



# Mining Sector Plan

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2014-2015



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## Introduction

Safe At Work Ontario is a Ministry of Labour (MOL) initiative designed to raise awareness about and increase compliance with, the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations. As part of *Safe At Work Ontario*, the MOL develops annual sector-specific enforcement plans that focus on hazards and outline what Inspectors will be focusing on during an inspection. This Sector Plan outlines the ministry's enforcement initiatives to protect Ontario's mining workers from occupational injury and illness.

Every year the MOL holds consultations to shape and improve its occupational health and safety compliance strategy and to build closer partnerships with its stakeholders. These sessions help the ministry to improve its approach and to better meet the public's needs. It is also an opportunity to learn from the ministry's partners, obtain feedback on how the program is working, increase support for new directions, and identify areas for improvement.

In addition to our regular consultation process, between January 2014 and January 2015 the Ministry of Labour is conducting a comprehensive, one-year mining health safety and prevention review led by Ontario's Chief Prevention Officer. An Advisory Group of industry, labour, and health and safety representatives has been established to ensure the public's and stakeholders' views are reflected in the review. In addition to information from public consultations held across the province and written submissions received, working groups will examine the Internal Responsibility System (IRS) in the mining sector, explore the ability of the current system to meet the occupational health and safety needs of the mining sector, examine the main health and safety issues in the mining sector including those relating to technology, study training needs now and in the future and forecast the requirements needed to maintain mine rescue capacity. The Review's report is scheduled for January 2015, however, any recommendations directed to the MOL during the course of the review will be considered by the Ministry. For more information on the Review you can go to <http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/miningreview.php>

The 2014-2015 Mining Sector Plan describes the MOL's enforcement focus for inspections at mines and mining plants. This sector plan contains a brief description of some of the main topics that an Inspector may address at a mining plant. While each workplace is unique and the circumstances presented to an Inspector may result in a different inspection focus, this sector plan provides a general overview of the MOL's focus within the mining sector and the various types of mining projects. Additional detail is provided about the focus for each mining campaign blitz initiative for 2014-2015.

You are encouraged to familiarize yourself with the plan and share copies of it with others in your workplace. Sector plans for other MOL programs may be downloaded from the [MOL website](#).

Ontario provides a toll-free number to report workplace health and safety incidents or unsafe work practices. Call the Ministry of Labour at 1-877-202-0008 to:

- Report critical injuries, fatalities, work refusals anytime
- Workplace health and safety information, weekdays 8:30am – 5:00pm
- Emergency? Always call 911 immediately

**Note:** This document does not constitute legal advice. To determine your rights and obligations under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) and its regulations, please contact your legal counsel or refer to the legislation at [www.e-laws.gov.on.ca](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca).

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## The mining sector

The Mining Sector in Ontario varies in location, setting and activity. It includes both large and small firms and includes unionized and non-unionized workplaces. It comprises both underground and surface operations as well as processing plants, including mills, smelters and refineries. This sector also includes sand and gravel operations, mineral exploration sites and oil and gas extraction facilities.

The Mining Sector consists of the following key subsectors:

- **Underground mines** – Includes ramp or shaft (conveyance) access mines and can involve a variety of mining methods such as bulk or narrow-vein mining.
- **Open pit mines and quarries** – Surface operations that typically involve large scale drilling, blasting, crushing, sizing and trucking.
- **Sand and gravel pit operations** – Range from small open pits to large scale operations with hundreds of pieces of mobile equipment (typically, these operations do not involve blasting).
- **Mineral exploration sites** – Surface operations that typically involve diamond drilling and bulk sampling to determine ore reserve potential.
- **Mining plants** – Includes mills, blast furnaces, smelters and refineries.
- **Oil and gas extraction sites and facilities** – Includes sites and facilities both on land and on water.

## Activities

The Mining Health and Safety Program will collaborate with its safety partners on several occupational health and safety initiatives from April 1, 2014 to March 31, 2015.

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### Mining review

Ontario has launched a comprehensive mining safety review to further improve the health and well-being of workers in the sector.

Starting in early 2014, the province's Chief Prevention Officer has been leading an advisory group of industry, labour, and health and safety representatives in a collaborative, evidence-based wide-ranging review.

