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**YOUR TICKET
TO BEST PRACTICES.**

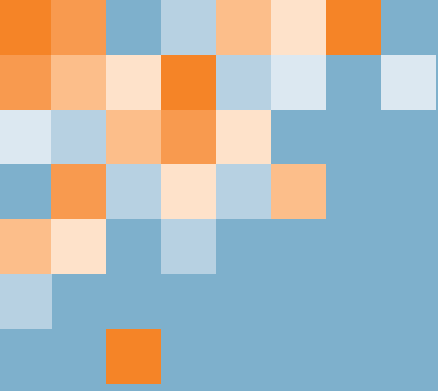
Leveling the Field

**A Best Practices Guide to
Employing Women in the Trades**

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Red Seal Carpenter and
Carpentry Instructor





A diverse employee base enables us to better understand and serve our customers.

- BC Trades Employer

It shouldn't matter whether you're a man or a woman in the trades. If a woman can pull her own weight just as most men do, then she has every reason to be there.

- Female Apprentice

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LEVELING THE FIELD

Many employers, when asked about the benefits of employing women in the trades, note that it doesn't matter who they hire as long as they are qualified and have a good work ethic. They believe men and women are equally able to complete most tasks in the trades, and recognise that each may bring unique strengths. **This perspective is echoed by women working in the trades, who just want to be treated the same as men.**

Why then produce a Best Practices Guide to support employing women in the trades?

Women continue to be underrepresented in the trades.

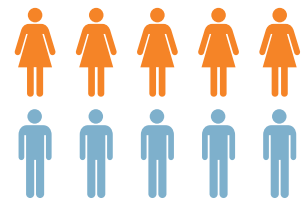
A substantial issue raised by many employers is how few women enter the trades – many have never had a female apprentice apply. The Industry Training Authority continues to work on encouraging both young men and women to enter the trades through their Youth Strategy, including programs like YES 2 IT, ACE IT and SSA, as well as a targeted program designed to encourage more women to enter the trades (the Women in Trades Training Initiative). Some employers note that momentum is building – as more women find work in the trades, others will see the trades as a viable career option.

Yet, in conversations with employers and women working in the trades, it is clear there are still gender-specific barriers in the workforce. Women have a harder time finding and retaining work in the trades. This guide will help employers understand what they can do to reduce these barriers, helping to level the field, so equally qualified women get a chance. It does not promote hiring women over men, but rather looks at employment practices that will help you find and keep the best qualified person for the job.

Increase the pool of qualified candidates.

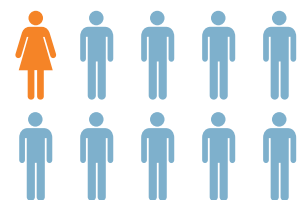
A common rationale for employers looking at this Best Practices Guide will simply be that in a tight job market, they need to be sure they are not excluding a potential candidate pool. Employers report that without increasing the size of the pool of qualified candidates, businesses will increasingly have to bring in temporary foreign workers on a short-term basis, when they would prefer to hire locally.

About **50%**
of the population are women



BUT

Only **10%** of
apprentices are women



Other employers see diversity – not just gender diversity – as a strength, bringing in a mix of experiences, knowledge and skills. Some note that gender diversity on a worksite promotes all employees being more open-minded, creating a positive and supportive environment for all employees while increasing a company’s ability to recruit talent from underrepresented demographic groups.

Some employers predict that many more future employees, both male and female, will expect flexible schedules and collaborative work environments. Those employers who embrace these practices to better support employees now will be in a much better position than those who do not.

The practices in this guide will help you
employ any apprentice – male or female.

– BC Trades Employer

In this market, it is so hard to find anyone.
We need to ensure that we are not excluding
a potential candidate pool.

– BC Trades Employer

According to the recent BC Trades Occupations Outlook,
by 2015 the province can expect to experience a
SKILLED LABOUR SHORTAGE of at least

160,000

RECRUITMENT & HIRING

Even without a labour shortage, hiring is a daunting task. The larger your pool of qualified candidates, the better chance you have of finding the right people with the right skills at the right time.

