

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE (JHSC) CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

CONSULTATION PAPER

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Prevention Division

Workplace Safety & Insurance Board



JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
CONSULTATION PAPER

Invitation to Participate.....	3
1. Introduction.....	4
a) Purpose of Consultation	4
b) Legislative Framework	5
c) The Certification Process.....	5
d) Certification Training Outcomes	6
e) Certification Standards	6
2. Certification Review Committee.....	7
a) Objectives	7
b) Composition	7
c) Guiding Principles	8
3. Consultation – Issues For Discussion	9
<i>3A. Certification Structure</i>	<i>9</i>
3a.I. Part one - Basic certification training - Structure	9
3a.II. Part two - Workplace-Specific Hazard Training	12
3a.III. Expiry and Renewal of Certification status	16
<i>3B. Program Delivery Standards.....</i>	<i>18</i>
3b.I. Program delivery	18
3b.II. Participant evaluation.....	20
3b.III. Instructor competency	23
3b.IV. Training provider expectations.....	24
<i>3C. General Questions</i>	<i>25</i>
4. Guideline for Submitting Responses.....	26
5. Summary – Issues For Discussion	27

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

INVITATION TO PARTICIPATE

I am pleased to provide for your review and comment, the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) consultation paper on the Joint Health and Safety Committee Certification Program.

The WSIB envisions a future where workplace injuries and illness are eliminated in Ontario. One of its purposes is: *"To promote health and safety in workplaces and to prevent and reduce the occurrence of workplace injuries and occupational diseases."* The WSIB fulfills this purpose by educating workers and others about health and safety, and by fostering a commitment to health and safety among employers, workers and others.

The WSIB oversees the certification of Joint Health and Safety Committee members and the process is outlined in the WSIB Certification Standards and Program. These standards and the program have been in place since 1996 and are in need of modernizing to ensure certified members continue to receive the highest quality training and knowledge.

In March 2009, the WSIB set up a Certification Review Committee comprised of representatives from labour, employers, Ministry of Labour, Certification Training Providers, Health and Safety Associations and an adult learning specialist to provide advice to the WSIB regarding the review and implementation of improvements to the Certification Standards and Program.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the participants of the Certification Review Committee for their hard work and dedication. The information arising from the review was very helpful in formulating this consultation paper.

I invite you to provide written comments on the issues and discussions set out in the enclosed consultation paper. All input will be considered in the design of the updated Certification Standards and Program. This consultation is your opportunity to help ensure the new Certification Standards and Program reflect current principles in health and safety and adult education and result in effective training for certified members. The consultation paper outlines timelines and how to submit your comments to WSIB.

Thank you for taking the time to read this consultation paper. I value your feedback and look forward to working with you on the Road to Zero.

Sincerely,



Tom Beegan
Chief Prevention Officer

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

1. INTRODUCTION

a) Purpose of Consultation

The WSIB wants to improve Certification processes and standards so that all Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) members receive the highest quality training to prepare them for their roles and responsibilities as certified members of the JHSC.

Most jurisdictions in Canada currently have a requirement for an occupational health and safety committee or equivalent body similar to Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSC) in Ontario. Two provinces, Ontario and Newfoundland and Labrador, are the only jurisdictions requiring “certified members”, though many other jurisdictions require training for committee members.

In 1993, the Workplace Health and Safety Agency (WHS) (which, at the time, was responsible for certifying committee members) launched the *Core Certification Program*. In 1998, responsibility for Certification was transferred to the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board. Since 2001, the Certification Standards and Program has remained unchanged. Currently, the WSIB has certified over 120,000 people and feedback from participants regarding the value of the training has been favourable. However, there are challenges with the program, such as a lack of understanding of the certification process, inconsistent delivery of training among various training providers, and inconsistent approaches to hazard assessment among employers. The WSIB is looking to address these challenges and to enhance and improve the Certification Standards and Program.

The WSIB recognizes that the world of work is changing. For example, most recently, the global recession has significantly impacted Ontario resulting in uncertainty and rapidly changing conditions. As a result of the current economic crisis, employers are restructuring and industry sectors are changing requiring new skills, technologies and demands on the workplace. Ontario’s economy is moving from automotive and manufacturing sectors to knowledge, service, and food services. New and emerging risks such as the H1N1 Flu Virus have arisen changing the way we interact with each other. New technologies such as nanotechnology and those related to new priorities such as the environment are prevalent, yet the health risks associated with them are relatively unknown. It is important that the current Certification Standards and Program are reviewed to ensure that the challenges posed by the changing world of work are addressed.

The WSIB invites submissions from workers, employers, labour and employer organizations, certification training providers and others who have an interest in certification. This is your opportunity to help ensure that the Certification Standards and Program provide the best training for certified members to prepare them for their health and safety role and responsibilities. To assist in this process, Section 3 Consultation – Issues for Discussion presents opportunities for improving the certification program.

The WSIB wants to improve the Certification process to ensure that it is easily understood by prospective certified members and that certification training is accessible, affordable and sustainable. Any modifications to the process must ensure that quality training is provided.

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

b) Legislative Framework

Since the introduction of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) in Ontario in 1978, Joint Health and Safety Committees (JHSCs) have played a key role in the prevention of injuries and illnesses in workplaces. The JHSC is made up of management and worker representatives and is required by law, in most cases, in workplaces with 20 or more workers. At least half of the JHSC members must represent workers. In addition, as per Section 9 of the OHSA, workplaces with a JHSC are required to have at least one worker and one management certified member. Certified member “means a committee member who is certified by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board under the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997*” (as defined in the OHSA).

The WSIB certifies committee members as per section 4 (1) 4, 5 of the *Workplace Safety & Insurance Act* (WSIA). The role of the WSIB with respect to certification is to set the standards for training, to approve training providers and their programs, and to certify people who meet the standards. The role of the Ministry of Labour (MOL) is to ensure compliance with the certification provisions.