[News release: Ontario to review mining health and safety](#)

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### Diesel survey

A diesel survey will be circulated to mining companies and contractors who own or operate diesel equipment. This survey follows a previous survey in 2002 to obtain information from stakeholders on how diesel emission testing is performed, including maintenance trends for equipment and exposure data from underground workplaces.

If you have questions or need help related to the survey, please email the Ministry of Labour at [Diesel.Survey2014@ontario.ca](mailto:Diesel.Survey2014@ontario.ca).

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### Mining Inspector video

The Mining Health and Safety Program (MHSP) will complete its second sector video; it will highlight ground control activities of an underground mine site. Additional videos will be an ongoing part of the MHSP activities.

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### Webinars

The MHSP will continue to collaborate with Workplace Safety North (WSN) in the development of Webinars to support the blitzes planned for 2014-2015.

## Mining enforcement statistics

**Note:** Enforcement statistics from the MOL in this sector plan are compiled by fiscal year (April 1–March 31). Lost-time injury statistics from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) are compiled by calendar year.

MOL Inspectors enforce the OHSA and its regulations at workplaces across the province. As part of the *Safe At Work Ontario* strategy, they focus on specific industry sectors where there are high injury rates, a history of non-compliance, and certain workplace hazards.

The ministry maintains a database where Inspectors record their workplace visits, inspections, consultations, investigations and orders issued. Fatalities, critical injuries, complaints, work refusals and other incidents reported to the ministry are also recorded.

The MHSP analyzes the data when planning enforcement initiatives and blitzes such as those outlined in this sector plan. Details of the MHSP activities and events and injuries for past three fiscal years are presented in the tables below.

### Mining program activities

| Program activities                      | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-2014 |
|-----------------------------------------|---------|---------|-----------|
| Proactive visits <sup>[1]</sup>         | 2,257   | 1,674   | 1,725     |
| Workplace inspections                   | 2,159   | 1,580   | 1,645     |
| Workplace consultations                 | 98      | 94      | 80        |
| Workplace investigations <sup>[2]</sup> | 493     | 445     | 448       |
| Orders issued                           | 3,443   | 2,930   | 3,480     |

<sup>1</sup> Proactive visits are those made under the *Safe At Work Ontario* strategy, and include inspections and consultations.

<sup>2</sup> Investigations are reactive workplace visits, which include investigations of complaints, work refusals, fatalities, critical injuries and other incidents.

**Mining events and injuries**

| Events and injuries            | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2013-14 |
|--------------------------------|---------|---------|---------|
| Complaints                     | 167     | 152     | 106     |
| Work refusals                  | 6       | 10      | 7       |
| Fatalities <sup>1</sup>        | 4       | 2       | 3       |
| Critical injuries <sup>2</sup> | 25      | 40      | 31      |
| Other incidents                | 77      | 85      | 67      |

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<sup>1</sup> Fatalities (and critical injury events) include only those that have been reported to the Ministry. A Ministry of Labour jurisdiction fatal injury includes an injury or incident resulting in the death of a worker. This excludes death from natural causes, death of a non-worker at a workplace, suicides, death under the jurisdiction of the Criminal Code, Highway Traffic Act and Canada Labour Code and death from occupational exposures that occurred many years ago.

<sup>2</sup> Critical injury events in the Ministry's data systems may include non-workers, as this is required to be reported. The critical injury numbers represent critical injuries as reported to the Ministry and may not necessarily represent critical injuries as defined by the OHSA.

# Priorities

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## System priorities

On December 16, 2013, the MOL released its first [Health and Safe Ontario Workplaces Strategy](#) designed to guide the efforts of the WSIB the Health and Safety Associations (HSAs) and MOL enforcement staff.

As outlined in this document, *Safe At Work Ontario* has been refocused to align with the priorities as set out in the Healthy and Safe Ontario Workplaces Strategy as well as deliver on the overall goals.

The priorities of the Healthy and Safe Ontario Workplaces Strategy are outlined below:

1. Assist the most vulnerable workers
2. Support occupational health and safety improvements in small business
3. Address the highest hazards that result in occupational injuries, illnesses or diseases
4. Build collaborative partnerships
5. Integrated service delivery and system wide planning
6. Promote a culture of health and safety

In support of the Healthy and Safe Ontario Workplaces Strategy, below is a brief overview of 2014-2015 priorities for Inspectors visiting mines and mining plants.