RECRUITING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

It is a competitive advantage for our company to have a female Construction Manager, she connects much more effectively with our clients and with tradespeople on the sites. - BC Trades Employer

In the trades, many employers rely on workers seeking out employment in order to find new staff. However, being proactive and advertising in multiple locations will broaden your reach – and it doesn't have to be expensive. Think carefully about your needs so you can be clear about what qualifications and skills you're looking for. Here are some tips:

- Include a description of the job and your business (e.g., certified carpenter required for residential renovation projects).
- If you have photos on your website or in an ad, make sure to include a diverse group of employees.
- Consider using gender-neutral terms like journeyperson or tradesperson. While some consider journeyman to be a gender-neutral term, other female apprentices look for gender-neutral terms as an indicator of how welcome they would be.
- Note that you are an equal-opportunity employer in your postings and on your website – and follow through in your hiring.
- Consider advertising in new places to reach a wider group of potential employees. WorkBC.ca offers free online job postings.
- Exploratory trades training programs (such as ACE IT and the Women in Trades Training Initiative) are a good place to find entry-level labourers and tradespeople – they will have already completed safety training and will be more likely to be productive on day one, with reduced orientation time, workplace incidents and turnover.

CONSISTENT HIRING PRACTICES

Our approach is to hire the most qualified person for the job, not necessarily a man or a woman. - BC Trades Employer

Consistent hiring practices will help you find employees who are the best match for your business.

Trades employers worry about investing in workplace training for entry level employees, then losing them to competitors once they get their ticket. Finding the right employees through consistent recruiting and hiring processes will help build a loyal and dedicated workforce.

Applications

Using a paper or online application form ensures that you get the same information from everyone. Asking all candidates to complete the same form and provide the same information helps establish a level playing field for everyone. This will allow you to more directly compare the candidates and suggests an established and transparent hiring process.

Interviewing

Interviews are an important opportunity for you to find out more about a candidate and for them to find out about your company. *Interview a woman the same way you would interview a man.*

-
- Choose a group of two to three people, including someone who will be working directly with the successful candidate. A group that reflects the diversity of your workforce will send a welcoming message to all candidates about your company.

 - Ask all candidates the same questions and try to make everyone as comfortable as possible.

 - Ask questions that help you learn about a candidate's skills, experience and training.

 - Ask about soft and transferable skills. While a candidate may not have previous on-site experience, they may have other experience that demonstrates the skills and competencies you require in your workers.

 - Tell the candidates about your needs and expectations. Include details about the duties, start date (and end date, if applicable), hours of work, rate of pay, benefits (if any) and the probation period.

 - Do NOT ask questions that are not job-related including aspects of the candidate's personal life (such as marital status, number of children, daycare arrangements, age, ethnic background or religion). Asking such questions is against human rights legislation.

 - Suggest solutions to improve the unsuccessful candidates chances in their next interview, such as a pre-trades training program. This will give the candidate a better opportunity to prepare for success and potentially return with the appropriate skills and competencies.

ONE IN FIVE SURVEYED FEMALE APPRENTICES REPORT BEING ASKED INAPPROPRIATE QUESTIONS IN AN INTERVIEW.

Example of an inappropriate question: *Do you know that you're going to get dirty?*

In an interview, clearly set out job expectations and consistently check if **all** applicants are able to meet them. For example:

-
- This job requires the ability to frequently lift twenty pounds/work in enclosed spaces/climb scaffolding – are you able to do this comfortably?

 - This job requires shiftwork. Shifts commonly start at 7 am and/or 3 pm and dependability is important to us. Will you be able to be on time at all of our worksites?

I appear very weak because of how thin I am, yet I can lift six speed transmissions with ease! - Female Apprentice

MYTHS ABOUT HIRING WOMEN

MYTH: *Women don't have enough physical strength.*

Two in five BC trades employers surveyed still believe that most women are not strong enough to do some work in the trades, though others pointed out that some men are not either. Female apprentices acknowledge that men typically have greater upper-body strength than women, but point out that they can do more than many people believe and that all new hires build strength over time.

