

Domestic workers

OHS information for workers and employers

KEY INFORMATION

- Homeowners who directly hire a domestic worker are considered employers.
- Homeowners are not considered employers if the work is performed by a person who is employed by an agency or company.
- Workers and employers can call the OHS Contact Centre at 1-866-415-8690 to ask questions or report injuries and incidents 24 hours per day.

Domestic workers are now covered by basic safety standards set out in the *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act* and Regulation. Domestic workers are not subject to the OHS Code.

Who are domestic workers?

Under the new *OHS Act*, a domestic worker is a person employed to perform domestic work within a private residence by, or on behalf of, an occupant or owner who lives in a private residence. Domestic work is normal household work, tasks or chores routinely performed by members of a household.



Domestic workers may include:

- childcare workers, such as nannies and babysitters,
- personal care workers who provide care for elderly or persons with disabilities,
- housekeepers and maids,
- gardeners and lawn maintenance workers, and
- pet-sitters.

What are the hazards for domestic workers?

Employers and workers need to be aware of the potential dangers in their work environment. Knowing what hazards are present and how to prevent them will help create healthy and safe workplaces.

For domestic workers, some hazards may include:

- **Physical:** lifting heavy loads, working alone, slipping/tripping, animal bites, violence, harassment;
- **Chemical:** cleaning/maintenance products (inhalation, ingestion, skin contact);
- **Biological:** viruses, bacteria, animal/pest waste, blood and bodily fluids; and
- **Psychological:** workplace stress, violence, harassment.

As a worker, you have the right to:

- refuse dangerous work,
- know about workplace hazards,
- participate in workplace health and safety activities.

Obligations of employers

Employers are responsible for:

- the health and safety of the workers while they are working and any other person in the vicinity;
- ensuring workers are aware of their rights and duties under the Act and Regulation;
- providing workers with information about hazards or health and safety issues that may affect them;
- ensuring the worker is supervised by someone competent;
- ensuring the workers have the training and protective equipment they need to work safely;
- ensuring health and safety issues raised by workers are resolved in a timely manner;
- ensuring that workers are not harassed or subject to violence at the work site; and

- complying with the Act and the Regulation.

Obligations of workers

Workers have responsibilities at their workplaces:

- refraining from violence and harassment;
- taking reasonable care to protect their own health and safety, the health and safety of other workers at the work site, and the health and safety of other persons at or in the vicinity of the work site while they are working;
- cooperating with the employer to protect themselves, their co-workers, and other workers present at the work site;
- using protective equipment designated and provided by the employer or required to be used OHS legislation, and
- telling the employer their concerns about unsafe or harmful work or work site conditions.

Contact Us

OHS Contact Centre

Throughout Alberta

- 1-866-415-8690

Edmonton & Surrounding area

- 780-415-8690

Deaf or hearing impaired:

- 1-800-232-7215 (Alberta)
- 780-427-9999 (Edmonton)

Website

[work.alberta.ca/ohs-contact us](http://work.alberta.ca/ohs-contact-us)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

[Hazard assessment and control: a handbook for Alberta employers and workers](#) (BP018)

[Harassment and violence in the workplace: OHS requirements for workers and employers](#) (LI045)

Worker's Guide to Occupational Health and Safety (LI008)

[Household Chemical Safety \(Government of Canada\)](#)

Get Copies of *OHS Act*, Regulation and Code

Alberta Queen's Printer

qp.gov.ab.ca

Occupational Health and Safety

work.alberta.ca/ohs-legislation

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