

TIP SHEET 3: Physical & Emotional Safety

Being new to Canada, many refugees may have a different understanding of workplace health and safety standards.

1

Employers should comprehensively review all occupational health and safety standards and procedures, including:

- Using safety equipment – both personal protective equipment and safety equipment on tools and machines – that the employer requires.
- The right not to use any equipment or machinery that could harm them or another worker.
- Reporting any health and safety violations to the employer.
- Onsite Support.

2

Keep in mind that English could be the second or third language for your new employees, and the health-and-safety orientation needs to be modeled accordingly:

- Make it simple but comprehensive, providing critical information first followed by less risky content, so as not to overwhelm the new employee.
- Design training modules based on the use of sufficient visual aids.
- Some employers have engaged employees, who are fluent in the newcomers' language(s), to assist with explaining the most important concepts.

Additional Resources

WorkSafe BC has a position paper entitled the [Immigrant Workers' Experiences after Work-related Injury in British Columbia: Identifying Key Questions and Building Research Capacity](#).

SEE: [Onboarding Syrian Refugees: A Toolkit for Employers](#)

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3

Your new hires may be reluctant to report workplace injuries, particularly if they feel that doing so may jeopardize their jobs and financial security.

- Be cognizant of what is reinforced and recognized and could affect your employees' willingness to report – e.g. “days free from workplace accidents”.
- Check in regularly, through colleagues, as well as supervisors.
- Help your new employees to understand, access and navigate health care and other support systems, such as WorkSafe BC.

4

Emotional safety is also very important, and it is worthwhile educating all staff about the symptoms of PTSD.

- You and your team need to know what to look for in the way of possible symptoms.
- However, in our desire to help or perhaps to protect our investment, we have to be cautious not to stretch ourselves.
- If you suspect that your employee suffers from PTSD, refer them to healthcare providers.

Useful Resources:

[PTSD Association of Canada](#)
[PTSD Checklist](#)

Coming Up:

Tip Sheet 4: Reasonable Accommodation