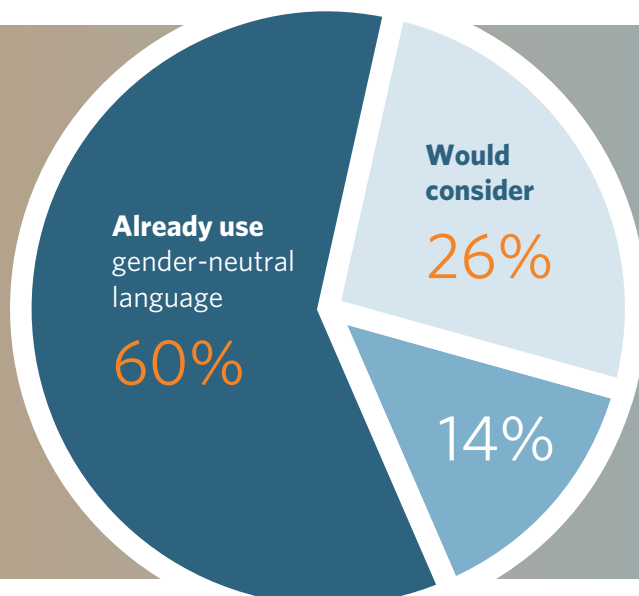
Women who are not strong enough to lift something on their own are going to seek assistive devices to help them. Seeing women on the jobsite approaching their tasks in a smart, safe and ergonomic manner may encourage similar behaviour in others working alongside them. As the use of assistive devices increases, the number of injuries will be reduced.

MYTH: *Women will prioritise family over their careers.*

While many women will take time to start a family, increasingly men are also taking time away from work for parental leave. All parents are legally entitled to time off in the first year of a child's life. Whether they come back will depend partly on your company's family friendly policies. [See Retention](#)

MYTH: *Women will be bothered by offensive language at work.*

Men working in the trades may be concerned that more women on the worksite means they can no longer swear at work. Both men and women can find profanity unacceptable. Some women in the trades reported trying to reassure men that they swear too by swearing early on to communicate that they can fit into the workplace. Other women may not swear, but don't care if their co-workers do. It is important to have respect for your co-workers, and if someone is offended by your language, change it.



DO YOU USE GENDER-NEUTRAL LANGUAGE IN EMPLOYMENT POSTINGS?

Question from ITA survey of BC Trades Employers, 2013

Wouldn't consider
Feel 'journeymen'
is a neutral term

ORIENTATION

All new workers need to receive a full orientation to your company and their worksite in order to be properly integrated in the work culture. A good orientation sets a welcoming tone and affects motivation from the start. If done well, orientation reduces turnover and increases productivity. **Female apprentices have told us that a good orientation was critical in helping them succeed in a job – and advocated for these practices for all new hires, not just women.**

PLAN FOR A COMPREHENSIVE ORIENTATION

When new employees have expectations explained on the first day, or even better, written down, they are more likely to be understood and followed. – BC Trades Employer

WorkSafeBC Occupational Health and Safety regulations require employers to provide an orientation to all new employees. An effective and comprehensive orientation should cover the following topics:

Introductions

- On the first day, introduce all new hires to the people they will be working with and as many other co-workers as possible, depending on the size of your company.
-

Physical tour

- Give each new hire a physical tour of the worksite, showing key locations (i.e. washrooms, muster areas, first-aid locations, emergency equipment, break rooms, lockers). For a large site, provide a site map. Make sure there is a spot in the lunchroom for all new employees.
-

Safety information

- Provide information and policies about safety, the workplace environment and culture that will help new employees to fit in more quickly.
 - If available, give all new hires a copy of your policies and procedure manual.
 - Make sure that all employees know how to appropriately handle hazardous material and are WHMIS-certified.
 - Provide clear guidelines regarding safe work policies and practices.
-

Communication

- Make sure that all new hires know who to talk to about any questions or concerns. Match all new hires with designated trainer(s) or mentor(s).
 - Provide key emergency contact information.
-

Expectations

- Provide clear information about your expectations regarding the new employee's role, specific safety and work procedures, relevant performance standards, required tools, and acceptable standards of attire and conduct.

