



Advancing a culture of prevention

IWH resources to assess and strengthen safety culture in the workplace

The Institute for Work & Health (IWH) is an independent, not-for-profit research organization based in Toronto, Canada. Our goal is to protect and improve the health and safety of working people by providing useful, relevant research in two key areas: (1) preventing work-related injury and illness, and (2) promoting recovery and work functioning following injury and illness.

Our work includes developing evidence-based tools and guides to strengthen safety culture and advance a culture of prevention. These resources focus on the shared values and beliefs about workplace safety and health in organizations and their importance in shaping prevention programs and practices. The resources also highlight the roles workers, worker representatives and organizational leaders all play in identifying hazards and developing safety solutions.

Institute for Work & Health Organizational Performance Metric (IWH-OPM)

The Institute for Work & Health Organizational Performance Metric (IWH-OPM) is an evidence-based, eight-item questionnaire used to help organizations assess and improve their health and safety performance. It was developed and validated by IWH in collaboration with health and safety professionals in Ontario. IWH-OPM scores indicate where improvements might be made to health and safety policies and practices in order to prevent injuries or illnesses from occurring. Since its development, the IWH-OPM's eight items have been incorporated by provincial bodies across Canada in initiatives aimed at strengthening safety culture.

[Download the tool](#)

OHS Vulnerability Measure

The OHS Vulnerability Measure, developed at IWH, measures the extent to which workers may be vulnerable to occupational health and safety (OHS) risks at work. IWH research has shown that vulnerability, as measured by this tool, is associated with elevated rates of self-reported work injury and illness. Using the measure, workers are considered most vulnerable to injury and illness when exposed to hazards in the workplace in combination with inadequate workplace policies and procedures, low OHS awareness and/or a workplace culture that discourages worker participation in injury and illness prevention.

[Get the tool](#)



Breakthrough Change in OHS

What does it take for organizations to make large improvements in OHS? An IWH research project took a close look at organizations that turned around their poor OHS performance. The result is a series of four case studies called Breakthrough Change in OHS. Each case study tells the story of an Ontario organization that achieved firm-level, sustained improvement in health and safety performance. Each illustrates the factors critical to making large improvement in health and safety, based upon an evidence-based model of breakthrough change developed as part of the research project.

[Download the series](#)

Internal Responsibility System Climate Assessment and Audit Tool (IRS CAAT)

The internal responsibility system refers to the rights of workers to participate in decisions that affect their safety and health. It's one of the core ideas underpinning Ontario's occupational health and safety system. The Internal Responsibility System Climate Assessment and Audit Tool (IRS CAAT) was jointly developed by the Institute for Work & Health, Workplace Safety North and partners in Ontario's underground mining sector. The climate assessment audit tool's 46 items are strongly correlated with the incidence of work-related injuries and illnesses. The tool has been used in Ontario's underground mining sector and beyond.

[Read about this tool](#)

Employer spending on OHS in Ontario

How much do employers typically spend to control or eliminate the causes of work-related injury and illness? This information is important to better inform public policy aimed at influencing employer investments in OHS. With the participation of a broadly representative sample of more than 300 employers in the province of Ontario, IWH conducted a study in 2017 to estimate the scale of employer expenditures to protect the health and safety of their workers. The study finds the average estimated OHS expenditure per worker per year among 334 employers in Ontario was \$1,303. Spending was three times higher in the goods-producing sectors compared to the service sectors. The largest proportion of spending was allocated to organizational management and supervision.

[Find out more](#)