



# Gender-neutral Language and Universal Washroom Facilities Guideline November 2022

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## Purpose of Guideline

The purpose of this guideline is to advise industry and labour on changes to the Health, Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in British Columbia (Code) that introduce gender-neutral language into the Code as well as to guide implementation of the new requirement for universal washroom facilities. These Code provisions were amended in November 2022.

## What is Gender Neutral Language?

Gender-neutral language avoids bias towards a particular sex or social gender. In English, this includes use of pronouns that are not gender-specific to refer to roles or professions and the formation of phrases. Historically, the Code only referred to men (he, him, men, man) and in 2017 this was updated to include women (he or she, him or her, etc.). Now in 2022, the Code has been revised again to reflect the broader understanding of gender—which includes transgender, non-binary or two spirit individuals.

The majority of the suggested revisions were related to pronouns and ensuring subject-verb agreement in phrasing which does not change the intent of the original provisions. These revisions affect almost every part of the Code. The purpose of implementing gender-neutral language into the Code is to remove barriers to accessibility and to modernize the Code to be inclusive and supportive of a diverse workforce. Some examples of changes:

He or She, His or Her → Job Title, Person  
Foreman → Foreperson  
Hoistman → Hoist Operator

## What are Universal Washroom Facilities?

Universal washroom facilities are a safe space for any person to use regardless of gender. Providing universal washroom facilities on mine sites is an opportunity to address the evolving needs of British Columbians and promotes inclusivity and equality.

Section 2.11.9 (5) of the Code requires that any existing mine undergoing renovations to permanent washroom facilities and new mines being constructed must provide at least one universal washroom. Smaller operations with 6 or less employees often do not have permanent facilities or only offer portable washrooms which are already for universal use. Considering this, section 2.11.9 (3) allows for small operations to opt out of providing male and female facilities as long as they are complying by using the portable toilet facilities.

### ***Washroom Facilities***

- 2.11.9** (1) *The manager must provide separate washroom facilities for male and female employees.*
- (2) *The washroom facilities must be conveniently located and equipped with*
- (a) subject to subsection (3),*
    - (i) one toilet and one urinal for every 25 male employees or fraction thereof, and*
    - (ii) one toilet for every 9 female employees or fraction thereof,*
  - (b) one wash basin, or equivalent facility, provided with hot and cold running water for every 15 employees or fraction thereof,*
  - (c) a means for drying hands hygienically, and*
  - (d) adequate heat, light, and ventilation.*
- (3) *Despite subsection (1), for a mine that has 6 employees or less,*
- (a) the manager must provide at least one universal washroom facility, and*
  - (b) if the manager provides additional washroom facilities, some or all of them may be universal washroom facilities.*
- (4) *The washroom facilities must have separate entrances with signs clearly indicating for which gender they have been provided or indicating that they are a universal washroom facility.*
- (5) *With respect to new mines or substantial renovations to the permanent washroom area of an existing mine on and after May 1, 2023, in addition to the washroom facilities referred to in subsection (1), for a mine that has more than 6 employees, the manager must provide at least one universal washroom facility.*