

Safety Facts: Working around contractors*

A contractor is a person or company that undertakes a contract to provide materials or labour to perform a service or do a job. For example, you call the local electrical company, and they send an electrician to your workplace to install a new outlet.

Why is it important?

A contractor at your workplace can create numerous issues:

- They are not aware of the hazards of your workplace and may introduce new hazards to your workplace
- They may not know what to do in the event of an emergency
- They could affect your WorkSafeBC insurance
- They might be considered as prime contractor and responsible for safety at the workplace

For this toolbox talk we will focus on the first two bullet points above.

What to do

The employer has a general duty in the *Workers Compensation Act (WCA)* to ensure the health and safety of their workers and other workers (contractors) present at the workplace. We need to ensure our workers are aware of all known or reasonably foreseeable hazards they are likely to be exposed to. It makes sense then to also inform contractors about workplace hazards (e.g., confined spaces that require a permit to enter). This is usually done through a contractor orientation or by providing supervision or an escort.

Contractor orientation can vary in content and duration. It is important to identify the essential information contractors need before entering the workplace. This may include:

- Known and reasonably foreseeable hazards
- Site specific safety rules e.g., PPE requirements, permits, etc.
- Emergency procedures e.g. fire alarms, muster points, etc.
- Check-in and out procedures
- The requirement to report any injury, damage, etc.
- The need for a field level hazard assessment prior to commencing work
- The go, no-go areas e.g., confined space
- They need to comply with all *Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR)* requirements

As a worker asks yourself these questions:

- Will the contractor bring in new hazards into your workplace e.g., boom lift working over top of you?
- How will I deal with these hazards?
- Will I be required to escort and possibly supervise the contractor?

- Are we supposed to provide equipment, tools, resources, etc. to the contractor e.g., can they borrow our forklift to unload their truck, or do we have to operate it?
- What should I do if I see a contractor doing something unsafe?



For additional resources visit:

[General Duties of Employers](#) | WorkSafeBC

[Contractors and subcontractors](#) | WorkSafeBC