The WHSA, through a bi-partite process, developed the *Core Certification Program* which consists of the training program, training materials and delivery of the training. In 1996, the WHSA shifted its focus to setting the standards and approving training programs. The WSIB continues to follow this system with training providers developing and delivering the training and WSIB assessing both the content and delivery of training programs against the Standards for program approval. Approved training providers are recognized and authorized by the WSIB to deliver Certification training.

c) The Certification Process

Certification training is a two part training process:

1. Part One – Basic Certification Training
2. Part Two – Workplace-Specific Hazard Training (in effect since 2001).

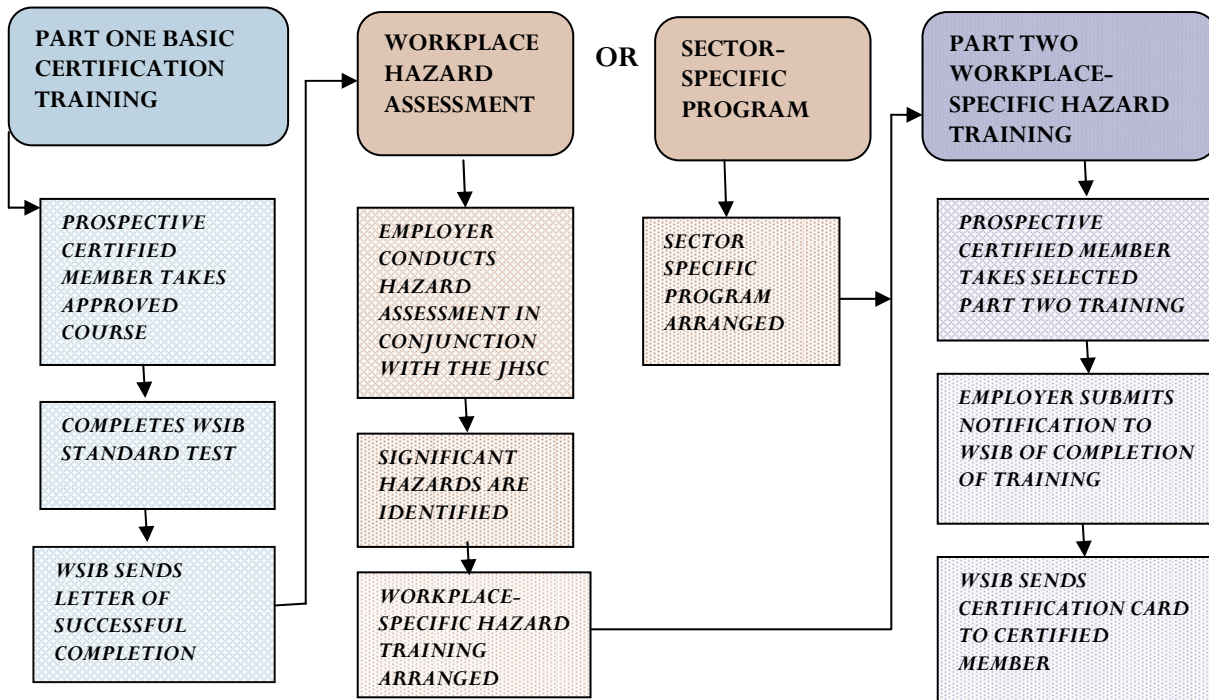
Part One – Basic Certification Training provides a set of knowledge and skills that are required by all certified members. This generic training includes health and safety fundamentals that cover the law, hazard recognition, hazard control, and resources and meets the needs of all workplaces. It is delivered through WSIB approved training providers. These approved Training Providers include Health and Safety Associations and private training providers.

Part Two – Workplace-Specific Hazard Training - Each workplace determines its own training needs based on the results of a workplace hazard assessment conducted by the employer. This training builds on the employer’s obligation to put in place a health and safety program and to provide appropriate training and supervision. In order to accomplish the Workplace Specific training requirement, the employer determines the significant hazards based upon the assessment of the hazards in the workplace and is encouraged to conduct the hazard assessment in conjunction with the JHSC. The employer, then, ensures that prospective certified members are trained on those hazards, including the identification, assessment and control of the hazards. There is no approval required from the WSIB for the Workplace-Specific Hazard Training. In some cases, a sector specific program (Sector Program), approved by WSIB and supported by an association or other representative group for the sector, may be available. In such cases, Workplace-Specific Hazard Training may be completed through attendance of a sector program. Upon notification to WSIB

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

about completion of the Workplace-Specific Hazard Training, the prospective certified member is granted certification status.

CERTIFICATION PROGRAM FLOWCHART



d) Certification Training Outcomes

The outcome of certification training is that certified members will have the knowledge and skills needed to fulfill the legislative duties of a certified member, and to support their internal responsibility system in the prevention of occupational injury and illness. Through learning and acquiring the skills and knowledge to assess and eliminate hazards, to recognize unsafe situations, to know how to address them and to know where to go to get further assistance/information if necessary, certified members will contribute to the enhancement of health and safety. The training ensures the certified member understands their rights and responsibilities, especially in regards to work stoppages. It is not meant to make the certified member a health and safety expert.

e) Certification Standards

The requirements for Certification training are specified in the WSIB Certification Standards (the Standards) and the Guidelines for Part Two – Workplace-Specific Training (the Guidelines). They are available on the WSIB website.

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

2. CERTIFICATION REVIEW COMMITTEE

a) Objectives

The WSIB is reviewing the Certification Standards and Program in order to improve the process for certifying JHSC members, to enhance the customer experience involving the certification training program, and to enable improved employer compliance to certification requirements.

The WSIB has formed a Certification Review Committee (CRC) whose task is to provide advice on the review and implementation of improvements to the Certification Program.

The objectives of the review are:

- To review the Certification Program with a view to modernizing it and to ensure the highest quality training is being delivered to prospective certified members.
- To develop recommendations for improvement and enhancement of the Certification Program and its Standards.
- To reach out to stakeholders for feedback on program enhancements through the formation of the Certification Review Committee and through a formal consultation process.
- To review current technologies utilized by the Certification Program and provide guidance on future enhancements that would have a positive impact on the delivery and administration of the program, as well as the training participants and their employers.

