BC GUIDANCE DOCUMENT

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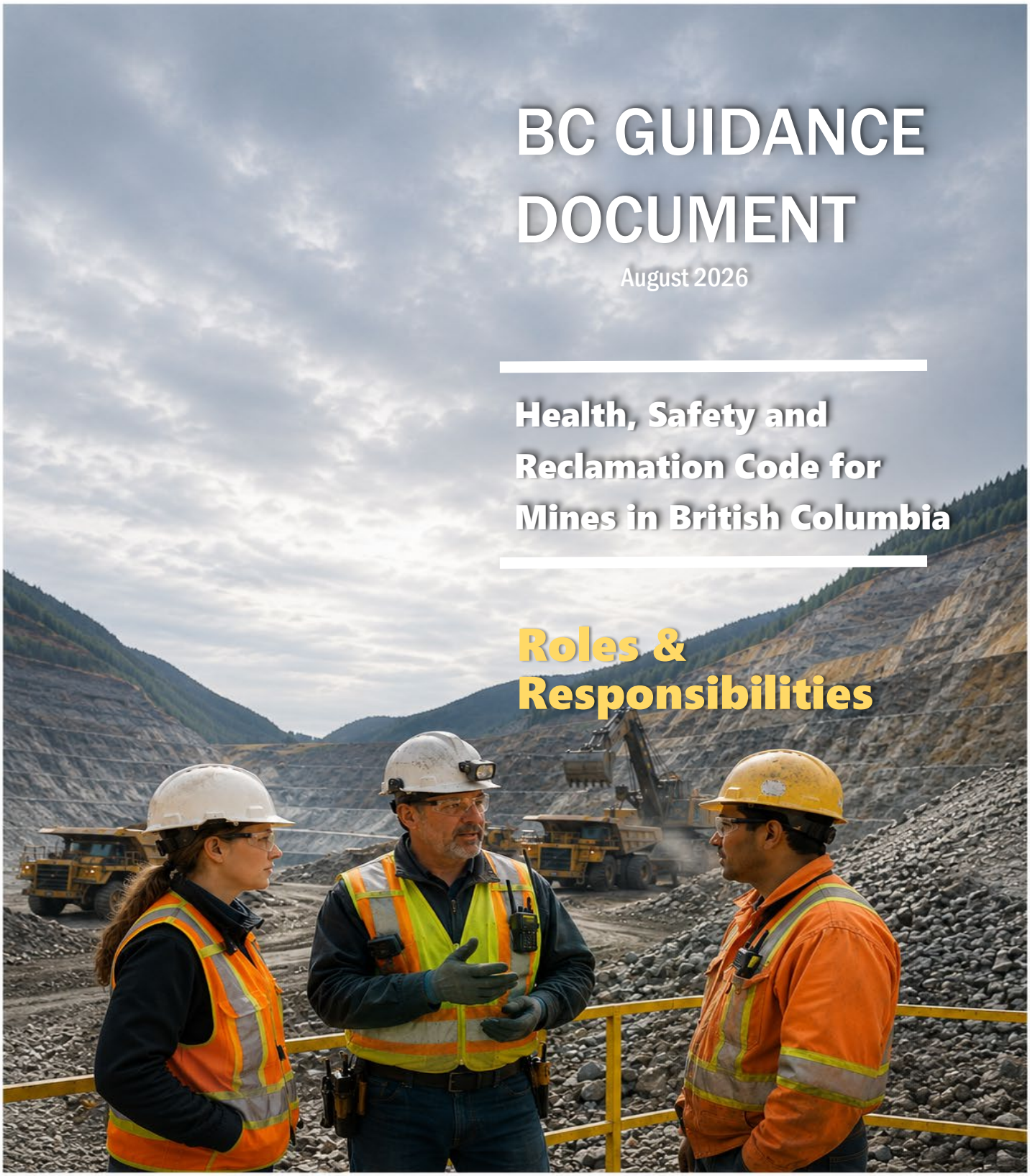
Health, Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in British Columbia

Roles & Responsibilities



BRITISH COLUMBIA

Ministry of Mining and Critical Minerals

Contents

Purpose of Guidance Document 3
Background 4
Code Language 4
Posting and Distribution of Mines Act, Regulations, and Code 5
Personal Protective Equipment 5
Roles and Responsibilities 8
Impairment and Conduct 12

Purpose of Guidance Document

This document provides guidance regarding the revisions to Health, Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in British Columbia (the Code) related to roles and responsibilities on mine sites.