- Include specific information about sexualized imagery and standards of behaviour in the workplace, including zero-tolerance for bullying and harassment, and the process to report incidents. [See Safe and Welcoming Workplace](#)

- Tell new employees that everyone is expected to commit to ongoing learning. Encourage them to confidentially test their Essential Skills using the ITA assessment tool (www.ita.essentialskillsgroup.com) and access the free tailored learning resources to address any gaps. This will ensure they are ready to learn when technical training begins or as their responsibilities increase.

Follow up

- Check in with new hires at the start and end of their shift during the first week of employment. Supervisors should maintain an open-door policy on-site with off-site options for issues that require confidentiality.

- At the end of the week, the new hire and their designated trainer, mentor or supervisor can go over the week and address any items that weren't covered, or address any Personal Protective Equipment fit issues. This gives the new hire an opportunity to address any concerns they have, and make sure they understand the safety policies and procedures on site.

I really like the idea of linking apprentices of any gender with a specific mentor. I think this would have really helped with ensuring that learning continues in a supported manner after school. - Female Apprentice

LINK NEW HIRES TO TRAINERS

Employers are responsible for providing a certified tradesperson to supervise all apprentices. This person may not be available to provide the daily support that new hires need as they learn about their tasks.

Having a designated trainer or mentor helps both male and female apprentices. Over half of female apprentices surveyed said that being partnered with a designated trainer or mentor would have made a difference to them.

Matching new hires with a designated trainer or mentor will reduce isolation and increase productivity sooner. Having someone specific to talk to when they have questions or require training will help all new hires get up and running quickly.

A good trainer or mentor will be patient and welcoming and a good match with the apprentice is important. Be open to change if the match isn't working for either partner.

DOES YOUR ORIENTATION WORK?

Don't assume the orientation programs are working.

What do employees say? Is your orientation meeting the needs of non-traditional employees?

SAFE & WELCOMING WORKPLACE

SAFETY EQUIPMENT IN A VARIETY OF SIZES

One of the primary safety concerns of women in the trades is improperly-fitting Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Finding appropriate sizes can also be challenging for smaller men in the trades. Most PPE has been designed for men and doesn't fit most women well - which can present a safety hazard.

An unrecognized need

I had to ask for specific things like a female harness or smaller welding gloves - they didn't know - but once I pointed it out, they were happy to supply them. However, not everyone is as confident as I am and many people don't feel comfortable asking. - Female Apprentice

Employers may not realize that specialized or different-sized PPE is required or available. In a survey of trades employers, only one in four agreed that women require specialised safety equipment. However, when we surveyed female apprentices, nine in ten said that employers should be encouraged to ensure that safety and work equipment is appropriately sized for tradeswomen - less than two-thirds said that the equipment on their jobsite is appropriate for them.

More than just sizing

Not all women are small in build. And for these women, some men's sizes can provide a reasonable fit. Likewise, there are small men who experience problems with the fit and comfort of their PPE and would benefit from a wider range of sizes.

Some areas of protective equipment need to be specifically designed for the female worker to ensure proper fit, comfort and protection. Specialized equipment designed for women include: head, eye/face, body, hand and foot protection. In other PPE areas, such as hearing protection, simply providing a wider range of sizes would meet the needs of the workforce.

In general, a woman's hands are smaller - she has shorter, narrower fingers and a smaller palm circumference - so even a man's small size glove often does not fit properly. The average woman has a smaller head and face circumference than the average man. This affects the fit and comfort in head, eye and face, and respiratory protection. The average woman's body is shorter in length, making men's coveralls too long in the torso, and shoulders are narrower, making the sleeves too long risking extra fabric getting caught in the machinery.