The Certification Review Committee met bi-weekly between March 3, 2009 and June 10, 2009, to discuss the various issues surrounding the current Certification Standards and Program. The meetings were a forum for exchange of ideas and comments and all opinions and suggestions were considered and committee agreement was not required on the suggestions. The feedback received from the committee forms the basis of the issues discussed in this consultation paper.

b) Composition

Members of the committee included the following organizations/representatives:

- Workers Health and Safety Centre (Co-chair)
- Ontario Service Safety Alliance (Co-chair), also representing Farm Safety Association and Industrial Accident Prevention Association
- Pulp and Paper Health and Safety Association of Ontario, also representing Mines and Aggregates Safety and Health Association and Ontario Forestry Safe Workplace Association
- Education Safety Association of Ontario, also representing Ontario Safety Association for Community and Health Care and Municipal Health and Safety Association
- Construction Safety Association of Ontario, also representing Electrical and Utilities Safety Association and Transportation Health and Safety Association of Ontario
- Pockele & Associates Inc
- Provincial Building & Construction Trades Council
- United Steelworkers
- Canadian Auto Workers
- Ontario Hospital Association
- Canadian Foundry Association
- City of Toronto

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

- Ontario General Contractors Association
- Ministry of Labour
- Ontario Institute for Studies in Education graduate student to provide expertise on adult education principles

The Workplace Safety & Insurance Board Prevention Division managed the logistics and coordination of the meetings including setting the agenda and identification of deliverables.

c) Guiding Principles

The goal of the certification review is to make improvements to the Certification Standards and Program that will strengthen Joint Health and Safety Committees in fulfilling their health and safety role. Any changes to the Standards must support the elimination of injuries and illnesses and contribute to the JHSC role in the elimination/control of hazards. Guiding Principles have been developed by the CRC to assist the WSIB in the selection of recommendations for improvements to the Certification Standards and Program. The recommendations must:

- Ensure the highest quality training is delivered.
- Conform to current principles of health and safety and adult learning and acknowledge the present state of work in Ontario.
- Ensure Certified Members receive the knowledge necessary to effectively carry out their role on the JHSC and their rights and responsibilities under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.
- Ensure the standards for program delivery are based upon best practice and evidence based information such that the training meets the learning needs of participants regardless of method of training delivery utilized.
- Facilitate compliance with certification requirements under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* through improved accessibility to training and an improved process for achieving Certification status.

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

3. CONSULTATION – ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

The WSIB would like to improve the Certification Standards and Program to ensure that employers and prospective certified members can easily understand the process and to facilitate the attainment of certification status. Any modifications to the process must ensure that quality training is delivered.

The WSIB has heard from the Certification Review Committee that although the current two part training process for Certification is a good system and that the present concept is good, there is confusion about the process for becoming certified; there are areas that are not well understood such as the workplace hazard assessment and the completion of Workplace-Specific Hazard Training; and there are inconsistencies in delivery of training. These issues result in obstacles to successful compliance with certification requirements.

The following sections are structured to provide an introduction to a specific certification topic, opportunities for improvements and discussion topics for your consideration and comments.

3A. CERTIFICATION STRUCTURE

3A.I. PART ONE - BASIC CERTIFICATION TRAINING - STRUCTURE

Introduction

The current content of the Certification program has been in place since the Standards were developed in 1996. In order to be approved by WSIB, training providers must develop programs that fulfill the learning objectives described in the Standards. These learning objectives are meant to ensure that certified members receive the training necessary for them to carry out their legislative duties and fulfill their responsibilities. They are not to make the certified member a health and safety expert.

The Learning Objectives (*full list pages 5-8 in the Standards*) for Part One – Basic Certification Training fall within the following categories:

- Health and Safety Law
- Hazard Identification and Control
- Investigation Techniques
- Prevention Resources

The Standards also mandate that training providers design the training programs to adhere to adult learning principles (*Standards page 3*) to ensure a proper learning environment for the students. These principles state that students need to be actively involved in their learning and not just passive participants. They need to understand how information is relevant and of immediate value to them, and how to apply the information to situations in their workplace. Students need to be involved and engaged throughout the course. Examples of interactive training include: exercises that simulate actual tasks as closely as possible; students bringing in samples of their work and applying what they learned to their work samples; students presenting on topics or work in case studies. To be approved, training providers must demonstrate that their training program

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

encompasses not only the Learning Objectives but also the delivery requirements specified in the Standards.

Opportunities

a) Course duration

The Standards require programs to adhere to adult learning principles such as use of interactive training mechanisms or variety of learning activities. In many of the classroom training courses currently being delivered, application of adult learning principles is weakening. It was suggested that this may be due to the fact that many of the courses have been modified to shorter durations, since the Standards do not specify how many hours the training must include. The length of time and number of activities per each learning objective will vary depending on the level and specificity of information provided for each learning objective. Some training providers have compressed classroom courses into as little as 2 days while others deliver the course in 3 to 5 days. Yet all of these programs are covering the same learning objectives. This gives rise to the question: Are all the courses delivering the same quality of training and addressing learning objectives with the same degree of comprehensiveness, depth of information and/or the amount of interactivity? Currently, the Standards do not specify the degree of comprehensiveness or the extent of activities to ensure learning objectives are adequately addressed.

In order to address this inconsistent delivery of certification training, some members of the **Certification Review Committee** suggested setting a minimum duration for Part One - Basic Certification Training, a common approach used by training bodies. For instance, the Occupational Health Safety Administration (OHSA) in the U.S. and Worksafe Victoria in Australia, institute minimum classroom times to complete courses and to fulfill learning objectives. First Aid courses also have a requirement for the minimum duration of courses – Standard First Aid is a two day course.

This approach would help ensure a consistent level of training regardless of where the training was taken. The training duration should be sufficient to ensure the learning objectives are achieved in a high quality fashion recognizing that students have different learning styles. Should the minimum duration be instituted, the Certification Review Committee suggestions for the minimum number of days varied ranging from a minimum of 3 to 5 days.

Discussion

1 a. What are your views on instituting a minimum course duration for Part One - Basic Certification Training classroom programs to help ensure adequate interactive activities and suitable depth of content?

1b. If you agree with minimum class durations, how many days do you think is needed in order to achieve the learning objectives?

