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## CPSC launches "essential skills" project to improve plastics industry workforce

The [Canadian Plastics Sector Council](#) (CPSC) has launched a national two-year initiative designed to target and develop a list of "essential skills" deemed necessary to boost productivity, safety and the ability to adapt to change within the plastics industry workforce.

"Essential skills are a specific set of skills that form the foundation for learning," the Ottawa-based organization said. "Without them, it's difficult to build technical skills, such as those needed to operate equipment safely. The reverse is also true: workers with strong essential skills have a higher level of productivity and safety, and are better able to adapt to change."

CPSC has identified nine essential skills: reading, document use, writing, numeracy, oral communication, working with others, thinking skills, computer use and continuous learning. By December 2011, CPSC said, its website will include an interactive, state-of-the-art product suite available in English and French aimed at building these nine criteria.

"Workers will be able to find information about occupations in plastics and they'll be able to see how their skills measure up," CPSC said. "An online assessment will summarize where they already have the necessary essential skills and where there may be gaps. It will then point them to learning resources aimed specifically at closing their gaps."

Industry will play a major role in the development of the website, CPSC continued. "The Essential Skills Group Inc., the company contracted to develop the website, is consulting with plastics companies across the country, gathering input on website content and approach," the organization said. "Once it's complete, CPSC will pilot the website with 10 firms, who will provide advice about how to promote and use it."

The CPSC is a national not-for-profit association created to explore and address emerging human resources issues in the plastics processing industry.