

Health and safety policy guidelines for junior mineral exploration companies

These guidelines are designed to assist boards of junior exploration companies set up effective health and safety policies and protocols for their companies. Please note that the guidelines are not standards and are not exhaustive.

1. Duties of boards of directors

- The board of directors should ensure that a health and safety program is in place.
- It may be preferable to appoint one director who will monitor and report to the board on health and safety implementation.
- Alternatively, the company could strike a health and safety committee of the board.
- The board chair should educate all directors about their responsibilities and liabilities with respect to health and safety in the workplace. This would include all of the following:
 - Understanding federal Bill C-45, which contains Criminal Code amendments affecting the criminal liability of organizations
 - Understanding regulations for the area(s) in which the company operates, and those specific to mineral exploration and mining
 - Understanding the policies of appropriate professional associations on health and safety in the workplace
 - Training on response to a serious accident at the worksite(s), including emergency response and response to media questions
- The directors should have a high level understanding of the health and safety risks in company workplaces.
- The board should be notified as soon as possible of all serious incidents in the workplace (medical aids, lost time injuries, fatalities).
- The board should allocate resources towards a health and safety program in the company.
- The board should ensure that the organization has a health and safety mission statement, policy, and a plan that implements health and safety protocols, and should periodically check that they are appropriate. There should be health and safety targets within the plan.
- The chairman, and preferably the whole board, should sign the policy.
- Any mission statement or policy could be incorporated within a general corporate mission statement and/or policy on sustainable development.
- An external review of health and safety policies and procedures should be considered.
- All work places, irrespective of jurisdiction, should have the same levels of health and safety standards.

2. Reporting

- Board meetings should include a report on health and safety performance prior to technical reviews.
- The board of directors or the director/committee appointed to monitor health and safety procedures should review with the chief operating officer or equivalent the records of statistics.
- Statistics should include hours worked, near misses, first aids, medical aids as well as work days lost, and fatalities.
- Statistics should be maintained with monthly or quarterly reports.
- Accident records should be detailed and signed. Actions taken subsequent to incidents should be recorded.
- The annual report of the company, any interim reports (quarterly reports) and the website should include a summary of health and safety performance, along with the health and safety policy statement.
- In case of serious accident, if the company does not have the capacity to investigate the causes itself, external auditing should be completed.
- Operating groups or project teams should be encouraged to have safety meetings as follows:
 - Prior to project reports;
 - Once a month; and
 - Short “toolbox” or “tailgate” meetings each day at the worksiteMinutes of safety meetings should be kept.
- Documentation should exist at three levels – office, management and field.

3. Training

- All directors should be informed about field health and safety risks and procedures (as well as social, community and environmental issues).
- A plan should be in place to ensure that all workers have appropriate training for the tasks to be completed.
- Safety leadership training should be undertaken as well as task-specific training.
- Work should not start before training has been completed.
- Workers should sign to indicate that they have received training and safety manuals and that they have read the manuals.
- All work places must comply with federal and provincial regulations on health and safety.

(see over)

4. Due diligence checklist

Questions the board of directors should ask the chief operating officer, vice president exploration, or equivalent.

- Do you have a corporate health and safety policy?
- Do you have a corporate health and safety plan?
- Does the board understand its responsibilities and liabilities?
- Does the board have appropriate insurance in place?
- Does the board request a health and safety report from the chief operating officer or equivalent prior to other discussions?
- Does the board of directors annually audit the plan with the chief operating officer or equivalent?
- Is the audit documented in writing, signed and dated?
- Does the board audit the plan, in addition to the annual audit, in cases of serious accident?
- Do all projects have a designated health and safety leader, manager or monitor (not necessarily a job title)? Is the person told to shut down work if it is unacceptably unsafe?
- Does the designated health and safety leader know the name of the person to whom accidents should be reported?
- Do all worksites (camps, drills, etc) and regional offices have a valid, tested emergency response plan?
- Does the response plan include immediate 24/7 communication with the chief operating officer or equivalent?
- Are all contractors required to include in contracts health and safety clauses to at least company standards?
- Before work starts, has there been an assessment and documentation of health and safety risks?
- Do workers receive health and safety orientation prior to starting work and are they supplied with all necessary personal protective equipment?
- Are all employees given the appropriate training for the tasks required?
- Who documents training, including names, dates and course topics?
- Are training records kept?
- Are employees and contractors given an appropriate health and safety manual?
- Do employees sign that they have read the manual?
- Is there auditing of the contractor's worksite and action taken if required?
- Are health and safety statistics kept?
- Are the statistics publicly released (at a minimum, in the company's annual report)?

These guidelines are contained in the *Canadian Mineral Exploration Health and Safety Annual Report 2006*, compiled and published by the Association for Mineral Exploration British Columbia and the Prospectors and Developers Association of Canada. The report is put out annually to disseminate aggregate health and safety data collected in a survey of Canadian mineral exploration companies with projects in Canada.

The aim of the survey is to track health and safety trends nationwide, to promote health and safety awareness, and to encourage companies to institute accident prevention measures. A national survey enables companies to share non-competitive information to the benefit of the whole industry.

The 2006 report also contains general safety guidelines. It is available on the PDAC's website at <http://www.pdac.ca/pdac/advocacy/health-safety/o6-ar-health-safety.pdf>.