

December 2017

McMaster's Workplace Wellbeing Newsletter focuses on the promotion of health, safety and wellness. Inquiries and feedback about any of the information in this newsletter may be sent to ehss@mcmaster.ca. This newsletter can also be provided in an accessible format upon request.

Workplace Wellbeing e-Newsletter



Environmental and Occupational Health Support Services (EOHSS)

A team of health, safety & risk management specialists committed to supporting the University's commitment to creativity, innovation and excellence, and strives to achieve these standards in the areas of environmental and occupational health, safety, loss prevention and mitigation.

Employee Health Support Services (EHS)

A team that provides programs & services to help employees lead healthier lives, in and out of the workplace. We are committed to supporting employees in a healthy & safe return to work following an injury or illness, facilitating workplace accommodations & fostering healthy work environments.

Organizational Development

A team that offers a supportive working environment through strong employee engagement, employee recognition & wellness. We also encourage individuals to enhance their personal and professional growth by recognizing that our employees and partners are our most valuable assets.

Don't Let Winter Get You Down

- ❖ **Stick to paths and sidewalks that have been cleared for use**
- ❖ **Wear appropriate footwear with good traction**
- ❖ **Slow down and take your time when walking on campus**
- ❖ **Report snowy/icy conditions to Facility Services at ext. 24740**



Reporting Hazards to Your Supervisor

Hazard Reporting



In a workplace we all play a role in health and safety.

Employees must remember that they have a responsibility to report concerns or hazards to their supervisors, this is actually a requirement of health and safety legislation. Your employer or supervisor has an obligation to investigate and assess the concerns to help resolve the hazards. Supervisors must show due diligence by taking every reasonable precaution under the circumstances to protect the worker.

Employees are protected under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, it is illegal for employers or supervisors to reprimand or discipline employees for reporting health and safety concerns. Employees who are not comfortable reporting hazards to their supervisors can also report to their health and safety representatives or Joint Health and Safety Committee members. Let us remember that when we report a hazard and resolve the issue we are potentially preventing an injury from occurring.

McMaster University Storm Closure Policy

The University will formally announce a closure when severe weather poses a danger to students, staff and faculty while on campus or if the weather would prevent large numbers of people from coming to campus or returning safely to their homes.



Every effort will be made to confirm a closing by 5:30 a.m. When a closing has been confirmed, it will be communicated via the Daily News, the University's social media sites, and Hamilton media (radio and television). When the University is closed, classes are not held, meetings and other scheduled events are cancelled and all areas and operations not defined as essential are closed. Examinations are cancelled and rescheduled. Deadlines for student assignments and other submissions due on a closed day are postponed until the same hour on the next academic day that the University is not closed. Faculty, staff and students are responsible for checking local media and the Daily News on stormy days. The complete storm emergency policy and procedure is available here:

www.mcmaster.ca/policy/Employee/storm_emergency_policy.pdf

Supervisor Due Diligence

As a supervisor, you must lead by example when it comes to health and safety and due diligence. What does due diligence mean? The Occupational Health and Safety Act states that a supervisor shall take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of a worker.

To completely understand due diligence, it's important to define 'every precaution reasonable'. Supervisors must ensure that workers are advised of the hazards of their work and are instructed on how to work safely. In some circumstances it might be important to provide written instructions (standard operating procedures) that specifically define the safe work requirements of a particular task. The University provides mandatory health and safety training for all workers in addition to hazard specific training on many topics. Supervisors must also ensure that site-specific training is completed where applicable.

For a complete list of the health and safety training courses offered by Environmental and Occupational Health Support Services and the requirements for workers please refer to the training matrices at the following link.

<http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/eohss/training/matrix/>



Due diligence also extends to appropriate injury/incident response. When a worker reports a hazard or an injury to their supervisor as required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act, the supervisor has a responsibility to thoroughly investigate and follow up. The investigation should focus on causal factors such as processes, equipment, materials, environment and people as well as appropriate corrective actions. A supervisor injury/incident checklist is available at the following link.

<http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/med/document/injury-incident-checklist-fillable-1-36.pdf>

Supervisors play an important role in the internal responsibility system of a workplace. It is their role to ensure that workers are trained and competent in the work that they are performing and that health and safety concerns will be addressed and taken seriously.

Job Hazard Analysis (JHA) Reminder

A reminder to all supervisors to ensure that new employees have completed a Job Hazard Analysis (JHA). A JHA is required to identify and minimize the risks associated with a worker's duties. While reviewing a list of the main tasks involved with each job, common hazards are identified. The JHA form will help to identify the appropriate health and safety training required before the worker begins their duties. Additional hazard specific training may also be required. The JHA online tool is available on the EOHSS webpage through the [JHA portal](#).

More information about JHA's can be found in RMM 324 Job Hazard Analysis Program. <http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/rmm/>

International SOS

As part of McMaster's commitment to our travelers, the University has a global medical and security assistance program through **International SOS**. This program is designed to keep our faculty, staff and students healthy, safe and secure while they are traveling or living abroad within a McMaster capacity. We strongly encourage you to take advantage of these services and online resources. **This is a travel assistance program and not a medical benefits program.**

International SOS provides medical, security and logistical expertise to help safeguard our international travelers. So, if you lose your medication in Prague; need to see a doctor in New Delhi; get pick-pocketed in Rio or are involved in an accident, International SOS can assist.

For all issues please contact your out of province benefits provider first.

Travelers can conveniently dial one phone number that will connect them to the International SOS network of medical and professional service teams which operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, all over the world.

You simply carry the International SOS membership card with you at all times or download the Assistance App to use this service. Both contain our membership number and key phone numbers along with the website address www.internationalsos.com.

Further details on **International SOS** are available on our website at <http://www.workingatmcmaster.ca/link.php?link=eohss:travelsafety>.

