

# Alberta OHS



## UPDATE 2 - Your Rights and Employer Duties



Workers in Alberta will see dramatic and positive changes to health and safety legislation come into effect on June 1, 2018. With the passage of Bill 30, the Alberta government has overhauled the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (the Act) for the first time in over 40 years.

To explain the implications for our members and other workers, CUPE's National Health and Safety Branch is highlighting some of the changes members can expect to see with the upcoming changes.

In this edition, we look at the purpose of the Act and the Four Rights workers have under the law.

### NEW PURPOSE, NEW STRENGTH

The first paragraph of the new Alberta *Occupational Health and Safety Act* explains its purpose:

- “[T]he promotion and maintenance of the highest degree of physical, psychological and social well-being of workers.”
- The prevention of and protection from “worksites incidents, injuries, illnesses and diseases, caused by factors and conditions adverse to their health and safety present in the workplace.”

This may seem simple but is in fact very important. Sometimes, there can be confusion or disagreement about how to interpret a section of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* or related regulations. When in doubt, remember to always interpret them in a way that

promotes good health and the prevention of injury or illness or disease.

This is about strengthening worker health and safety. Any other interpretation that doesn't protect our health and safety should be rejected.

### FOUR BASIC RIGHTS

Importantly, the Alberta government enshrined basic rights of workplace health and safety under the purpose of the Act. They are:

- The right to **know** and be informed of hazards in the workplace.
- The right to **participate** including the expression of health and safety concerns.
- The right to **refuse** dangerous work.
- The right to **not be subjected to discipline** for following health and safety laws.



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### RESOURCES AND HELP

CUPE provides many resources for new committees in our Health and Safety Committee Resource Kit ([cupe.ca/health-and-safety-committee-resource-kit](https://cupe.ca/health-and-safety-committee-resource-kit)).

**Do you have additional questions?  
Contact your CUPE National Staff  
Representative.**

**Learn more at [cupe.ca/albertaohs](https://cupe.ca/albertaohs)**