This guidance document is intended to be general and not prescriptive in nature and provide context to clarify the Code requirements. The provisions of the *Mines Act* and the Code prevail in cases where differences may occur in interpretations of the guidance.

The responsibility and authority for interpretation of this guidance document rests with the Chief Inspector of Mines.

Background

The Health, Safety and Reclamation Code for Mines in British Columbia (the Code) has been updated to introduce a new Roles and Responsibilities header in Part 3, which sets out clear health and safety duties for managers, supervisors, workers, and contractors through new requirements 3.0.1 Manager's Responsibilities, 3.0.2 Supervisor's Responsibilities, 3.0.3 Worker's Responsibilities, and 3.0.4 Contractor's Responsibilities.

These responsibilities, including those for contractors, have always been expected at mine sites but are now consolidated and clearly articulated in one place. In addition to the introduction of this new header, the Code has also been updated to include revisions to 1.1.1 Application, 1.4.1 Manager's Responsibilities, 1.8.1 and 1.8.2 Personal Protective Equipment, and 3.1.1 Impaired Persons to support and align with the strengthened focus on roles and responsibilities.

These updates modernize the Code and align with current workplace health and safety standards.

Code Language

Application

1.1.1 This code applies to
- (a) all mines in the Province of British Columbia; and
- (b) the manager must ensure that all employees or contractors who supervise workers are familiar with all appropriate parts of the act, regulations, and the code.

Guidance: The Code applies to every type of mine in British Columbia, including sand and gravel operations, quarries, placer mines, and both surface and underground mining operations. It applies throughout the entire life cycle of a mine, including exploration, construction, operation, care and maintenance, reclamation, and closure.

Subsection (b) states the manager is responsible for ensuring that all persons who supervise workers, whether they are employees, contractors, or subcontractors, are familiar with the relevant parts of the Mines Act, regulations, and the Code that apply to their duties. This includes supervisors employed directly by the mine as well as those engaged through contracting arrangements who direct workers or make safety-related decisions. Supervisors are expected to be familiar with the health and safety requirements associated with the work they oversee, including applicable regulatory requirements, site-specific rules, safe work procedures, and hazard controls. The section further describes that the manager takes reasonable steps to ensure supervisors receive appropriate information, instruction, or training to support their supervisory role, regardless of employment status. This approach supports informed, consistent,

and effective supervision, and helps promote the uniform application of health and safety expectations across the mine site when work is performed by employees or contractors.

Posting and Distribution of Mines Act, Regulations, and Code

Manager's Responsibility

1.4.1 The manager must ensure that

(1) every employee is given a copy of the *Mines Act*, the regulations, and the code, and provided additional copies at cost, and

(2) a copy of the *Mines Act*, the regulations, and the code is maintained in every safety office and at other suitable locations and available to employees.

Guidance: The manager is responsible for ensuring that every employee is provided with access to a copy of the *Mines Act*, the regulations, and the Code, and that additional copies are available at cost upon request. It also describes that current copies of these documents are maintained in each safety office and in other suitable locations at the mine site so they are readily accessible. Suitable locations may include common work areas, contractor check-in points, or electronic systems where workers can easily access the information.

While the requirement refers to employees, the intent is to support access for all persons working at the mine site, including contractors and supervisors, so they are able to refer to the Act, regulations, and Code to better understand the health and safety requirements that apply to their work. This supports informed compliance and helps ensure the documents can be consulted when needed without difficulty.

Personal Protective Equipment

Manager's Responsibility

1.8.1 The manager must ensure that

(a) except for protective footwear and prescription eyeglasses, personal protective equipment and safety devices are supplied to persons as appropriate to the task or occasion,

(b) persons are trained in the use of the equipment and devices, and

(c) the equipment and devices are adequate for their purpose.

Guidance: The manager is responsible for ensuring that, except for protective footwear and prescription eyeglasses, personal protective equipment (also referred to as PPE) and safety devices are provided to persons at the mine site in a way that is appropriate to the task or work conditions. Examples of personal protective equipment may include respirators, hard hats, high-

visibility vests, hearing protection, gloves, face shields etc. Examples of safety devices may include machine guarding, emergency stop systems, gas and dust monitoring equipment, ventilation controls, lockout/tagout devices, personal fall-arrest systems, self-rescuers, and other wearable or portable protective equipment used to reduce exposure to mining-related hazards.