## Enforcement focus

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### Mine hoist plants

The transportation of workers and materials within mines shafts occurs in conveyances moved by hoists located in hoist plants.

Hoisting can be hazardous, if proper design, operating and maintenance measures are not put in place and adhered to by mine employers. Many aspects of the maintenance, installation and operation of hoist plants are regulated under the OHSA and [Regulation for Mines and Mining Plants \(Regulation 854\)](#).

#### Tools:

- [Underground Mines the Focus of Winter Safety Blitz](#)
- [Fact Sheet](#) (Mine Hoist Plants)
- [Blitz Results](#)

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### Training of workers (underground and surface operations)

Regulation 854 for Mines and Mining Plants requires training to be provided to workers and supervisors; these requirements are set out in section 11 of the regulation. Employers are required to establish and maintain training programs that set out the minimum standards required to perform work in specific workplaces.

It is important for workers to be trained on the work they will be performing; MHSP Inspectors will be checking to see that if there are requirements set out in Section 11 for the work being performed by workers, that they have been trained and there is documentation to show completion of this training. Training of Supervisors and specialty modules will also be reviewed by MHSP Inspectors to ensure time frames for the training are being completed in the prescribed amount of time.

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### Diamond drill operations (underground and surface operations)

The MOL will focus on diamond drill operators in surface and underground mining operations. Specifically, MHSP Inspectors will focus on:

- Diamond drill workers are trained, as per specific requirements of the Regulation for Mines and Mining Plants. The training called “Common Core” educates workers on the mandatory safe practices when using diamond drills.

- Diamond drill sites are properly supervised and that supervisor contact information is available and known to the workers on site. Inspectors checks records of the supervisors' visits and the frequency of the visits to the drill sites. The location of these sites can be in remote areas of the province and not always easily accessible.
- Emergency preparedness plans for the evacuation of workers requiring medical attention are developed and kept on site for the protection of the workers.
- Guarding devices where in place to protect workers from entanglement with rotating drill rods or other equipment.
- Precautions taken before and while working on an ice sheet.

**Tools:**

- [Safe Surface Diamond Drilling](#)
- [Best Practices for Building and Working Safely on Ice Covers in Ontario](#)
- [Diamond Drilling](#) (Poster)
- [Notice of the Operation of a Test Drill](#)

## Enforcement initiatives

Enforcement initiatives are part of the province's *Safe At Work Ontario* compliance strategy. Although workplace inspection blitzes may be announced to the sector in advance, individual workplaces are not identified in advance. Results from province-wide initiatives are posted on the ministry's website. The initiatives raise awareness of workplace hazards and promote compliance with the OHSA and its safety regulations.

Inspectors' findings may influence the frequency and level of future inspections of individual workplaces. Inspectors may also refer employers to health and safety associations for compliance assistance and training.

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### Dust management / ventilation

This initiative will focus on the hazards associated with dust management/ventilation in surface and underground mines.

#### Enforcement focus

Inspectors will check that:

- Ventilation systems are providing an adequate clean air supply in underground mines, and are well maintained
- Employers are regularly testing the air in underground mines to ensure concentrations of toxic substances do not exceed allowed levels
- Employers are performing emission tests on diesel-powered underground mobile equipment, as required by Section 183.2 of the Regulation for Mines and Mining Plants (Reg. 854)
- Measures and procedures in place to control dust in the workplace

#### Tools:

- [Ventilation Hazards in Underground Mines](#)
- [Mining Ventilation Safety](#)

## Mobile equipment

This initiative will focus on mobile equipment in surface and underground mines.