Fit = Safety

Using ill-fitting personal protective equipment can be more dangerous than using none at all. A workplace conversation on appropriately fitting safety equipment for women will focus attention on appropriate use for everyone. Here are some examples of the impact ill-fitting PPE can make on your female employees - and your safety record.

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- A woman with a small face wears the goggles available in the shop. The gaps they leave at her temples allow flying debris from her machine to enter her eyes.
-
- A female worker in a sawmill can only get small men's-sized gloves; the fingers are too long and too wide, the palm area too large, and the cuff allows sawdust to fill the fingers. She risks getting her fingers caught in machinery and pinched when she stacks or carries boards.
-
- A woman with an ill-fitting respirator will find it difficult to achieve an adequate seal and may be exposed to harmful gases.
-

Finding equipment

Employers and employees share in the responsibility to ensure that safety equipment is used appropriately. It is an employee's responsibility to let their employer know if the supplied equipment doesn't fit properly. Under WorkSafeBC regulations, employers are responsible for ensuring that all the required equipment they supply fits their employees properly. Employers should also assess the PPE employees provide themselves and intervene if any are using inappropriate equipment.

Some suppliers are now producing PPE specifically for tradeswomen though many products are still only available in pink. Below are some suppliers suggested by female apprentices:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Lincoln Electric (www.lincolnelectric.com) | <input type="checkbox"/> Ono Work and Safety (www.onoworkandsafety.com) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Covergalls (www.covergallsworkwear.com) | <input type="checkbox"/> Canadian Linen - Coveralls (www.canadianlinen.com) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Essentials Tools (www.essentials-tools.com) | <input type="checkbox"/> KMS Tools - safety equipment (www.kmstools.com) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Green Heron Tools (www.greenherontools.com) | <input type="checkbox"/> Mark's Work Wearhouse (www.marks.com) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Norguard (www.norguard.com) | <input type="checkbox"/> Summit Tools (www.summittools.com) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Columbia Fire and Safety (www.columbiasafety.com) | <input type="checkbox"/> Carhartt (www.carhartt.com) |

A WELCOMING WORKPLACE

94% of BC trades employers agree that workplaces that are respectful and healthy for women are respectful and healthy for all employees.

A workplace respect policy is an important step in addressing workplace culture and shifting norms that may be challenging to women (and others) entering the industry. Workplace respect policies promote a safe workplace by addressing violations of respect, such as unprofessional conduct, harassment and workplace violence. In a respectful workplace, employees, supervisors and employers show consideration for the rights or feelings of others, and treat each other courteously, inclusively and safely.

Where workplace respect policies are established, practiced and enforced, communication is more effective and employees tend to be more productive. Improved workplace respect means site supervisors will spend less time managing workplace harassment issues and will have more time to focus on daily tasks. There are financial costs associated with workplace bullying and harassment, such as higher levels of client dissatisfaction and higher turnover, resulting in higher recruitment costs and possible legal fees. It is likely less expensive to prevent bullying and harassment than to address the effects after it takes place.

Zero tolerance for bullying and harassment policy

It has always been the responsibility of employers to ensure the health and safety of all workers on their jobsite. In November 2013, WorkSafeBC implemented a new Occupational Health and Safety Policy that addressed bullying and harassment in the workplace and outlines employer, supervisor and worker responsibilities.

What is bullying and harassment?

Not every unpleasant interaction, instance of disrespectful behaviour, or workplace conflict is bullying and harassment. WorkSafeBC defines bullying and harassment as “any inappropriate conduct or comment by a person towards a worker that the person knew or reasonably ought to have known would cause that worker to be humiliated or intimidated”.

