the first day of employment or before the employee commences work. Key aspects to be reviewed in this orientation include; BCTS safety policy, safe work procedures, job specific hazards and worker rights and responsibilities and the right to refuse unsafe work.

The general orientation requirements should be reviewed within the first week of a new worker's employment. Key aspects of this orientation are listed on the orientation check list and the Safety Competency Review Checklist. This list should be used to document the supervisor's verification of the new employee's competence level. Several approaches can be used to verify the necessary competences which include past work performance checks, confirmation of certification, observation and demonstration. The orientation is a similar process to the on the Safety Competency Evaluation process and serves a similar purpose to verify competence or identify competence gaps for further training and establish interim safety protocols so as not to expose employees to hazards until appropriate competency levels can be established.

Management has overall responsibility for the orientation process, but this responsibility can be delegated to include on-site supervisors, safety reps/committee members or other designated personnel.

The BCTS Safety Program Orientation Checklist can be accessed in Appendices to this manual.

This checklist represents the minimum of what is to be covered. Additional localized issues should be discussed and documented as part of the BCTS Orientation process.

Competency Evaluation

Safety Competency Evaluation (S.C.E.) is a crucial step in reinforcing and ensuring continued competency and to ward off complacency. It can augment through hands-on instruction and demonstration in the workplace. Written records of this activity combined with active verification of competency through observation and reinforced direction achieve diligence and a safety culture. Competency Evaluation can be addressed by a one-on-one with the Supervisor which could include a review of Safety training, observations of worker in routine scenarios and discussion with worker and other sources of information available to the supervisor.

In addition other tools can be used by the supervisor to address certain elements of the competency evaluation including the use of a “buddy system” with another competent worker who is familiar with doing the job safely and efficiently. Ultimately the supervisor must satisfy themselves that the employee can undertake their duties safely and document their conclusion. This is not a performance assessment of the employee but rather a review and retraining exercise to ensure ongoing safety culture and awareness. Should a supervisor feel that circumstances warrant disciplinary action based on observations these matters should be addressed separately and documents relative to this should be filed in the workers personal file. It is expected that these types of circumstances would be addressed immediately when they are identified through other routine supervision and thus it is not the focus of this review to find such matters.

The objectives of competency evaluation and ongoing training are to:

- Teach new skills, procedures or processes;
- Refresh old skills or knowledge, correct bad habits; and
- Re-verify and document competency and awareness.

Key aspects that might be reviewed and discussed during SCE are: safe work procedures; proper use of tools and equipment; emergency response; WHMIS currency of training and certifications and due diligence.

Supervisors must conduct or ensure “SCE” is addressed on a regular basis and at least once per year. This exercise could be addressed incrementally through routine field activities and section safety meetings allowing annual documentation to be a summary of observations throughout the year. Jobs involving the following may require more frequent SCE and training:

- Those with serious hazards;
- Those performed frequently and repetitively;
- Those where there is high turnover of staff; and
- Those where incidents frequently occur.

The BCTS SCE Checklist can be accessed in Appendices to this manual.

Job/Task Hand Off

Under certain circumstances, such as illness, vacation, or re-assignment of duties, a BCTS worker will be required to 'hand off' regular job duties to another co-worker. An effort must be made to ensure that the co-worker, who may be working in a new and/or unfamiliar area, is made aware of any existing or known hazards prior to beginning this work. This can often be done during tailgate meetings and must be documented and made available upon request. A note in a diary or a note or email to file is sufficient to record this has been done.

Formal Training Courses and Certifications

BCTS will require that employees filling certain roles or encountering certain hazards engage in formal training to provide the basis for being competent to perform their duties.

Some, but not all of these requirements, result in a time limited certification. Prior to the expiration of the certification, the individual must again take the training or additional training.

BCTS has prepared a matrix of potentially required training courses depending on staff exposure, for guidance of management, supervisors and workers. This matrix is considered to be the basic requirement for training. Local management and workers may determine that additional training is required for certain functions.

Recording and Tracking of Training Records

Each timber sales office must ensure a process is in place to maintain (Managed by CSO):

- A list of the required certifications by job function;
- A list of the training and certification completed by each employee together with the dates of certification and renewal required for each;
- A process to advise staff in advance of a needed certification expiring and schedule new training to renew the certification; and
- A record keeping process to keep track of less formal training such as on the job training and job task handovers.
- Assign the responsibilities to ensure the above is addressed

The provincial Training matrix is in Appendix 1J form 13-1 and can be augmented with local needs.

Local Procedures

- May require additional training in specific local areas

Forms and Checklists

- Appendix 13-1 Provincial BCTS Safety Training Matrix 13-1
- Appendix 13-2 Safety Competency Evaluation Checklist 13-2
- Appendix 13-3 Safety Program Orientation Checklist 13-3