

The Aging Workforce

Many people continue to work beyond age 65. In 2001, 11.8% of the population aged 65 to 69 were active in the workforce (ie: self-employed, employed, or actively looking for employment). [Statistics Canada] Older workers continue to work for various reasons: a) some enjoy and/or find meaning in work, b) some do not have a private pension plan, or c) others do not have enough pensionable years accumulated to replace their earning income (ie: stayed home to raise children, or started work late in life due to divorce, death of a spouse etc.) With a skills shortage in many trades, a declining birth rate, and possible end to mandatory retirement, older workers will be staying on the job longer.

Aging workers may experience health problems, declining physical capabilities and energy levels, stress due to rapid changes in technology, and increased family responsibilities (ie: looking after an elderly parent).

Ways to assist the older worker include:

- tailoring employee benefit packages (ie: increase prescription values, etc.)
- flexible work (ie: job share, flexible hours, etc.)
- use more “practically” based training (ie: new skills explained in a way that fits into what they already know, since learning based on previous experience)
- more learning time and practice time
- more time to adjust to changing external temperatures (easier to overheat)

Did You Know?...

As of June 30, 2006, an addition to the Occupational Health & Safety Act will cover hired farm labour. Farms that hire workers will be subject to the same requirements as other workplaces for inspections and safety infraction penalties. This would apply to operations such as mushroom, greenhouse, dairy, beef, hog, and poultry farming.

Did You Know?...

The owner of an auto repair shop in Oakville was recently sentenced to 7 days in jail and 6 months probation for preventing Ministry of Labour Inspectors from conducting a routine workplace inspection. The owner was convicted and charged with contravening Section 62(1) of the Occupational Health & Safety Act.

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