### Enforcement focus

Inspectors will check that:

- Mobile equipment is in safe working condition
- Equipment, including brakes, lights, steering and other safety components is being properly maintained, including removal of accumulated oil, grease or other flammable material, and that there is no substandard electrical wiring that could increase the risk of a fire on a piece of equipment
- Adequate procedures are in place for testing, maintaining, and inspecting the mobile equipment
- Power sources to mobile equipment are being locked and tagged when maintenance and repair work is being performed, as required by Section 185 of the Regulations for Mines and Mining Plants. Standard “locking out and tagging” procedures include shutting down equipment, using an energy isolating device so that all energy sources are disconnected or isolated from the equipment, releasing stored energy in the machine, and placing a lock and tag on the energy isolating device. These procedures must be performed whenever workers are installing, servicing, maintaining or removing any type of machinery, equipment, or components. This is to ensure workers do not work on live, energized equipment and that equipment does not unexpectedly start-up or release stored energy while being worked on

### Tools:

- [Notice of Diesel-Powered Equipment](#)
- [Mining Ventilation Safety](#)

### Videos:

- [Mobile Equipment In Underground Mines](#)

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## Remote operating equipment

This initiative will focus on remote operating equipment in surface and underground mines.

### Enforcement focus

Inspectors will focus on:

- Maintenance schedules and procedures to ensure that remote equipment is maintained
- The integrity of the safety circuit; it must not be compromised and must work as per design, (redundancies)

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## Asbestos program and inventory

This initiative will focus on asbestos program and inventory in surface, underground mines and associated buildings. This concerns only asbestos-containing building materials and would not apply to natural asbestos in the ore/waste.

### Enforcement focus

Inspectors will focus on:

- Requirement for the owner to prepare and keep on the premises a record that lists the location of all asbestos-containing material (ACM), whether the material is friable or non-friable, and in the case of sprayed-on material the type of asbestos, if known
- Requirement for the owner to inspect the material mentioned in the record at regular intervals to determine its condition
- Requirement for the owner to “establish and maintain, for the training and instruction of every worker employed by the owner who works in the building and may do work described in clause (d), a program dealing with,
  - (i) the hazards of asbestos exposure,
  - (ii) the use, care and disposal of protective equipment and clothing to be used and worn when doing the work,
  - (iii) personal hygiene to be observed when doing the work, and
  - (iv) the measures and procedures prescribed by this Regulation”

Regulation 278/05 Section 8(3)

### Tools:

- [Ontario Reg 278 05](#)

## Inspection blitzes

MOL Inspectors enforce the OHSA and its regulations at workplaces across the province. As part of the *Safe At Work Ontario* strategy, they focus on specific industry sectors where there are high injury rates, a history of non-compliance, and specific workplace hazards. They will also continue to verify overall compliance with the OHSA and its regulations. Inspectors are not limited to inspecting with respect to the issues identified in this document as *Safe At Work Ontario* areas of focus, and will take enforcement action as appropriate to the situation at each workplace inspected.

**Note:** Injury and illness trends: The program uses WSIB data to identify injury and illness trends. Trend analyses of the number of fatalities, critical injuries, lost-time injuries (LTIs), LTI rates and the costs associated with WSIB claims for each sector are used by the program to identify sectors for blitz initiatives. In addition to this information, Inspectors also review the compliance history and known hazards inherent to the type of work to select which workplaces to visit.

| Month, year               | Enforcement campaign/blitz topic                                                                                    | Key points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| July and August 2014      | Explosives Storage and Handling for Surface and Underground Mines                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintenance/Inspection of explosive magazines and equipment</li> <li>• Explosive inventory methods</li> <li>• Procedures for safely disposing damaged explosives</li> <li>• Proper handling, use (transporting, loading)</li> <li>• Reporting of mishandling of explosives</li> </ul> |
| October and November 2014 | Ground Control – The blitz includes a general assessment of ground conditions in both surface and underground mines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stability of development heading faces in underground, and in surface mines producing metallic ore, mines provisions for face stability specified in the mine design package, as required under Section 6 of Regulation 854</li> </ul>                                                |

| Month, year             | Enforcement campaign/blitz topic   | Key points                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                         |                                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The justification provided for unsupported faces, as required under Section 6.1 of Regulation 854</li> <li>• In surface mines the provisions for the working face as required by Sections 88 and 89 of Regulation 854</li> <li>• In surface mines the provisions for inspection of the working face as required by Section 93 of Regulation 854</li> </ul> |
| February and March 2015 | Water Management-Underground Mines | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workplaces free from the accumulation or flow of water</li> <li>• Managing the drainage of water from high risk areas in the underground environment</li> <li>• Checking that excess water is drained to a pumping system capable of pumping water to surface</li> </ul>                                                                                   |

