

# Onboarding Checklist for Employers Hiring Women Apprentices

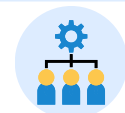
## BEFORE YOU HIRE: Workplace Preparation

- **Use existing resources to guide you.** Nova Scotia Works offers an HR Tool Kit and resources for [Welcoming Workplaces](#).
- **Complete the mandatory Orientation Program for Employers offered by the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA).** Take the 1.25-hour [online mini-course](#). Check out this [Employer Tool Kit](#) from the [Canadian Apprenticeship Forum](#) for more tips.
- **Use inclusive hiring practices (job postings and interview processes).** Apply gender-neutral language and highlight your commitment to equity. See [Building Opportunities Toolkit](#) for templates and examples.
- **Train your team.** Encourage or require welcoming workplace training for all staff and mentorship training for journeypersons. Email the NSAA Women in Trades team at [WIT@novascotia.ca](mailto:WIT@novascotia.ca) about free options.
- **Have clear and reasonable policies.** Ensure policies cover parental leave, [harassment prevention](#), and violence prevention. Templates available in the [Building Opportunities Toolkit](#).
- **Review workplace setup.** Ensure site entry is well-lit and safe, and that washrooms, lockers, change rooms, and break rooms are inclusive, clean, and have locking doors where appropriate.
- **Ensure the Occupational Health and Safety (OH&S) committee includes women and meets regularly.** Provide clear channels to report concerns and ensure both psychological and physical safety are addressed. [Nova SAFE](#) provides important information on regulatory requirements for a variety of OH&S and Technical Safety topics.
- **Confirm access to appropriate accommodations.** Including support for childcare, transportation, eldercare, cultural/religious needs, or health concerns.
- **Assess site safety through an inclusion lens.** Check for visible graffiti, inappropriate posters, or sexist culture indicators.



## BEFORE DAY ONE: Pre-Onboarding Preparation

- **Ensure personal protective equipment (PPE), uniforms, and tools are available in appropriate sizes.** Contact the NSAA Women in Trades team at [WIT@novascotia.ca](mailto:WIT@novascotia.ca) for a list of retailers with PPE for women.
- **Provide a personalized welcome package.** Include a welcome note, schedule, site map, safety contacts.
- **Inform your team.** Let staff know about the new apprentice, encourage a warm welcome, and remind them of respectful workplace expectations.



## WEEK ONE: Orientation and Integration

- **Assign a trained mentor or buddy.** Choose someone committed to equity, ideally trained in mentorship.
- **Confirm apprenticeship plan & expectations.** Ensure the apprentice understands the scope of their trade, training plan, schedule, and who to go to with questions.
- **Tour the workplace with a gender-inclusive lens.** Include washrooms, PPE stations, and highlight inclusive signage and resources.
- **Review respectful workplace policies.** Clearly explain expectations around harassment, discrimination, and inclusion. Share the complaint process.
- **Discuss workplace culture and “unwritten rules”.** Clarify expectations around communication, breaks, overtime, informal norms, etc.
- **Set early check-in points.** Schedule 1 on 1 meetings in week 1, week 2, and at the end of the first month.



## ONGOING SUPPORT (Months 1–3)

- **Ensure that apprentices gain hands-on experience across the full range of tasks.**
- **Provide consistent, constructive feedback.** Ask how the apprentice prefers to receive feedback and share clear examples of strengths and areas for growth.
- **Support participation in mentorship, peer networks, or women in trades groups.** Contact the NSAA Women in Trades team at [WIT@novascotia.ca](mailto:WIT@novascotia.ca) for a list.
- **Celebrate progress.** Recognize milestones—e.g., completing first block training, positive safety reviews, etc.
- **Conduct a 3-month reflection meeting.** Ask what’s working, what could be improved, and how your workplace can better support her and future apprentices. Use feedback to adjust your onboarding process and build a more inclusive workplace for all.



*While the Women in Trades team at NSAA is focused on improving the recruitment and retention of women in the skilled trades, this onboarding checklist can be used with all apprentices and journeypersons to help create safe, respectful, and equitable workplaces for everyone in Nova Scotia.*



*If you want to learn more about NSAA’s work to support women in trades, visit <https://www.nsapprenticeship.ca/get-started/women-trades> or email us at [WIT@novascotia.ca](mailto:WIT@novascotia.ca)*