The Supervisor Standard – Canada



When a serious workplace incident occurs in Canada, enforcement does not stop at whether the company had a safety program or delivered general training. Inspectors and courts look much more closely at what **supervisors** were trained on, when that training occurred, and whether supervisors understood their legal duties under provincial OHS legislation. Across Canada, including Ontario and other jurisdictions, supervisors are routinely treated as the employer's legal agents. What they knew, tolerated, or failed to correct can be used directly against the organization.

This document explains the **non-negotiable supervisor training expectations** that inspectors consistently test against during investigations. These expectations go far beyond generic safety awareness. Supervisors are expected to understand due diligence, hazard identification, incident investigation, right-to-refuse processes, enforcement responsibilities, and task-specific hazards for the work they oversee. When this training is missing or poorly documented, inspectors often conclude that the employer failed to equip supervisors to meet their legal duties, which quickly escalates enforcement from orders to penalties and, in serious cases, prosecution.

The guide also breaks down **how inspectors actually assess due diligence**, including how supervisor interviews are conducted and how training records are cross-checked against incident facts. Inspectors do not rely on policies alone. They test whether supervisors can explain their responsibilities in plain language, identify hazards that existed on the day of the incident, describe how controls were chosen, and demonstrate authority to stop unsafe work. Weak or inconsistent answers frequently appear later in inspection reports and prosecution briefs.

The full document includes a **Supervisor Due Diligence Training Matrix** that mirrors how inspectors build their enforcement cases. It shows exactly what evidence regulators expect to see and how gaps are interpreted. For OHS managers, this provides a practical roadmap for protecting both supervisors and the organization before something goes wrong.

Download the full PDF to see the complete training standard inspectors apply in Canada.