# Teachers’ H&S Roles and Responsibilities

## Health and Safety in Your School
As a teacher you understand that safety in your school is a top priority – for the students.

Do you realize that your health and safety, as well as your coworkers, is not only important but is mandated under the Occupational Health and Safety Act?

It is necessary to maintain a safe workplace. This is a responsibility of all workplace parties and is the law.

## Occupational Health and Safety Act
### Regulation 857 Teachers
The purpose of the Regulation is to make the Act apply to teachers in a manner that is consistent with the Education Act.

The Act applies to all persons who are employed as teachers as defined in the Education Act.

The following conditions and limitations pertain to the application of the OH&S Act to teachers:

- A principal, vice-principal or teacher appointed by an employer of teachers to direct and supervise a school or an organizational unit of a school is a person who has charge of a school or authority over a teacher and exercises managerial functions.
- A teacher’s right to refuse (see third column) does not apply to a teacher where the circumstances are such that the life, health or safety of a pupil is in imminent jeopardy.

### What is a Teacher’s Role Regarding Safety?
Teachers are recognized as an employee under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA). An employee is described under this act as a “worker”.

### Teacher (Employee) Responsibilities
Employees have a general duty to protect their own health and safety and that of others around them.

This includes a duty to report workplace accidents and unsafe acts or conditions.

Employees must:
- Work in compliance with the Act and regulations.
- Use or wear any equipment, protective devices or clothing required safely, as shown by your supervisor.
- Not remove or make ineffective any protective devices required by the employer or participate in horse-play.
- Report to the employer or supervisor any contravention of the Act and regulations.

### Teachers’ (Employee) “Right to Know”
- Teachers’ must be provided with proper training and equipment to do their job.
- Includes specific training such as manual materials lifting, WHMIS, hazard identification, housekeeping and confrontational situation training.

### Teachers’ Limited Right to Refuse
Under the Education Act, teachers’ have a “Duty of Care” requirement.

It is a priority to maintain and protect the safety of the students in their classroom.

This means under the OHSA, teachers have a “limited right to refuse” as the students’ safety takes precedence.

Only if student safety is not compromised can a teacher then exercise their right to refuse.

### Teachers’ Responsibilities in the School
Teachers’ must take responsibility for the health and safety of themselves and others in their environment.

This includes:
- Reporting hazards (breakages, spillages, unsafe equipment/conditions/acts, defective PPE).
- Using the right equipment (i.e. stepladder instead of standing on desks/chairs, approved PPE).
- Lifting and carrying books and equipment in the correct way.
- Ensuring items are put away safely.
- Wearing adequate footwear for the job.
- Maintaining a hazard free environment.

For more information please contact your Health and Safety Officer.