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

b) Interactivity

The training provider is required to design into the course a variety of activities that allow opportunity for feedback and interaction. This may include use of visual aids, demonstration aids, case studies, role plays, simulations, brainstorming and group discussions. As courses become shorter and shorter, is it still possible to cover all the learning objectives while maintaining adult education principles?

The Certification Review Committee expressed concern that shorter class times, such as two day courses, do not provide sufficient time for interaction activities. It suggested learning objectives should be structured to ensure that students have opportunities to practise what they learn, and to simulate real life work situations in the classroom.

Discussion

2. What are your views on modifying the learning objectives to identify areas where interactive activities are required so students can adequately practise the skill or demonstrate the knowledge?

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c) Course Content

The *Certification Review Committee* indicated that the learning objectives are comprehensive and adequately prepare prospective certified members for their responsibilities. The Certification Review Committee also suggested that the program could be improved by adding learning objectives that includes training on interpersonal skills to help the certified member to represent and work with the committee, employer and workers. Examples of these skills include negotiation, conflict resolution and leadership.

The Certified member may be involved in dealing with workplace issues and conflicts so training in these topics, including knowing how to use communication and negotiation skills, would be of benefit.

Discussion

3a. What are your views on including a learning objective on interpersonal skills for the Certification training? Which skills do you think are important?

3b. Are there any other learning objectives that you think should be included to prepare the certified member for their responsibilities?

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

3A.II. PART TWO - WORKPLACE-SPECIFIC HAZARD TRAINING

Introduction

The purpose of Part Two - Workplace-Specific Hazard Training is to ensure that certified members have a general awareness of the significant hazards in their workplace and to develop their skills in identifying, assessing and making recommendations for the control of the hazards.

There are two options for Workplace-Specific Hazard Training:

- 1) Training based on the Workplace-Specific Hazard Assessment, or
- 2) Sector specific training programs

In the first instance the employer provides training on the significant hazards that exist within the workplace. This allows for flexibility in training, as each employer identifies their own individual training needs. In the second option, participants attend WSIB approved sector programs that have been endorsed by that sector. This enables a single program to be delivered covering hazards common to the majority of the workplaces in a sector. However, specific sector training programs are not available for all sectors.

For the Workplace-Specific Hazard Assessment process, the Standards outline the requirements to be accomplished for Part Two - Workplace-Specific Hazard Training, “each workplace will determine its own needs based on the results of a workplace hazard assessment conducted by the employer.” The Guidelines provide further information to employers regarding the process for Workplace-Specific Hazard training including: employer responsibilities; workplace-specific hazard training needs assessment; training requirements; and receiving final certification.

After identification of the significant hazards in the workplace, the prospective certified member is required to attend training on those hazards that meet the following learning objectives:

1. Describe the hazard and how it may cause injury or illness
2. Identify the relevant legislation, standards and guidelines for the hazard
3. Describe how to identify and assess the hazard
4. Describe ways of controlling the hazard
5. Prepare an action plan to identify, assess and control the hazard based on an actual workplace situation

The employer has the option for their prospective certified member to attend training on those hazards through any training provider or in-house training as long as the training meets the learning objectives. The training providers are not approved by the WSIB. As training providers determine their own content for hazard training, training on any particular hazard will vary from training provider to training provider. It is the responsibility of the employer, preferably in consultation with the JHSC to determine if the training is equivalent and meets the certification learning objectives.

Further detailed information is available in the WSIB publication - “Guidelines for workplace-specific hazard training of certified members” (the Guidelines).

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

Opportunities

There are challenges to Certification training that have arisen following the introduction of the Part Two-Workplace-Specific training in January 2001.

Although the WSIB provides the Guidelines, there are inconsistencies from employer to employer regarding training and there is confusion. Part One - Basic Certification Training is a structured process where training must be taken from an approved training provider; a standardized WSIB test is written; and upon successful completion of the test a Certification Identification Number is provided. Many participants think they are certified at this point. Yet, there is a second step – Part Two - Workplace-Specific Hazard Training.

The process for Part Two – Workplace-Specific Hazard Training is much less structured: employers determine their own training needs, based upon the completion of a workplace hazard assessment for which there is no standardized tool or method; training can be carried out internally or through any training provider and there are no criteria for how much training is sufficient to fulfill Part Two – Workplace-Specific Hazard Training.

Sector-specific programs do provide a structured process similar to Part One - Basic Certification Training, although not all sectors have a program available and programs that are available may not address completely the unique issues of individual workplaces.

Due to the self-directed approach to Part Two – Workplace-Specific Hazard Training, there is variation from employer to employer regarding the length and comprehensiveness of hazard training taken. Although the present process was developed to provide flexibility for employers to identify training needs applicable to their workplace, this has resulted in employers unsure of what training their prospective certified members should be taking. The present process does not provide for mechanisms to validate the training selected and assist employers in complying with their responsibilities for certified members.

The Workplace-Specific Hazard Training process needs to be improved so that the variability of hazards identified and subsequent training taken between different employers is eliminated / solved.

a) Workplace Hazard Assessment Process – Resources

The Workplace Hazard Assessment component is not well understood and is a significant challenge in the certification process. Questions arise such as: How do you complete a hazard assessment? What is a “significant” hazard? Why are my “significant” hazards not the same as another employer in the same industry?

Some members of the **Certification Review Committee** suggest a tool or template could be provided to assist in the identification of hazards in the workplace. Another suggestion is to revive and update the hazard assessment work sheet from the original WSHA *Core Certification Training*. This template/tool provides questions to guide the employer through the selection of significant hazards that are applicable in their workplace.

Discussion

4a. Would a hazard assessment template or tool assist you in completing the hazard assessment requirement for Part Two - Workplace-Specific Hazard Training?

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

Another **Certification Review Committee** suggestion is to have employers use a preset sector list of hazards to guide them in the selection of their significant hazards. Information such as the top hazards resulting in injuries or hazards identified in Ministry of Labour inspections or sector health and safety knowledge would be used to develop the sector lists. The employer would then review the list and select those hazards that are applicable to their particular workplace with the requirement that a minimum number of hazards must be selected. Since all employers in a particular sector would select from the same list of hazards, it is expected that consistency of hazard training among employers in each sector should improve.