Bullying and harassing behaviours may include the following:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Verbal aggression or insults; calling someone derogatory names | <input type="checkbox"/> Engaging in harmful or offensive initiation practices or hazing |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Vandalizing personal belongings | <input type="checkbox"/> Physical or verbal threats |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sabotaging someone's work | <input type="checkbox"/> Making personal attacks, based on someone's private life and/or personal traits |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Spreading malicious gossip or rumours | <input type="checkbox"/> Making aggressive or threatening gestures |

This is not a complete list. Other, more subtle behaviours, such as patterns of targeted social isolation, might also be considered bullying and harassment if they are humiliating or intimidating. This type of bullying could be perceived as interpersonal conflict, but still needs to be addressed. For all employees, it is the person being harassed that decides if they are feeling the effects of someone's actions, even if the person doing the harassing doesn't intend their behaviour to be offensive.

What isn't bullying and harassment?

WorkSafeBC's definition specifically excludes “any reasonable action taken by an employer or supervisor relating to the management and direction of workers or the place of employment”.

WHY ENSURE A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE

Improved workplace respect means site supervisors will spend less time managing workplace harassment issues and will have more time to focus on daily tasks. Effects on the overall workplace might include:

- Increased efficiency and productivity due to better staff morale and teamwork
- Reduced stress and tension between workers
- Lower absenteeism rates
- Lower turnover, resulting in lower recruitment costs
- Higher levels of client satisfaction

Examples of behaviours that may not be bullying and harassment, if undertaken in an appropriate manner, include:

- Expressing differences of opinion
- Offering constructive feedback, guidance, or advice about work-related behaviour and performance
- Making a legitimate complaint about someone's conduct through established procedures

Actively watch for incidents

A welcoming workplace depends on employers proactively setting a respectful tone and responding swiftly to incidents, reported or observed. Unsubstantiated complaints may happen, but are rare.

Many women in the trades report that they avoid making complaints to their employers out of fear that they will make the situation worse or that they will not be supported by their employer. In a survey of BC female apprentices, more than two in five said they had experienced inappropriate behaviour from co-workers or supervisors on the jobsite and thought it was because they were a woman. Less than half of those women made a complaint to their employer or supervisor.

Suggest that if there is any unwelcome behaviour, employees should confront the individual(s) and request for it to stop. If it continues, employees should report to their supervisor and document the incident. Employers emphasized that they can't fix issues they don't know about.

Reference for employers

WorkSafeBC (2013). Toward a respectful workplace: A handbook on preventing and addressing workplace bullying and harassment. www2.worksafebc.com/pdfs/Bullying/BK137.pdf



Reasons for not making a complaint

Question from ITA survey of BC Female Apprentices, 2013

STEPS TO ENSURE A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Develop a policy statement on bullying and harassment | <input type="checkbox"/> Train supervisors and workers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Take steps to prevent or intervene in incidents of bullying and harassment | <input type="checkbox"/> Orient all new workers on bullying and harassment policy and procedures |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Develop and implement procedures to report and deal with incidents | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inform workers of the policy statement and procedures to address incidents | |

Source: WorkSafeBC (2013). Toward a respectful workplace: A handbook on preventing and addressing workplace bullying and harassment. <http://www2.worksafebc.com/pdfs/Bullying/BK137.pdf>

RETENTION

The apprenticeship system requires training both in the classroom and on the jobsite. Technical classroom training is only 20% of an apprentice's learning, employers are responsible for 80% of an apprentice's training on the job. Employers are understandably concerned about investing in an entry-level employee only to have them poached as they become more productive or have them leave to attend to family responsibilities that conflict with work.

Here are some ideas to help you develop a loyal and dedicated workforce.

COMMUNICATION STYLES

In the trades, workers commonly report that they receive very little positive reinforcement – it's just not the culture. Employers report noticing an increased need for recognition amongst their younger staff, and suggest all employers in the trades will need to learn to give feedback both when things are going well, and when improvements are needed.