WHMIS 2015 Compliance – Are You Ready?

Did you know that WHMIS 1988 will be changing to WHMIS 2015? Currently, the Province is in a transition period where both regulations apply. This means that Safety Data Sheets (SDS)/Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) and labeling requirements are acceptable for both. The current McMaster WHMIS 2015 training provides instruction on both regulations. If you haven't already completed this training please ensure that you complete it as soon as possible.

As of December 1, 2018 the Province will fully transition to WHMIS 2015. This will incorporate the Global Harmonized System (GHS) of [labelling and classifying](#) chemicals, let's [play the classification game](#). WHMIS 2015 also changes the requirements for Safety Data Sheets or SDS's - formerly MSDS's. By this date, **WHMIS controlled products** in the workplace must have labels displaying pictograms, hazard classifications and precautionary statements as per the WHMIS 2015 regulation. Many chemical suppliers have already transitioned to the new requirements and so many products in your work areas may already be in compliance. However, older products must be in compliance by this date. To give you an idea as to whether your product is in compliance, please review the graphic below.

Supplier labels

Grandfathering of old product labels will not be accepted. Therefore it's time to start thinking about either re-labeling or disposing of products that are not in compliance with WHMIS 2015. Please note that supervisors of labs are responsible for disposing of chemicals – at their cost.

WHMIS 1988



WHMIS 2015



EOHSS is working on providing solutions for you. We are designing new workplace labels for WHMIS controlled products and will be implementing a chemical inventory management system which will provide the required SDS's. Great things are coming in the New Year.

Five Tips to Avoid the Flu

1. Get your flu shot

The influenza virus changes every year, and every year new vaccines are made to battle the newest strain. Getting regular flu shots has shown to reduce flu in over 60% of people.



2. Avoid close contact

Avoid getting too close to those who are sick, and keep your distance from others if you're feeling sick.



3. Wash your hands often

Regardless of where you are, you could be touching things or people that may be contagious. Wash your hands often with soap and water, scrubbing for at least 20 seconds.



4. Avoid touching your face

This is a quick way for germs to spread. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth as much as you can.



5. Disinfect and clean surfaces

The things around you could be contaminated with germs and bacteria. Keep your area clean with disinfectant spray and wipes.



Sources: Ontario.ca and CDC

Holiday Safety Tips

The holiday season is officially upon us which means it's time for holiday festivities and friendly gatherings. Follow these simple tips to keep you and your loved ones safe.



- ❖ Always use a ladder or proper step stool when hanging lights or other decorations in high places. For more information regarding ladder safety refer to https://ccohs.ca/oshanswers/safety_haz/ladders/step.html.
- ❖ Before decorating your home with lights, check each strand for any damaged cords, frayed ends or loose connections. If lights need to be replaced, purchase approved Canadian Standards Association (CSA) products.
- ❖ Live trees quickly become dry and are a fire hazard. Keep trees well-watered and away from sources of heat. Trees last roughly 14 days.
- ❖ Ensure your home is equipped with a working carbon monoxide detector, smoke alarm, fire extinguisher, and a first aid kit.
- ❖ Make sure gifts for children are sturdy, well-made toys that are age appropriate. Some toys may contain small pieces that can be choking hazards and pinch points that may be unsafe for young children.
- ❖ Keep foods out of the danger zone. Keep hot foods hot, at least 60°C (140°F) and keep cold foods cold, at least 4°C (40°F) or lower. Do not leave hot or cold foods at room temperature for more than 2 hours.

***Wishing you and your family
a safe and happy holiday
season!***

Healthy Workplace Committee

The Healthy Workplace Committee will be focusing on “Holiday Wellness” for the month of December. Below is a breakdown of the resources that will be made available for McMaster employees. For any further questions or suggestions for future topics, please contact healthyworkplace@mcmaster.ca.

WEEK	THEME	COMMUNICATION TOPICS
Week 1: December 4-8	Holiday Shopping (on a budget and shop local)	This week’s newsletter will focus on shopping local, and shopping on a budget. It will include local shopping ideas, as well as a discount card. It will also showcase tips and tricks for holiday budgeting.
Week 2: December 11-15	Holiday Healthy Eating and Staying Active	Staying healthy and active over the holidays can seem daunting, especially with all of the potlucks and family functions. This week’s communication will contain different mocktail recipes, as well as packing sustainable lunches (using leftovers!), and tips and tricks for healthy holiday eating.
Week 3: December 18-22	Stress Management	For many, the holidays can be a stressful time. This week’s newsletter will focus on tips & tricks for relaxation, as well as online resources to manage stress.

January 31 is Bell Let's Talk Day

Bell Let's Talk is a multi-year charitable program dedicated to the promotion and support of mental health across Canada. Many of us have seen this campaign during previous Bell Let's Talk Days. This program reminds us that “talking is the best way to start breaking down the barriers associated with mental illness.”

- Half a million Canadians miss work because of a mental health problem or illness. Just as many will miss work next week.
- 1 in 5 Canadians will experience a mental health problem or illness this year.

Join the conversation on January 31 at **#BellLetsTalk** to share your story, continue to break down barriers, and support individuals with mental health concerns.



Smoke-Free Campus

The McMaster community continues to prepare for the **January 1, 2018** designation of McMaster's tobacco and smoke-free campus. On that date, McMaster will be the first 100% smoke-free Ontario campus. In preparation for this change, the University is continuing to offer supports and services to help students, faculty and staff adapt to the new policy and to educate and inform the community about the new tobacco and smoke-free designation.

Monthly smoking-cessation workshops were offered to faculty and staff who were interested in quitting. The December **smoking-cessation workshop** still has limited space available. For further information and updates on this initiative, please visit the **Smoke Free Campus** website.