Subsection (b) maintains the manager is also responsible for ensuring that people receive training on how to use the PPE and safety devices used for their work. PPE and safety devices are only effective when used correctly. Most injuries involving PPE do not happen because equipment wasn't provided, but because:

- Workers didn't know how to use them,
- PPE was worn incorrectly,
- The equipment wasn't adjusted properly,
- Workers didn't know the PPE or safety devices limitations,
- Workers didn't maintain or inspect the PPE or safety devices before using them.

Training closes that gap. Without it, PPE and safety devices can give a misleading sense of safety.

Subsection (c) states the manager is responsible for ensuring that the personal protective equipment and safety devices provided are suitable and effective for their intended purpose and appropriate to the hazards present and the work being performed. Providing PPE and safety devices alone is not enough—they must be properly selected to match the specific risks of the task and work environment. PPE and safety devices may fail to protect workers when:

- The wrong type of PPE or safety device is selected for the hazard (e.g., inadequate respiratory protection for airborne contaminants).
- The equipment is not rated or designed for mining conditions or the specific work being performed.
- PPE or safety devices do not fit the worker properly or are incompatible with other required equipment.
- Changes in work conditions or hazards are not reflected in the PPE or safety devices provided.
- The equipment is unsuitable due to wear, damage, or environmental conditions such as heat, moisture, or dust.

Ensuring PPE and safety devices are appropriate and effective helps prevent a false sense of protection and ensures workers are properly safeguarded against the hazards they may encounter during mining operations.

Responsibility of All Persons

1.8.2 A person must

(a) use, as instructed by a qualified person, the personal protective equipment and safety devices supplied to the person as set out in section 1.8.1, and

(b) ensure the equipment and devices are in good working order.

Guidance: Every person is expected to use the personal protective equipment and safety devices provided to them, in accordance with the instructions given by a qualified person.

This requirement is important because PPE and safety devices only provide real protection when they are actually used and used correctly. Even when equipment is supplied and training is provided, the protective benefit is lost if workers choose not to wear it or use it improperly. By placing a clear duty on each person to use the equipment as instructed by a qualified person, the requirement ensures that:

- The protective intent of the PPE is realized in practice, not just in policy.
- Workers follow the correct procedures, reducing the risk of injury caused by misuse or non-use.
- The manager's responsibility for providing equipment and training is matched by the worker's responsibility to apply that training.
- Due diligence is supported, because both the employer and the worker have defined obligations to work together to create a safe environment.

In short, this subsection ensures that the safety measures put in place are implemented, making the workplace safer and reducing preventable incidents.

Subsection (b) maintains that every person is responsible for checking that the personal protective equipment and safety devices they use are in good working order before use; this includes inspecting equipment before use and not using PPE or safety devices that are damaged, defective, or not functioning as intended. PPE and safety devices can only provide effective protection when they are properly maintained and fit for use. Failures often occur because:

- Equipment was damaged, worn out, or altered and not reported or replaced.
- PPE or safety devices were not inspected prior to use.
- Defects or malfunctions were ignored or not recognized.
- Equipment was improperly stored, cleaned, or maintained.
- Workers continued using PPE or safety devices beyond their service life or manufacturer's specifications.

By placing responsibility on each person to ensure their equipment is in good working order, this requirement helps identify issues before they result in injury or exposure. It reinforces shared responsibility for safety at the mine site and supports the manager's duty to provide suitable equipment by ensuring workers actively contribute to its continued effectiveness. In doing so, this subsection helps maintain the integrity of safety measures and reduces preventable incidents caused by equipment failure.

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and Responsibilities is a new header in Part 3 that establishes responsibilities for managers, supervisors, workers, and contractors with respect to health and safety on mine sites.

Manager's responsibilities

3.0.1 The manager is responsible for ensuring that all activities on the mine site are conducted in a manner that assures the health and safety of persons at the mine.

Guidance: The manager has overall responsibility and accountability for ensuring that all activities carried out on the mine site are conducted in a safe and healthy manner. This includes work performed by employees, contractors, and any other persons present at the mine site. It reflects the manager's role in providing oversight of operations by ensuring that risks are identified and assessed, and that appropriate controls, policies, procedures, and resources are put in place and maintained, whether directly or through competent persons.

While the manager is not expected to personally carry out every task related to these activities, they are responsible for ensuring that the work is assigned to competent persons, completed as required, and monitored for effectiveness. This responsibility applies across all phases of mining activity and supports a coordinated approach to health and safety management throughout the operation.

