

CAREERS IN SAFETY

A career in safety can be both challenging and rewarding. There are several ways to enter the safety field and advance along a career path.

SAFETY BY EXPERIENCE

Often people become involved in safety because they were involved in or observed a significant incident. This type of entry into the safety field is often reflected by a strong life-long commitment to safety.

SAFETY BY ASSIGNMENT

An employer may assign you some safety responsibilities or recruit you to a safety committee or as a trainer or mentor to new employees. Often people can become involved in safety through first aid or human resources.

SAFETY THROUGH EDUCATION

Another path is to obtain a credential in safety. The BCIT Certificate in OHS often provides enough training to allow the holder to move into an entry-level safety position. Once there, a dedicated individual can work their way up the ladder into more senior positions. The BCIT OHS Diploma allows you to move directly into a more advanced position often in management. Work history and communication skills are the two factors that most influence the career path.



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MORE INFORMATION:

BCIT OHS DIPLOMA PROGRAM
bcit.ca/6850dipl

BCIT OHS CERTIFICATE PROGRAM
bcit.ca/6850cert



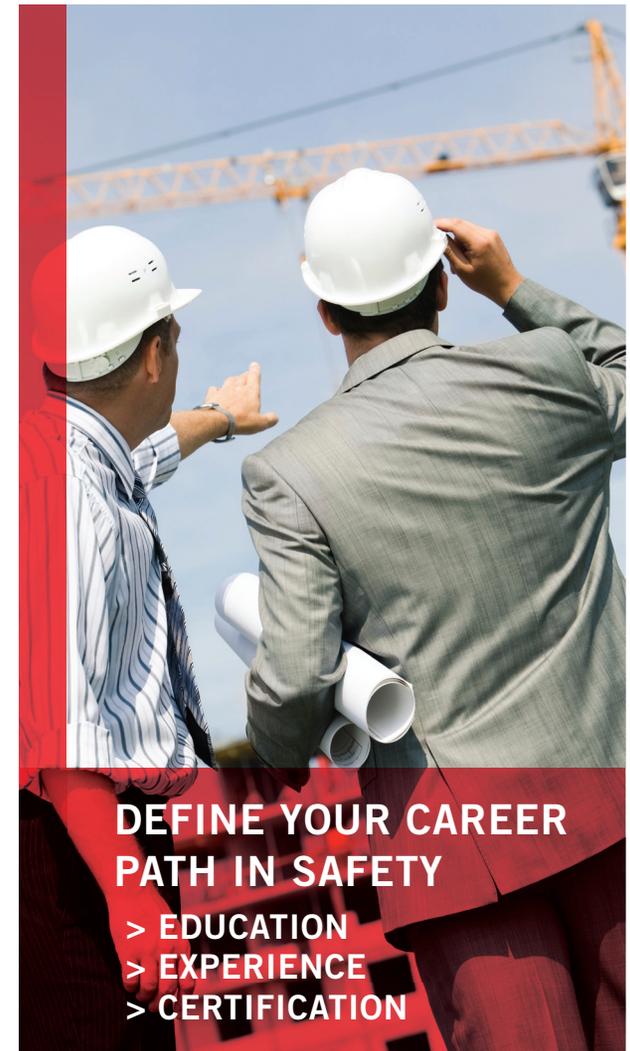
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OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

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DEFINE YOUR CAREER PATH IN SAFETY

- > EDUCATION
- > EXPERIENCE
- > CERTIFICATION

STARTING YOUR CAREER IN SAFETY

BASIC – ENTRY LEVEL

Involvement at this level usually involves compliance and enforcement of safety rules, regulations, and standards and/or encouragement of safe work practices.

Job titles/functions include safety committee members, safety coordinator (e.g. for a union or work group), safety leader or supervisor, and TSC or CSO (trades safety coordinator or construction safety officer).

Normally this is the first step for most workers in developing their interests in safety. Safety roles at this level may involve identifying hazards through inspections or during accident investigation, evaluating risks and recommending controls. Work may involve safety training, planning of upcoming work and assisting workers to perform their duties safely.

Training is usually through the employer or employer-sponsored courses. Training often is between 10 and 100 hours. Many courses are available at this level, most between one and three days in duration. Experience with the current employer is desirable where the worker demonstrates an aptitude for safety.

REFINING YOUR SAFETY CAREER

MID-LEVEL – PRACTITIONER

Involvement at this level is usually as a junior safety professional or safety technician.

At this level practitioners usually have broad safety responsibilities (full- or part-time). Work includes identifying, evaluating and controlling risks, evaluating hazard control measures, investigating incidents, maintaining and evaluating incident and loss records as well as conducting safety training for workers and supervisors.

Safety at this level is usually more systems based and requires the practitioner to understand an Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) management systems approach.

Training is usually at the OHS certificate level and previous work experience in an industry is desirable. The OHS certificate at BCIT is comprised of 45 credits (about 15 safety courses) offered via Part-time Studies/distance education so students can continue working while obtaining the credential.

MANAGING YOUR PROFESSIONAL CAREER

SAFETY PROFESSIONAL

This level of practice usually requires the practitioner to work at the management level.

Responsibilities include advising company and department leaders at the safety management system level including planning, organizing and budgeting for safety program implementation. Responsibilities extend beyond compliance and involve continual improvement, change management, and incorporating safety into company culture, and work practices.

At this level of safety management, high-level decisions are made about safety which determines management direction, safety leadership and ultimately, the safety culture in the organization. Practitioners often supervise a department or team of safety professionals which are responsible for multiple operations or locations.

Training at this level is normally a diploma or degree in OHS or previous work experience in a related field with extensive safety experience. The BCIT OHS diploma is comprised of 147.5 credits. About 50% of the courses are safety courses while the rest are mainly communications, science and business courses.

