

# >> SAFETY MATTERS

## 8 Tips for Avoiding Falsified Safety Documentation

Every so often there are reports of altered and/or fraudulent training certificates circulating in the construction industry. Falsified certificates, particularly relating to safety training, can have serious consequences. Employers are ultimately responsible to ensure that workers are appropriately trained, and as such, should be diligent in ensuring training records are legitimate. The following tips offer some proactive measures that can be taken:

- 1 Understand your responsibilities regarding - and the consequences of - falsified safety documentation.
- 2 Ensure that all employees understand their health & safety responsibilities.
- 3 Have a policy in place for dealing with employees who are suspected of either passing off or knowingly accepting falsified safety documents.
- 4 At orientation, and at least annually thereafter, communicate to your employees the seriousness of falsifying safety documentation. Have each person sign that they are aware of the policy and the consequences for any violations (this might be a warning, a suspension without pay or immediate dismissal).
- 5 If and when you suspect that safety documents of any kind have been altered or fabricated, follow through and investigate. In the case of safety training documentation, look it over with a critical eye – are you familiar with the training provider?; does this certificate/document look the same as others from the same provider?; do the signatures look authentic?; is there anything suspicious about the date, the names, or the certificate numbers? Observe the employee's work. If he or she is not performing the task safely, intervene with reminders or tips, and ask him or her to explain how it should be done. If the safety training objectives are not supported by his/her actions it may be a clue that the training certificate /documentation is not valid, or that the training provider failed to ensure that the curriculum outcomes were met and understood.
- 6 The best way to ensure employees have the training they need is to arrange for the training through a reputable trainer. A reputable training provider should keep records of all safety training and be able to confirm that a particular person did or did not complete the training in question, and should also have the course overview and learning objectives readily available. The Workplace Health, Safety and Compensation Commission (WorkplaceNL) lists approved trainers for compliance training on their website, [www.whscc.nl.ca](http://www.whscc.nl.ca).
- 7 Keep a copy of the training certificates and re-train as required.
- 8 And lastly, take and record policy-stated disciplinary action against any and all employees who are found to be guilty of either passing off or knowingly accepting any type of falsified safety training certificates or documents.

Source: These tips were part of an article, '*Falsified Safety Documentation: A Killer of a Deal*', written by Beth Johnstone, Marketing Manager, Newfoundland and Labrador Construction Safety Association, for the NLCA Construction Journal 2014. A copy of the full article is available upon request at [info@nlcsa.com](mailto:info@nlcsa.com).