As workplace diversity increases, employers will also need to pay more attention to communication styles. Communication styles are individual but there are generally accepted differences in the ways that women and men communicate. In particular, men and women often express frustration differently. Men may shout or appear angry while women might not express their frustration out loud, they may blame themselves, and may even cry. A woman who cries at work is likely to feel embarrassed so it is important to not make a big deal about it. Consider it for what it is, an expression of frustration or fear of failure.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES

My employer is flexible; if I need to go because of an appointment I am accommodated; we are also given the option of working eight or ten hour shifts so I don't find having a family a hard thing to balance. My employer's flexibility is what keeps me here. - Female Apprentice

Employers who wish to maintain a diverse workforce that includes women will find that ensuring they have family-friendly policies will help them retain loyal and dedicated employees. As the gender-balance of parenting shifts, men are increasingly looking for family-friendly workplace as well.

Flexible Scheduling

Construction jobsites often start before daycares and schools start. Women are more likely to be responsible for school drop-off than men. Consider providing optionally shorter shifts that allow for work to start after drop-off time.

All employees will occasionally need to take personal time off to tend to family responsibilities, such as caring for an elderly parent or sick child. Under the BC Employment Standards Act, employees are entitled to five days of unpaid leave each year to take care of family responsibilities.

Parental leave

Pregnancy is protected under the BC Human Rights Code – you cannot terminate someone because of pregnancy. Work with your employee and your safety manager to determine what, if any, job modifications need to be made during pregnancy. All parents are legally entitled to time off in the first year of a child's life. Parental leave is covered by Employment Insurance at 55% of an employee's wages – some companies provide a top-up, but you are not legally required to do so.

After a parental leave, employees are entitled to return to a comparable job unless it is no longer available for an unrelated reason (e.g., project completion). Employees are more likely to return following leave if you remain in contact while they are away and offer flexibility to accommodate family responsibilities.

Benefits

A benefits package will attract a wider group of potential employees and will make you more competitive with other employers. Women especially place a high priority on benefits for themselves and their families.

Extended health benefits often cover therapies such as physiotherapy and massage that will help keep your employees healthy and strong, preventing and treating minor injuries that can impact productivity. If you are concerned about the cost of providing benefits, consider offering to split the premium with your staff members.

CONSISTENT JOB EXPECTATIONS

Evaluate work fairly

An annual employee evaluation is an opportunity to provide positive feedback to employees in areas where they perform well, address any problems, and offer employees a means to tell you about any issues they are having at work.

You don't need an elaborate system to do performance reviews – a simple form with a checklist of performance measures and a set of questions will do. Include ratings on their performance in areas such as technical knowledge, problem solving and decision-making, interpersonal skills and teamwork, and adherence to safety.

All employees should be evaluated using the same standards. So, just as you would with any male employee, if a female employee isn't able to do the job, offer her any coaching and support you feel are appropriate and, if necessary, let her go. Keeping a woman *on the job* when she can't *do the job* will ultimately be damaging to capable women working to establish themselves in the trades.

One of the largest factors in whether women will be accepted or welcomed in the trades will be their employer's previous experience working with women in the trades. Just as you wouldn't judge a new male apprentice on former male apprentices' ability, evaluate each woman on her work alone. It is important to evaluate each of your employees on the merit of their work without falling back on stereotypes or experiences with previous female employees.

69% of trades employers surveyed have policies and practices in place that support employees with families and support work-life balance

SETTING WOMEN UP FOR SUCCESS

Here is a checklist to help employers assess their workplaces for policies and practices which support women in the trades. Employers and women working in the trades are quick to point out that these policies support all tradesworkers.

RECRUITING A DIVERSE WORKFORCE

- Include a description of the job and your business (e.g., certified carpenter required for residential renovation projects).
- If you have photos on your website or in an ad, make sure to include a diverse group of employees.
- Consider using gender-neutral terms like journey person or tradesperson. While some consider journeyman to be a gender-neutral term, other female apprentices look for gender-neutral terms as an indicator of how welcome they would be.
- Note that you are an equal-opportunity employer in your postings and on your website – and follow through in your hiring.
- Consider advertising in new places to reach a wider group of potential employees. WorkBC.ca offers free online job postings.
- Introductory training programs (such as the Women in Trades Training Initiative) are a good place to find tradespeople. They will have already completed safety training and will be more likely to be productive on day one, with reduced orientation time, workplace incidents and turnover.

