

Understanding 'competent person' in the workplace

What is a "competent person"?

A competent person in the workplace is someone who has the knowledge, experience, and training necessary to perform their job safely and effectively. The exact definition can vary by jurisdiction, but generally, a competent person:

1. Has the necessary qualifications (through training, experience, and education).
2. Understands the health and safety legislation related to their work.
3. Understands the company's health and safety management system (policies and procedures).
4. Is aware of the potential hazards and risks in their work environment.



Why is competency important?

Having a competent person on-site helps ensure that all tasks are done safely and in compliance with OHS legislation. A competent person can:

- Identify potential hazards.
- Implement safety controls to reduce risks.
- Ensure workers are trained and follow proper procedures through direct supervision.

Responsibilities of a competent person

Monitoring safety: They are responsible for checking and ensuring safety standards, including proper equipment use and workplace conditions.

Providing guidance: A competent person may provide training or lead toolbox talks to educate others on safe practices.

Ensuring compliance: They ensure that the company adheres to the laws and regulations that apply to the workplace.



Examples of when a competent person is needed

- In construction, they oversee scaffolding and trenching operations.
- In industrial settings, they monitor hazardous materials handling and machine safety.

In every scenario, a competent person helps prevent incidents, injuries, and supports a safe working environment.



Key takeaway:

Having a competent person on-site helps ensure that workers perform tasks safely, and hazards are effectively managed.

Reference

For more information, visit: <https://www.ccohs.ca/oshanswers/legisl/legislation/competent.html>

Understanding 'competent person' in the workplace

Competency means having the right training, knowledge and experience to do your job safely. A competent team protects each other and reduces the chance of incidents within our Alberta construction industry. Prevent injuries by identifying competent persons on your worksite who empower your crew by monitoring safety, providing guidance and ensuring compliance.

What incidents have happened where someone was lacking competency and was injured?

Why is competency important on the worksite?

What can we do to address issues with competency on the worksite? How can we work together to increase competency at work?

What questions or comments do you have about what it takes to be deemed 'competent'?

Attendance

Name	Initials	Name	Initials

Action items

Name	Person responsible	Due date	Done

If you have questions or comments, speak with your health and safety representative.