Supervisor's Responsibilities

3.0.2 (1) A supervisor must ensure that the work the supervisor performs, or over which the supervisor has supervision, is carried out in a manner that assures the health and safety of persons at the mine.

(2) Without limiting subsection (1) a supervisor

- (a) must follow safe work procedures and act safely in the workplace at all times,
- (b) must ensure the health and safety of the workers under the supervisor's direct supervision,
- (c) must in respect of the requirements that apply to the work over which the supervisor has supervision,
  - (i) know the requirements,
  - (ii) meet the requirements, if performing all or part of the work, and
  - (iii) ensure the requirements are met by the workers performing the work under the supervisor's direct supervision, and
- (d) must respond appropriately when becoming aware of an unsafe situation.

Guidance: Supervisors play a critical operational role in maintaining a safe and healthy work environment at the mine site. Under subsection (1), supervisors are responsible for the safety of their own work and for actively overseeing the work of others to ensure that tasks are planned,

carried out, and completed in a manner that protects workers from injury or illness. This includes day-to-day leadership, visibility in the workplace, and timely intervention when issues arise.

In subsection (2)(a), supervisors are expected to demonstrate safe behaviour at all times by following applicable safe work procedures, rules, and standards while performing their own duties. Supervisors set behavioural expectations for workers, and their actions directly influence how safety requirements are interpreted and followed in practice. Consistently acting safely reinforces workplace standards and helps normalize compliance among workers.

As stated in (2)(b), supervisors are responsible for actively supporting the health and safety of workers under their direct supervision through regular oversight of work activities. This includes assigning work appropriately, confirming that workers are competent to perform assigned tasks, ensuring required PPE and safety devices are used, and monitoring work conditions to identify emerging hazards. Effective supervision involves ongoing communication, observation, and correction where necessary—not just responding after incidents occur.

Subsection (2)(c) states supervisors need to be aware of the requirements that apply to the work they oversee, including applicable legislation, site rules, and safe work procedures. When supervisors perform all or part of the work, this involves applying those requirements in their own activities. When supervising others, it involves helping workers understand the requirements that apply to their tasks and observing work activities to confirm those requirements are reflected in how the work is carried out.

In (2)(d), supervisors play a role in addressing unsafe conditions, behaviours, or practices when they become aware of them. Depending on the situation, this can include taking steps within their role to reduce risk, guiding workers toward safer practices, or bringing concerns forward through established reporting or escalation processes. Recognizing and responding to unsafe situations early supports safer work and helps prevent conditions from developing into incidents.

Worker's Responsibilities

3.0.3	(1)	A worker must ensure that the work the worker performs is carried out in a manner that assures the health and safety of persons at the mine.
	(2)	Without limiting subsection (1), a worker must
		(a) follow safe work procedures and act safely in the workplace at all times,
		(b) only carry out the work for which the worker is adequately trained, and
		(c) be alert to hazards and report them immediately to the supervisor or manager.

Guidance: Workers play a direct and active role in maintaining a safe and healthy workplace through the way they carry out their own work. Responsibility at the worker level focuses on personal actions, awareness of surroundings, and communication with supervision. Everyday decisions—how tasks are performed, how procedures are followed, and how hazards are addressed—have a direct impact on individual and site-wide safety.

In 3.0.3(1), workers carry responsibility for the safety of the tasks they personally perform and for avoiding actions that could create risks to themselves or others. This includes planning work before starting, recognizing when conditions are not safe, and taking steps to prevent unsafe situations from developing. For example, this may involve adjusting work methods when conditions change, stopping work when controls are not in place, or seeking guidance when uncertainty exists.

Subsection (2)(a), workers are expected to follow established safe work procedures and conduct themselves safely while performing their duties. Safe work procedures describe how identified hazards are controlled and how tasks are expected to be completed. Applying these procedures consistently—such as using required PPE, following traffic rules on site, or respecting barricades and signage—helps ensure hazards are managed as intended. Acting safely also includes behaviour that supports others, such as maintaining situational awareness and avoiding shortcuts that could increase risk.

In (2)(b), workers carry out work that aligns with the training, instruction, and experience they have received. This involves recognizing the limits of one's own competence and avoiding tasks that require skills, certifications, or authorizations that have not been obtained. Examples include declining to operate unfamiliar equipment, requesting instruction before performing a new task, or seeking clarification when job expectations are unclear. Staying within the scope of training helps prevent errors and reduces the likelihood of injury.

