

## Practice Guideline

March 22, 2007

Prior to the practice education experience, students must have a working knowledge of workplace health and safety practices related to:

- Fire Safety
- Infection Prevention/Control
- Workplace Hazardous Materials Information Systems
- Workplace Violence Prevention
- Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention
- Waste Management

Receiving Agency staff and/or Placing Agency faculty must provide on site orientation and direction, and supervise students when they are exposed to new or unfamiliar procedures, substances, or equipment.

## Guideline Details

Fire Safety should include evacuation principles and use of fire extinguishers.

Infection Prevention/Control must include the principles of hand washing, and may also include the broader concepts of standard precautions depending on the program of study.

Workplace Hazardous Materials Information Systems basic education is required by any individual who works with or in proximity to hazardous or controlled products. In healthcare, this may include maintenance staff, x-ray and medical technicians, nurses, laboratory workers, housekeepers, and laundry staff.<sup>1</sup>

Workplace Violence Prevention education is required by any individual who may be exposed to the risk of violence in the workplace. Education should include measures to prevent or minimize any risk of violence to oneself or others, and general actions to take should violence occur.

Musculoskeletal Injury Prevention education is required for those who may be exposed to a risk of musculoskeletal injury (MSI). Education should include risk identification related to the work, including the recognition of early signs and symptoms of MSIs and their potential health effects. For those involved in direct care, education should also include principles and practices of safe manual handling and use of lifting equipment.

Waste Management education should include the principles and practices related to disposal of materials, sharps, biohazardous wastes, and chemotoxic wastes.

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<sup>1</sup> Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare in BC. (2003). Basics of the Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS) - "Who needs this type of education?" Retrieved on June 9, 2006 from [http://www.ohsah.bc.ca/index.php?section\\_id=25193&](http://www.ohsah.bc.ca/index.php?section_id=25193&)

## Roles and Responsibilities

### Placing Agency:

- Faculty are responsible for keeping current on workplace health and safety issues and practices and teaching students the most up to date principles and practices.
- All students and on site faculty are responsible for being familiar with Receiving Agency Health and Safety policies, procedures and equipment.
- Students and on site faculty may be required to attend Health & Safety educational sessions.

### Receiving Agency:

- Make sure the student and on site faculty have information on site-specific workplace health and safety policies, procedures, and practices.
- Staff are responsible for modelling correct workplace health and safety practices.

## Consequences of Non-compliance

Students and on site faculty put not only themselves but others at risk when they do not have an up-to-date working knowledge of workplace health and safety practices.

## Rationale

WorkSafeBC OHS Regulations outline employer requirements for workplaces, promote occupational health and safety, and protect staff, students and other persons present at workplaces from work-related risks to their health, safety, and well-being. In addition to WorkSafeBC Regulations, health authorities are to demonstrate that health and safety hazards are addressed as part of the accreditation process as per the Human Resources Standard 10.0: “The organization is committed to the occupational health and safety of staff, independent practitioners, volunteers, and students.”<sup>2</sup>

Workplace health and safety is essential to every practice education experience. Students and on site faculty should have a working knowledge to ensure a safe working environment for everyone involved. Students and on site faculty need to have up to date information on workplace health and safety regulations and practices in order to help prevent accidents, incidents, and injuries from occurring in the course of a practice education experience.

When students and on site faculty come with working knowledge, it reduces the amount of education and training needed at practice sites and can increase practice time, which would otherwise be taken up with more in depth training.

Receiving Agencies have access to up to date information and resources that can be made available to Placing Agencies to assist in the implementation of workplace health and safety training.

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<sup>2</sup> Canadian Council on Health Services Accreditation. (2004). CCHSA’s Accreditation Program – Human Resources Standards. 5<sup>th</sup> Edition. Ottawa, Ontario. Section 5.0, page 25.

E-learning programs on these subjects are being developed for health care staff and can be made generic across the health system. These modules could be used by Placing Agencies and would promote consistency in the information given to the students. Receiving Agencies should share or make these resources available.

### Definitions

**Employer:** In the practice setting, the Receiving Agency is the employer for staff and the Placing Agency is the 'employer' for students and on site faculty.

### References

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