Discussion

4b. Would a preset list of “significant” hazards by sector assist you in completing the hazard assessment requirement for Part Two- Workplace-Specific Hazard Training?

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b) Workplace Hazard Assessment Process - Validation

The current process does not provide any mechanism for validating that the training selected by an employer is an appropriate response to the significant hazards in their workplace or that the training provided is adequate. The quality of some of this training comes into question. In cases where there may be disagreements between the prospective certified member and the employer on the significant hazards of the workplace, there may be little recourse for settlement of the disagreement.

The **Certification Review Committee** discussed involving the Health and Safety Associations or the Ministry of Labour, as well as strengthening the JHSC role, as options for assisting in the validation of the hazard assessment process, outcome and resulting training package.

Discussion

5a. How can the WSIB ensure the completeness of hazard assessments?

5b. Who should be responsible for the validation of hazard assessments?

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c) Sector-Specific Program

The Certification Review Committee discussed requiring all Part Two – Workplace-Specific training to be achieved through sector-specific programs. Every employer in the same sector would take the same course and therefore hazard topics. This is a clear process for employers as it ensures a foundation of quality training for certified members and consistent training in the sector. However there are some drawbacks with this system such as: some sectors have wide-ranging hazards and, therefore, a set training program may not cover all significant hazards for all employers – sub-sector programs would need to be developed; or conversely the set program may include training on more hazards than are applicable for a particular employer.

Discussion

6. Would a sector-specific program approach be better for Part Two – Workplace Specific training? Please explain.

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
CONSULTATION PAPER

d) Combined Certification Training

In order to minimize the confusion surrounding the requirements for achieving certification status, the **Certification Review Committee** discussed combining Part One – Basic Certification Training and Part Two – Workplace-Specific Certification Training into one training program – “Certification Training”. The proposed structure could have the training provider responsible for delivering “Certification Training” instead of delivering just Part One - Basic Certification Training. Therefore a student would sign up for “Certification Training” with a training provider and the training provider delivers both Part One and Part Two training either in one continuous time period or separated into two sections. This structure would also help to decrease the time span between completion of Part One and Part Two.

Discussion

7a. Do you think combining Part One - Basic Certification Training and Part Two - Workplace-Specific Hazard Training into one “Certification Training” program would improve the Certification process? Should it replace the current system?

7 b. If so, how would you see that designed?

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e) Training on Top 4 Hazards

Some members of the **Certification Review Committee** suggested the top 4 hazards, if applicable, should be included in Certification Training, in addition to the requirements for Part Two – Workplace-Specific Hazard training. The WSIB regularly analyzes injury and illness statistics and currently, the top 4 hazards or causes of injury are motor vehicle incidents, caught or struck by injury, falls and musculoskeletal disorders. The rationale for this suggestion is that it would ensure that all participants receive training on the prevalent hazards that result in the most workplace injuries and costs. However, there is the potential that the top 4 hazards may not be prevalent in all sectors. Instituting this requirement may also result in the need for longer instruction time in order to cover this added training requirement.

Discussion

8a. What is your opinion regarding making training on the top 4 hazards mandatory for Certification?

8b. If you agree, where should it be included: Part One – Basic Certification Training or Part Two - Workplace Specific Hazard Training?

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f) Part Two – Workplace-Specific Hazard Training - Other Suggestions

The **Certification Review Committee** put forward additional ideas for improving Part Two – Workplace-Specific Hazard Training:

- Enhance the Standards to include specific requirements for Part Two-Workplace Specific program delivery such as the number of topics or minimum class duration
- Designate mandatory training topics such as Hazard Recognition and Control or Common Hazards
- Accredite training providers for Part Two

Discussion

9. Do you agree with these suggestions put forward by the Certification Review Committee? Do you have any other suggestions for improving Part Two – Workplace-Specific Hazard Training?

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

3A.III. EXPIRY AND RENEWAL OF CERTIFICATION STATUS

Introduction

How we work and how the workplace is organized is constantly changing. Work arrangements and employment relationships are more complex with an increase in non-traditional forms of work such as self-employment, working from home, part-time, casual and temporary employment. With changes in the economy, companies are restructuring and downsizing, resulting in greater movement of the workforce from employer to employer.

Changes in the way work is done have come about due to many factors such as globalization, increased competition, technological changes and evolving work processes. New or unfamiliar hazards are potentially introduced. For example, nanotechnology has only recently been identified as a new and emerging risk and the occupational health risks associated with it is not yet understood.

New legislation and regulations are constantly introduced or updated. For example, in 2009 there have been seven regulations amended solely under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. Certified members need to be aware of current legislation as part of their role in the JHSC.

Due to these changes in legislation and the world of work, the WSIB believes that requiring certified members to renew their Certification status through additional training would help them remain current. Lack of knowledge about hazards related to new processes or the legal requirements surrounding hazards and processes impacts the certified member's ability to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities on the JHSC and as part of the internal responsibility system in their workplace. It is normal for certification based training in other fields to have expiry dates and requirements for renewal. For example, First Aid training typically expires after three years. A training program such as Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), while it does not have a formal expiration date, does require an annual review of the training to ensure it is current with work processes.

Opportunities

The length of time a certified member remains on a JHSC can vary widely from workplace to workplace with some individuals choosing to remain for many years and others who may spend a term on the JHSC and return to the committee several years later. A certified member who changes employer may become the designated certified member for the JHSC of the new employer; yet, the specific workplace hazards for the new employer may be different than those in the certified member's original workplace. Without the requirement for certification status renewal, the certified member could potentially remain the designated certified member without undergoing updated workplace hazard training to meet the needs of the new workplace.

Over time, legislation, work processes and type of work changes so that a certified person who was trained years ago may not be up-to-date with the hazards of the workplace, committee responsibilities or changes in legislation. A potential knowledge gap exists.

