

WORKING CONDITIONS: HEALTH AND SAFETY (DUE WEEK 7)

A common expectation among workers is that your employer will provide a safe and healthy working environment. State and federal laws require compliance with existing rules and regulations. Employers know that unsafe surroundings at work can cost a company a great deal in terms of money and, more importantly, in the lives of their employees. Health and safety hazards can cause similar concerns too. No company wants accidents to occur, and no company wants an employee to get sick because of an unhealthy work environment.

Your field experience supervisor wants you to be as safe as possible at all times. During your orientation you should be provided with safety instructions appropriate to your work site. This is especially true if you are using potentially dangerous machines or materials, or if your job duties have risks involved in their performance. You should expect to be trained to use equipment, materials, or machines correctly. You should also expect to be provided with information about what procedures are in place should an accident or injury occur. It is also your responsibility to be aware and safety-conscious yourself. Look for posted rules and warning signs. If you are given protective equipment to use, such as goggles, safety shoes, hard hats, earplugs, gloves, etc., wear them properly. You must, by law, obey the rules and use the protective equipment required for your job.

Your field site should also keep up-to-date in its efforts to minimize the danger from hazardous work environments. Report any dangerous or unhealthy working conditions or concerns to your supervisor first or follow established procedures. Other offices which provide assistance include OSHA and EPA.

Your field supervisor will expect you to stay mentally alert and healthy to prevent accidents and illness. You have a responsibility to yourself so you can perform your duties well. You may lose an opportunity for promotion if you are frequently absent from work because of illness or injury. You may be released if you are unable to perform your work satisfactorily. You may also have to pay for medical expenses as a result of an injury or illness. In other words, while the employer needs to provide a safe and healthy work environment, the worker bears a personal responsibility as well.

ASSIGNMENT: Consult with your field supervisor or co-workers for assistance. Use reverse side for responses.

1. Identify at least 3 potential causes of injury or health hazards that may be found at your current field site or in your type of occupation. Describe what you and/or your employer can do to prevent or minimize them.
2. Describe briefly the type and extent of safety training you received when you began your job. How confident are you that you will be able to handle an emergency at work?
3. How do you report an accident or unsafe work conditions at your work site? Be specific.
4. Describe your employer's policy on smoking.
5. Describe any employee assistance programs your employer offers (e.g., for substance abuse, for anger management, for general health).
6. Does your employer require a drug test? If so, who pays for it? How much does it generally cost?
7. Where are the following located at your workplace?
 - First aid supplies OSHA poster / information
 - Fire extinguisher Building evacuation plan for emergencies
8. Define the following:
 - HIOSH RSI
 - MSDS Carpal Tunnel Syndrome
 - EPA Ergonomics
 - CPR Risk Management