Under (2)(c), workers are expected to remain alert to hazards in their work environment, including those that develop as conditions change throughout a shift. Hazards may include ground instability, equipment movement, environmental conditions, or changes to work processes. Identifying and communicating these hazards supports timely correction and helps protect others who may be affected. Prompt reporting to a supervisor or manager—whether through verbal communication, hazard reporting systems, or site-specific processes—supports shared awareness and early intervention.

The intent of this section is to highlight the essential role workers play in maintaining a safe and healthy workplace. Through safe behaviour, awareness of personal limits, and active communication of hazards, workers contribute to preventing incidents and supporting effective health and safety management across the mine site.

Contractor's Responsibilities

3.0.4	(1)	A contractor must ensure that the work the contractor performs, or over which the contractor has supervision, as set out in section 25 of the Act, is carried out in a manner that assures the health and safety of persons at the mine.
	(2)	Without limiting subsection (1), a contractor must
		(a) follow safe work procedures and act safely in the workplace at all times,
		(b) ensure the health and safety of the workers under the direct supervision of the contractor, if any, and
		(c) be alert to hazards and report them immediately to the supervisor or manager.

Guidance: Contractors play an important role in maintaining a safe and healthy work environment at the mine site, both through the work they personally perform and through any work activities they supervise. Responsibilities at the contractor level focus on coordinating work safely, managing interfaces between contractor activities and mine operations, and ensuring that workers under their direction carry out tasks in a manner that controls risk. This responsibility is consistent with section 25 of the *Mines Act* and applies regardless of the size or duration of the contracted work.

3.0.4(1) states contractors are accountable for the safety of the work they perform and for the work activities they oversee. This includes planning work to address hazards before tasks begin, coordinating with mine management and other contractors, and ensuring that controls remain effective as work progresses. For example, this may involve reviewing site-specific hazards and procedures prior to starting work, adjusting work plans as conditions change, or coordinating schedules and access to prevent conflicts with other activities on site.

In subsection (2)(a), contractors are expected follow applicable safe work procedures and conduct their work in a manner that aligns with site-specific health and safety requirements. Safe work procedures describe how identified hazards are managed and how work is expected to be performed at the mine. Applying these procedures consistently—such as using required personal protective equipment, complying with traffic controls, or following isolation and permitting processes—supports a common safety standard across all work activities, including those carried out by contractors.

Subsection (2)(b), where contractors have workers under their direct supervision, they play a role in supporting those workers' health and safety through day-to-day direction, coordination, and oversight of work activities. This may include communicating job expectations, confirming that workers are familiar with applicable procedures, monitoring work conditions, and addressing issues as they arise. Effective supervision helps ensure that work is carried out as planned and that hazards are identified and managed promptly.

Subsection (2)(b) maintains contractors must remain alert to hazards and changing conditions at the mine site that could affect the safety of their work or the work of others. Hazards may include changes in ground conditions, the movement of mobile equipment, interactions with other crews, or environmental factors such as weather or ventilation. Identifying and reporting hazards or unsafe situations to a supervisor or the manager allows issues to be addressed early and helps prevent incidents involving contractor personnel or others working nearby.

Contractors may maintain their own health and safety programs, policies, or procedures in addition to those established at the mine site. When work is performed at a mine, contractor systems are intended to align with site-specific requirements and the Code to support a consistent and coordinated approach to health and safety across all work activities.

Impairment and Conduct

Impaired Persons

3.1.1 No person may enter, remain, or be knowingly permitted to enter or remain in any mine if, in the opinion of management, the person's ability is so impaired, including by way of fatigue, that the person's health or safety, or that of another person, may be endangered.

Guidance: This section means the manager is responsible for ensuring that no person enters or remains on a mine site if, in management's opinion, the person's abilities are impaired in a way that could endanger their own health or safety or that of others. It also reflects that everyone on site has a role in recognizing and reporting situations where impairment—such as fatigue or other conditions—may create risk. The expectation is that a person whose abilities are compromised is kept out of the work area until it is safe for them to return. This supports a shared approach to preventing unsafe situations and maintaining a safe work environment

Impairment can include fatigue or any other condition that affects a person's ability to work safely such as, but not limited to:

- Effects of alcohol or drugs
- Side effects from medications or medical treatments
- Fatigue from long hours, multiple jobs, or inadequate rest
- Disrupted sleep or alertness from shift work
- Stress from family or personal crises
- Responsibilities related to caring for dependents
- Emotional strain after workplace incidents
- Impacts of bullying or harassment
- Reduced alertness due to extreme heat or cold