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

The Certification Review Committee discussed instituting an expiry date for Certification status and a renewal process. The suggestions on what might be required to renew Certification credentials were varied. Suggestions included:

- Instituting refresher courses which would provide updates in legislation, hazards and review of the basic knowledge
- Requirement to take courses to upgrade their skills and knowledge. The selection of courses would depend on the particular need of the certified member.
- Institute maintenance system similar to programs implemented by of the Board of Canadian Registered Safety Professionals (Canadian Registered Safety Professional), Project Management Institute (Project Management Professional) or Certified General Accountants of Ontario (Certified General Accountant). Members maintain their status by accumulating a set number of points per year, usually obtained when receiving or delivering training and attending conferences.

Discussion

10a. What are your views on implementing an expiration period for Certification status? If you agree with implementing an expiration period, what should the timeframe be?

10b. What do you think should be the requirements for renewal of Certification status? Some examples are:

- **Refresher training (short review of Part One - Basic Certification Training and updates)**
- **More hazard training (on topics not previously taken)**
- **Re-do entire Part One - Basic Certification Training**
- **Maintenance system**
- **Other?**

10c. If expiry is not recommended, what suggestions do you have for ensuring certified members maintain currency with emerging health and safety knowledge or if they transfer to a new employer?

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

3B. PROGRAM DELIVERY STANDARDS

3B.I. PROGRAM DELIVERY

Introduction

The Standards set out criteria for program delivery such as adherence to adult learning principles. *For reference: WSIB Standards pages 3-4.*

Current training methods have evolved to include several modes of delivery such as:

- Classroom – instructor led,
- Non- classroom:
 - Electronic learning (e-learning) – delivery of content via electronic media. May include video or CD/DVD media; computer based training (self-study); internet based, online training; or teleconference (distance learning using closed-circuit television and telephones etc).
 - Paper-based, self study – correspondence
- Various combinations of the above

The WSIB reviewed other health and safety authorities training programs to see what role non-classroom training played. The Occupational Health and Safety Authority (OHSA) in the United States prefers classroom, however accepts non-classroom courses that meet special requirements. Worksafe Victoria in Australia only accepts courses that include face-to-face instruction. Other programs may accept non-classroom training on a case-by-case basis or with additional requirements.

The WSIB Certification Standards are predominantly designed for a classroom mode of delivery. It is also accepted that Certification training should be available to everyone regardless of geographic location, learning style or sector. Each mode of training delivery has its benefits and liabilities. For instance, instructor-led classroom training can be expensive or prohibitive if students are required to travel or if class size is small. However, it allows students to communicate and interact with their peers, ask questions and clarify information with the instructor in real-time, and allows instructors to provide immediate feedback on the student's performance.

Non-classroom training may provide flexibility as students can complete the training at their convenience and move through the content at their own pace. Students who live at a distance or do not have access to classroom courses for other reasons can complete the course at an accessible location. However, non-classroom courses do not provide real-time access to instructors or peers. E-learning courses are not suitable for students who are not proficient with technology; do not have easy access to computers or whose learning style is not compatible with this mode of delivery.

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

Opportunities

The WSIB is receiving requests for approval of non-classroom courses, however, the Standards do not include criteria specific to the administration of this type of training delivery. The **Certification Review Committee** has diverse views in regards to the use of e-learning for certification training:

- it is an appropriate method for delivering certification training,
- it was suitable for use in refresher courses, or
- it is a viable and necessary option.

Adherence to adult learning principles, especially the need for interactivity and ability for students to be able to ask questions and receive immediate feedback, is very important to WSIB. Some of the Certification Review committee members felt that this was not possible in e-learning formats whereas others thought that it is possible as long as the training is well-designed and peer-reviewed.

In order to ensure successful e-learning training, various strategies or techniques have been incorporated, such as:

- Tracking tools to record the participation levels of each student and show patterns of access.
- Provision of opportunities for student-to-student and student-to-instructor interaction such as discussion boards or help line for asking questions (qualified instructor for course content and technical support for operation and navigation of the electronic course).
- Incorporating high level of interactivity into the course design such as simulations, application exercises, video, case studies, online mentoring.
- Putting adequate controls in place to ensure verification of the student and validity of student assessment results.
- Incorporating blended learning – e-learning plus some form of instructor-based training. The e-learning delivery trains on knowledge components and the instructor-based delivery allows for interaction and evaluation of the student's ability to apply the knowledge learned.
- Provision of student to instructor (resource) for content support
- Completion and submission of assignments to instructors

Discussion

11. In addition to the strategies listed, what other requirements should be included in the standard for non-classroom training?

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

3B.II. PARTICIPANT EVALUATION

Introduction

The Standards require participant evaluation – ongoing and final. (*Standards page 4*)

For ongoing evaluation, the Standards are general, solely specifying that training providers are directed to “gather feedback evaluation from participants throughout the program to ensure participant achievement of the individual learning objectives.” No criterion is provided as to what constitutes “ongoing evaluation”.

Ongoing evaluation is the monitoring of a participant’s progress and providing immediate feedback/correction to the participant before the learning and teaching is complete. The feedback may consist either of corrections where the participant is explained how they can obtain the objective or confirmation that they have successfully achieved the learning objective. Techniques may include discussion, completion of review questions after each module, assignments, mini quizzes, activities and participation in class.

Final evaluation assesses a participant’s understanding of the material covered in Part One-Basic Certification Training. This is accomplished through a WSIB Standard test which reviews the key concepts important to the role of the certified member. Participants must attain a minimum score to pass the Part One- Basic Certification Training.

The WSIB Standard test is administered by the training providers and submitted to the WSIB for scoring. The WSIB notifies successful participants through a letter advising that they have successfully passed the test and must continue on to Part Two Workplace-Specific Hazard Training in order to be certified. The WSIB issues a supplemental evaluation to unsuccessful participants.

Opportunities

a) Ongoing Evaluation

Although, the Standards require ongoing evaluation, they are not specific about the requirements for accomplishing it. Ongoing evaluation varies widely from provider to provider and there is no requirement to submit results of the evaluation to the WSIB. In addition, methods for implementing ongoing evaluation would be different for classroom training versus e-learning or self-study.

