

4.0 Health and Safety Policy

The Health and Safety Policy is a commitment by the employer that clearly outlines the dental practice's approach to health and safety. When communicated to all workplace parties, the policy guides the workplace towards a common goal of improved health and safety. **Dental practices with five (5) or fewer workers are exempt from preparing a written health and safety policy.**

If a written policy is required, it must be clearly written so that everyone understands the intent and meaning. The policy should contain at least the following elements:

- An employer commitment to providing a healthy and safe workplace
- A commitment to comply with the OHSA and associated regulations
- The health-and-safety-related responsibilities of the employer, workers, and *contracted workers*
- A commitment to consultation and co-operation between management and workers to improve health and safety

Contracted workers are external people who do not spend their entire day at the practice, but are contracted for periodic work, such as office cleaning, pest control or maintenance.

The policy should be dated and signed by the dental practice owner, and reviewed at least annually.

The policy must be posted in a conspicuous location where workers can see it and access it at all times. A copy of the policy can also be included in an employee handbook if one is provided to workers, in any health and safety training policy and procedure manual or as part of the orientation package for new workers. It should also be reviewed with all contracted workers.

Since every business is different, a policy must be written to specifically suit the dental practice. A sample health and safety policy is provided in Appendix E.

ACTIONS:

- 4.1** Develop, and put in writing if required, a Health and Safety Policy for your Dental office, and review it at least annually OHSA s.25(2)(j).
- 4.2** If a written Health and Safety Policy is required, sign and post the policy in a conspicuous location where workers can see it in the workplace OHSAs.25(2)(k).

Resources:



The *2015 Pocket Ontario OH&S Act & Regulations, consolidated edition*, containing Ontario statutes and regulations, can be purchased from PSHSA. Contact the PSHSA Head Office to order (Toll free: 1-877-250-7444). <http://www.pshsa.ca/product/2016-pocket-ontario-ohs-act-regulations/>

Other

Health and safety statutes and regulations can be downloaded on an individual basis from <http://www.ontario.ca/laws> (direct links are given in Appendix B).

5.0 Health and Safety Program

The OHSA states that employers must have a Program in place to implement the Health and Safety Policy. **Dental practices with five (5) or fewer workers are exempt from preparing a written program.**

The Health and Safety Program will vary depending on the hazards identified in a specific workplace. Each component of the program should indicate the person responsible for that component. For most workplaces, health and safety information is kept together in a binder labelled Health and Safety Program. The information should be accessible to all workers.

Consider the following as a minimum when developing health and safety programs:

- Responsibility, accountability and authority for the success of the program
- HSR/JHSC responsibilities
- Analysis of injury and/or illness trends – risk assessment
- Workplace inspections
- A formal means of hazard/incident reporting
- Incident investigation
- Orientation and ongoing training
- Emergency preparedness including first aid

The remainder of this guide provides information on the elements in the above list.

Certain hazard-specific programs may be required, depending on the findings of the *risk assessment*. Consider the following:

- WHMIS 2015
- Chemical waste management
- Infection prevention and control (including immunization)
- Biohazardous waste; sharps use and disposal procedures
- Radiation protection
- Appropriate use of antiseptics, disinfectants and decontaminants
- Managing the risk of violence and harassment in the workplace
- Practices and procedures for working alone
- Musculoskeletal injuries/safe material handling
- Personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Electrical safety procedures (Lockout – see Glossary of terms)
- Preventive maintenance
- Slips, trips and falls prevention

Risk assessment is the process of evaluating the level of risk associated with identified workplace hazards. Assessing the risk makes it possible for the employer to prioritize health and safety concerns and plan for ongoing improvements to workplace health and safety.

To satisfy the requirements of the **Needle Safety Regulation**, a dental practice should have a written policy regarding the use of safety-engineered needles. See Appendix F for a sample Sharps Safety Program and Appendix G for an Information Tracking Form to report on sharps in use at the dental facility that have not been replaced with a safety-engineered needle.

ACTIONS:

- 5.1** Prepare a binder or file to hold the Health and Safety Program information such as the Responsibility Statements, Health and Safety Policy, and blank incident reports, and place it in a location accessible to all workers (LP).

Resources:

The following resources are available on the ODA Member website:

- [*Dental Wastes – Best Management Practices Guide for the Dental Community, 2005*](#)
- [*MSD Awareness and Prevention: A Guide for Dental Practices, 2011*](#)
- [*Radiation Safety Program – A Guide for Dental Practices, 2011*](#)
- [*WHMIS Program: A Guide for Dental Practices*](#)



The following is a partial list of free PSHSA downloads that may be of use:

- *Planning Guide to the Implementation of Safety Engineered Medical Sharps*
<http://www.pshsa.ca/products/a-planning-guide-to-the-implementation-of-safety-engineered-medical-sharps-test/>
- *Protecting Workers Who Work Alone*, 2012. Available at
<http://www.pshsa.ca/products/protecting-workers-who-work-alone/>
- *Hand Hygiene: Spread Protection, Not Infection*,
http://pshsa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/Hand_Hygine.pdf