CONSISTENT HIRING PRACTICES

- Choose a group of two to three people, including someone who will be working directly with the successful candidate. A group that reflects the diversity of your workforce will send a welcoming message to all candidates about your company.
- Ask all candidates the same questions and try to make everyone as comfortable as possible.
- Ask questions that help you learn about a candidate's skills, experience and training.

- Ask about soft and transferable skills. While a candidate may not have previous on-site experience, they may have other experience that demonstrates the skills and competencies you require in your workers.
- Tell the candidates about your needs and expectations. Include details about the duties, start date (and end date, if applicable), hours of work, rate of pay, benefits (if any) and the probation period.
- Do NOT ask questions that are not job-related including aspects of the candidate's personal life (such as marital status, number of children, daycare arrangements, age, ethnic background or religion). Asking such questions is against human rights legislation.
- Refer unsuccessful entry-level candidates to a pre-trades training program. This will give the candidate a better opportunity to prepare for success and potentially return with the appropriate skills and competencies.

PLAN FOR A COMPREHENSIVE ORIENTATION

Introductions

- On the first day, introduce all new hires to the people they will be working with and as many other co-workers as possible, depending on the size of your company.

Physical tour

- Give each new hire a physical tour of the worksite, showing key locations (i.e., washrooms, muster areas, first-aid locations, emergency equipment, break rooms, lockers). For a large site, provide a site map. Make sure there is a spot in the lunchroom for all new employees.

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- Provide information and policies about safety, the workplace environment and culture that will help new employees to fit in more quickly.

- If available, give all new hires a copy of your policies and procedure manual.
- Make sure that all employees know how to appropriately handle hazardous material and are WHMIS-certified.
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- Make sure that all new hires know who to talk to about any questions or concerns. Match all new hires with designated trainer(s) or mentor(s).
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- Provide clear information about your expectations regarding the new employee's role, specific safety and work procedures, relevant performance standards, required tools, and acceptable standards of attire and conduct.
- Include specific information about sexualized imagery and standards of behaviour in the workplace, including zero-tolerance for bullying and harassment, and the process to report incidents. See [Safe and Welcoming Workplace](#)

Follow up

- Check in with new hires at the start and end of their shift during the first week of employment. Supervisors should maintain an open-door policy on-site with off-site options for issues that require confidentiality.
- At the end of the week, the new hire and their designated trainer, mentor or supervisor can go over the week and address any items that weren't covered, or address any Personal Protective Equipment fit issues. This gives the new hire an opportunity to address any concerns they have, and make sure they understand the safety policies and procedures on site.

LINK NEW HIRES TO TRAINERS

- Link all new hires with a designated trainer or mentor.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

- Offer Personal Protective Equipment in a variety of sizes and provide equipment made specifically for women if available.

- Assess what PPE employees have provided for themselves and intervene if using ill-fitting equipment.

ZERO TOLERANCE FOR BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

- Develop a policy statement on bullying and harassment.
- Take steps to prevent or minimize bullying and harassment.
- Develop and implement procedures for workers to report incidents.
- Develop and implement procedures for dealing with incidents.
- Inform workers of the policy statement and procedures to address incidents.
- Train supervisors and workers on bullying and harassment policy and procedures.
- Orient all new workers on bullying and harassment policy and procedures.

FAMILY-FRIENDLY POLICIES

- Consider providing an option for shorter shifts that allow for work to start after school or childcare drop-off time.
- Provide information during orientation about your procedures for accommodating family responsibilities.
- Work with any pregnant employee and your safety manager to determine what, if any, job modifications need to be made during pregnancy.
- Remain in contact with employees on parental leave in order to support their return.
- Consider offering an extended health benefits package.

CONSISTENT JOB EXPECTATIONS

- Assess all employees on their work, not on any previous negative experiences with other female employees.
- Evaluate all employees using the same criteria.



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YOUR TICKET.

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