The **Certification Review Committee** suggested the Standards include specific direction for implementing ongoing evaluation, such as building ongoing evaluation techniques into the lesson plan and requiring the training provider to demonstrate how they will do ongoing evaluation in order to obtain WSIB approval. In addition, the requirement for ongoing evaluation should also apply to Part Two – Workplace-Specific Hazard Training.

Discussion

12a. What are your views on including specific criteria for ongoing evaluation and validation of knowledge transfer to enhance the learning of the participant?

12b. What, if any, suggestions do you have for the criteria?

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
CONSULTATION PAPER

b) Final Evaluation – Validity of WSIB Standard Test

The **Certification Review Committee** raised issues regarding the validity of the present WSIB standard test. Do the questions adequately assess a participant’s acquisition of the Part One - Basic Certification Training learning objectives? The present test is multiple choice but would another format more adequately assess acquisition of knowledge? Is the test effective for all types of students regardless of learning style or language skills and is it accessible to students with disabilities? Another suggestion was that the final evaluation would be a composite of all ongoing evaluations conducted throughout the course.

The **Certification Review Committee** felt that there should be a final evaluation of a student’s achievement of the learning objectives and regardless of the training method used, the student should be able to apply the knowledge learned in the training and know how to bring about improvements in health and safety at their workplace.

Discussion

13a . What are your views on how to best evaluate successful knowledge transfer?

13b. If you have written the WSIB standard test or have experience with it, do you think it is a valid assessment tool?



c) Final Evaluation – Test Feedback

Under the current process, the training providers forward the student’s completed tests to the WSIB for scoring and the students are advised of the test results at a later date. As a result, during classroom training, instructors and students are not able to access test results to determine gaps so that these learning objectives can be reviewed. The instructor simply must administer the test and is removed from the function of validating knowledge transfer and providing feedback on test results or areas where further training/review may be required. As well, the student does not have the opportunity to discuss with their instructor the areas they did not understand, since the instructor does not have the opportunity to determine areas where knowledge transfer did not occur. As such, instructors are not able to subsequently modify or improve the training course to address any deficiencies.

The **Certification Review Committee** discussed the benefits of administering and scoring the standard WSIB test while the students were still in the program. The instructor would be able to review material where students had incorrect answers, ensuring that knowledge transfer occurs. The student would know immediately if they have been successful.

Discussion

14a. Who should be responsible for scoring the final evaluation?

- **WSIB**
- **Instructor**
- **Training Provider?**

14b. By having the instructor score the test, the instructor has the opportunity to review and provide immediate feedback to the students. How important is this?

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

d) Final Evaluation – Who does it?

The **Certification Review Committee** discussed the benefits of requiring the training provider to develop their own final evaluation instead of using a WSIB standard test. The training provider would be able to design evaluations that are better fitted to the particular sector and student needs. However, removing the standard WSIB test would introduce variability in the evaluation and therefore results may not be easily compared across training providers. Another area discussed was the possibility that more emphasis be placed on ongoing evaluation instead of the final test. This would result in more immediate feedback and learning gaps could be identified and resolved as they occur and not at the end of the program.

Discussion

15a. Do you think there should be a formal evaluation at the completion of Part One – Basic Certification Training?

15b. Who should be responsible for developing the final evaluation?

- ***WSIB***
- ***Instructor***
- ***Training Provider?***

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

3B.III. INSTRUCTOR COMPETENCY

Introduction

The Standards require training providers to ensure their instructors are qualified with a background in adult education and/or training and knowledge of occupational health and safety. In addition, they are required to assure instructor qualifications and performance and include provisions for instructor upgrading and updating. The Standards, however, do not provide specifications as to what constitutes instructor qualifications and quality assurance. The goal is to ensure certified members receive high quality training and, as such, the WSIB would like to know your views on instituting instructor competency levels and quality assurance measures.

Opportunities

Currently the Standards do not include well defined specifications regarding instructor qualifications. The background, experience and qualifications of instructors vary from provider to provider. The WSIB proposed instituting competency levels for instructors to the **Certification Review Committee**. Defined competency levels are the norm in most “certification” programs. Many require instructors to successfully complete a “train the trainer” course in order to be a recognized instructor. The **Certification Review Committee** agreed that a defined instructor competency level would be beneficial. The following are elements of possible criteria for instructor competency:

- Work experience in occupational health and safety and in the particular sector
- Work experience as an instructor/trainer
- Education in adult education
- Education in occupational health and safety
- A system for continuous improvement such as keeping up-to-date with developments in health and safety and adult education principles.
- Experience in delivering Certification Training programs
- Completion of a “train-the-trainer” course

Discussion

16a. What are your views on requiring instructors to meet a training and/or competency standard in order to provide training?

16b. What should instructor competencies include? Some examples are:

- **Work experience in occupational health and safety and in the particular sector**
- **Work experience as an instructor/trainer**
- **Education in adult education**
- **Education in occupational health and safety**
- **Continuous improvement**
- **Experience in delivering Certification Training programs**
- **Completion of a “train-the-trainer” course**
- **Other?**

16c. What other suggestions do you have for ensuring quality training is delivered by training providers?

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

3B.IV. TRAINING PROVIDER EXPECTATIONS

Introduction

The Standards include criteria for approval of training providers and specify that the WSIB may monitor providers and revoke approval if it has reason to believe that criteria or standards are not being met. Presently, there is a great variety of approved training providers. They range from private training organizations (one or more instructors) to health and safety associations (some with many instructors). Some training providers deliver training regularly with sessions throughout Ontario and some training providers may not deliver a session in a given year.

Opportunities

As outlined in the WSIA, the WSIB approves training providers and their programs for certification. The Standards do not provide direction for training providers on development of instructor materials (for example: timetable, instructor notes, lesson plans) that when in place would ensure greater consistency of delivery, regardless of instructor. For training providers or instructors that deliver few courses, how do we ensure consistent, quality training is delivered?

