

Module 5: Health and Safety

OHS – Occupational Health and Safety Act

While you don't need to memorize the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) for exams, understanding its key principles is essential. You can access the full Act here: [Occupational Health and Safety Act](https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o01). (<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/90o01>)

The OHSA aims to protect everyone in the workplace from potential health and safety risks, both immediate and long-term, that may arise from improper handling, storage, or presence of certain materials, equipment, and chemicals. When a security guard identifies a hazardous situation, their primary action should be to ensure their own safety. After securing their safety, they must report the hazard to qualified and licensed personnel as required. Additionally, any observed violations of site rules and regulations must be promptly and meticulously documented.

Security Guard Safety

Personal Safety

Personal safety starts with your mindset and readiness for the job. Your physical and mental health are crucial to ensuring your safety before you even arrive at the work site. Each day, assess your own fitness to perform your duties by observing and evaluating your condition. If you are overly tired, sick, or otherwise incapacitated, you become a danger to yourself, those you are meant to protect, and a liability to your employer.

Prioritize wellness by getting adequate sleep, eating a nutritious diet, addressing medical concerns with healthcare professionals, and engaging in activities that maintain your fitness. Physical fitness is always important for security professionals, even if you have a mostly stationary post. Good fitness helps combat fatigue and keeps your cognitive abilities and observational skills sharp.

Always wear and use any safety or protective equipment required by your employer. Items like steel-toed boots and reflective vests are designed to protect you from hazards. Maintain your uniform in good condition; tears or loose fabric can get caught in machinery or equipment, leading to injury. Wear appropriate outerwear when patrolling in cold weather to prevent hypothermia or frostbite. A water-repellent coat is essential during rain. When patrolling outdoors during the day, apply sunscreen and wear a hat to protect yourself from sun damage, regardless of the season.

Communication and Safety

Develop the habit of regularly communicating with your co-workers or supervisor while on duty. Checking in at the start of your shift, before and after breaks, and at the end of your shift

helps others know your location and establishes a benchmark for your communication patterns. If time and circumstances allow, you can check in more frequently. Your employer shares the responsibility for your safety and will appreciate your regular check-ins.

During your patrols, you may also interact with others, either fellow employees or individuals working at various locations within the site. For instance, you might make it a habit to stop by the information desk each time you patrol the lobby area. This regular contact offers two significant benefits:

- You can inquire if there are any issues or concerns that need your attention.
- The individuals at the desk will come to expect your presence, and if you don't stop by as usual, they may notice your absence and alert someone to check on you.

Maintaining consistent communication not only enhances your safety but also fosters a collaborative and vigilant environment.

Safety and Your Duties

In this course, you have explored various scenarios you might encounter as a security guard and the best practices and strategies for handling each. While predicting every possible situation is not feasible, it is important to recognize that every site you work at will have an associated level of risk. For our discussion, we will consider three broad categories of risk: low, medium, and high.

LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day shift work • Post at non-hazardous location (office desk) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evening shift work • Parking lot during daylight hours • Construction or industrial site during daylight hours • Venue with large numbers of guests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Night shift work • Working in high crime neighborhood • Working around large amounts of cash or valuable items • Working in settings where there is a risk of violence (labor strike) • Parking lot in darkness • Construction or industrial site in darkness • Isolated location

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working where there is limited radio or cell signal
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You will need to evaluate the risk level at each site you work. Factors to consider during a risk assessment include the likelihood of a risky event occurring (e.g., the probability of encountering a fire) and the frequency of such events (e.g., how often you need to remove trespassers from a construction site during the day). For instance, you might be assigned to a medium-risk area, such as a parking lot during daylight hours, but due to its isolated location, it may attract drag racers. If you have to deal with groups of trespassers at least once a week, this regular interaction raises the setting to a potential high-risk situation.

Assessing and understanding the risk level at each site allows you to prepare and respond effectively, ensuring both your safety and the safety of others.