The ***Certification Review Committee*** discussed introducing a requirement that approved training providers must deliver a minimum of two or more sessions per year. It also suggested that the Quality Assurance component of the Standards should be more robust with specific criteria for training provider approval. Some suggestions were:

- Training providers should outline the elements of their quality assurance program and the WSIB conduct spot checks on the training providers and their programs to ensure they implement it.
- The WSIB should conduct regular audits of training providers, the course material and the delivery of the courses to ensure they continue to meet the Standards.
- The Standards should also include a requirement that training providers have an evaluation process for their courses.
- Training providers should have a quality assurance program for their instructors to ensure competency and to deal with any performance issues.
- Require training providers to submit an annual report on their programs to the WSIB.

Discussion

17a. What is your view on including a requirement for training providers to deliver at least 2 sessions per year?

17b. What suggestions do you have for quality assurance for training providers?

Some examples are:

- ***Required instructor materials***
- ***Course evaluation***
- ***Instructor performance***
- ***Other?***

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

3C. GENERAL QUESTIONS

The certified member on a JHSC plays an important role in contributing to a safe and healthy workplace. Currently, there is no formal networking/support process for certified members.

Feedback received from the *Certification Review Committee* suggests that certified members would benefit from structured support mechanisms and access to resources. The WSIB would like to know your opinions on the type of support and resources that you think would be helpful for certified members to be more effective.

Discussion

18a. Do you think that certified members would benefit from a support mechanism and access to resources?

18b. If so, what would you suggest?

- ***Networking opportunities***
- ***Dedicated website, chat-line, blog***
- ***Regional meetings/conferences***
- ***Newsletters***
- ***Volunteering in safety organizations***
- ***Other?***

General:

Discussion

19. Are there any other comments you wish to provide regarding the Certification Standards and Program?

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

4. GUIDELINE FOR SUBMITTING RESPONSES

How to respond to this consultation paper:

Please send your comments, suggestions and recommendations regarding the Joint Health and Safety Committee Certification Program Consultation Paper to the WSIB:

By mail:

Cristina Campanelli, Project Manager
Prevention Division, 11th Floor
Workplace Safety & Insurance Board
200 Front Street West
Toronto, Ontario M5V 3J1

Or by email:

cristina_campanelli@wsib.on.ca

Please provide your response by February 5, 2010.

Please direct any questions to Cristina Campanelli at 416 344-5041 or 1800 663-6639 ext 5041.

Your input will help us to improve the WSIB Certification Standards and Program. We will review and consider all the comments that we receive to this consultation paper and use this feedback to help us make decisions on the changes to the WSIB Certification Program and Standards. Thank you for taking the time to participate.

It will help us if you let us know in your response, which of the following apply:

- Currently a designated member on your Joint Health and Safety Committee and if you represent workers or management
- An employer
- In management/supervision
- A worker
- A Certification Training Provider or and Certification Training instructor
- An employer or labour association or organization
- Prevention System Partner – Ministry of Labour or Health and Safety Association
- Government
- Presently work in health and safety
- Other

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM
CONSULTATION PAPER

5. SUMMARY – ISSUES FOR DISCUSSION

1 a. What are your views on instituting a minimum course duration for Part One - Basic Certification Training classroom programs to help ensure adequate interactive activities and suitable depth of content?

1b. If you agree with minimum class durations, how many days do you think is needed in order to achieve the learning objectives?

2. What are your views on modifying the learning objectives to identify areas where interactive activities are required so students can adequately practise the skill or demonstrate the knowledge?

3a. What are your views on including a learning objective on interpersonal skills for the Certification training? Which skills do you think are important?

3b. Are there any other learning objectives that you think should be included to prepare the certified member for their responsibilities?

4a. Would a hazard assessment template or tool assist you in completing the hazard assessment requirement for Part Two - Workplace-Specific Hazard Training?

4b. Would a preset list of "significant" hazards by sector assist you in completing the hazard assessment requirement for Part Two- Workplace-Specific Hazard Training?

5a. How can the WSIB ensure the completeness of hazard assessments?

5b. Who should be responsible for the validation of hazard assessments?

6. Would a sector-specific program approach be better for Part Two – Workplace Specific training? Please explain.

7a. Do you think combining Part One – Basic Certification Training and Part Two – Workplace-Specific Hazard training into one "Certification Training" program would improve the Certification process? Should it replace the current system?

7b. If so, how would you see that designed?

8a. What is your opinion regarding making training on the top 4 hazards mandatory for Certification?

8b. If you agree, where should it be included: Part One –Basic Certification Training or Part Two - Workplace Specific Hazard Training?

9. Do you agree with these suggestions put forward by the Certification Review Committee? Do you have any other suggestions for improving Part Two - Workplace-Specific Hazard Training?

JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

10a. *What are your views on implementing an expiration period for Certification status? If you agree with implementing an expiration period, what should the timeframe be?*

10b. *What do you think should be the requirements for renewal of Certification status? Some examples are:*

- *Refresher training (short review of Part One - Basic Certification Training and updates)*
- *More hazard training (on topics not previously taken)*
- *Re-do entire Part One - Basic Certification Training*
- *Maintenance system*
- *Other?*

10c. *If an expiry is not recommended, what suggestions do you have for ensuring certified members maintain currency with emerging health and safety knowledge or if they transfer to a new employer?*

11. *In addition to the strategies listed, what other requirements should be included in the standard for non-classroom training?*

12a. *What are your views on including specific criteria for ongoing evaluation and validation of knowledge transfer to enhance the learning of the participant?*

12b. *What, if any, suggestions do you have for the criteria?*

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JOINT HEALTH AND SAFETY COMMITTEE CERTIFICATION PROGRAM CONSULTATION PAPER

16a. *What are your views on requiring instructors to meet a training and/or competency standard in order to provide training?*

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- *Education in adult education*
- *Education in occupational health and safety*
- *Continuous improvement*
- *Experience in delivering Certification Training programs*
- *Completion of a “train-the-trainer” course*
- *Other?*

16c. *What other suggestions do you have for ensuring quality training is delivered by training providers?*

17a. *What is your view on including a requirement for training providers to deliver at least 2 sessions per year?*

17b. *What suggestions do you have for quality assurance for training providers? Some examples are:*

- *Required instructor materials*
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- *Other?*

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- *Volunteering in safety organizations*
- *Other?*

19. *Are there any other comments you wish to provide regarding the Certification Standards and Program?*