## Tips on how to prepare for a blitz inspection

### Before the Inspector's visit:

- Check your accident experience in relation to the blitz topic
- Review the sections of the Act and regulations that may apply according to the focus of the blitz
- Determine whether you are currently meeting or exceeding the minimum legal requirements in those areas
- Consult with the Workplace Safety North (WSN) and Infrastructure Health and Safety Association (IHSA) for specific information and services that may help you prepare
- Review the blitz-related material prepared by the MOL
- Discuss compliance strategies with your Joint Health and Safety Committee, Health and Safety Representative and Trade Union representative

### During the visit:

- Ensure all required documentation is on site and available to the ministry Inspector (e.g., Notice of Project, Traffic Protection Plan, maintenance logs, operator manuals)
- Ensure that the appropriate supervisor and health and safety representative are available
- Ensure the workplace parties co-operate with the ministry Inspector

### The Inspector will verify:

- Compliance with the [OHSA](#) and its regulations
- Whether a health and safety policy and program has been developed and implemented
- Whether the workplace has the required components of a strong Internal Responsibility System – self-reliance
- Compliance with training requirements
- Whether workplace specific hazards related to the blitz have been addressed by the employer

**Note:** Inspectors can legally enter a workplace at any time without warrant or prior notice (OHSA section 54(1)(a)). An Inspector will identify himself/herself by means of ministry identification. No person shall hinder, obstruct, molest or interfere with or attempt to hinder, obstruct, molest or interfere with an Inspector in the exercise of a power or the performance of a duty under the OHSA or the regulations or in the execution of a warrant issued under the OHSA or the Provincial Offences Act with respect to a matter under the OHSA or the regulations.

# Explosives storage and handling blitz

**Date:** July and August, 2014

**Type:** Mining

Mining Inspectors will be visiting mining sector/subsectors to check that explosives are properly stored and handled.

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## Rationale

Explosives used in the mining industry present a number of hazards related to their use, handling, and storage. Although there has been progress in the manufacturing of explosives to ensure they are safe, and reliable for operators to use, extreme care must still be used when dealing with explosives. Only trained and competent personnel should be allowed to handle explosives. The blitz will cover the handling, use and storage of explosives in both surface and underground mining operations.

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## Blitz focus

The objective is to protect the health and safety of workers from the hazards of handling, use and storage of explosives.

The goal of this blitz is to assess:

- Maintenance/Inspection of explosive magazines and equipment
- Explosive inventory methods
- Procedures for safely disposing damaged explosives
- Proper handling and use (transporting, loading)
- Reporting of mishandling of explosives

**Tools:**

- [Notice of Magazine or Use of Explosives](#)

## Ground control blitz

**Date:** October and November 2014

**Type:** Mining

This blitz will focus on ground control hazards at all mining subsectors.

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### Rationale

As development of heading cross-sectional dimensions in underground mines continues to increase (partly to accommodate larger units of diesel equipment), heading face stability is a growing health and safety issue. In 2012, there were two fatalities of workers who were working at the face.

For surface mines producing metallic ore, the requirements for wall stability must meet the requirements in Section 6 for mine design purposes; and where metallic or non-metallic material is being removed the requirements set out in Sections 88, 89, and 93 to ensure ground conditions or stock piles remain stable while work is being performed around these areas.

Ground instability in underground and surface mines constitutes a serious health and safety hazard and can result from both ineffective design and operational procedures and practices. Therefore, there is a need for the MOL to check that mine operators are effectively addressing both the design and operational aspects of ground control.

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### Blitz focus

The goal of this blitz is to assess ground conditions in both surface and underground mines with special emphasis on the stability of development heading faces in underground mines. Face stability will be evaluated in terms of:

- provisions for face stability specified in the mine design package, as required under Section 6 of Regulation 854
- the justification provided for unsupported faces, as required under Section 6.1 of Regulation 854
- In surface mines the provisions for face stability as required by Sections 88 and 89 of Regulation 854
- In surface mines the provisions for inspection of the working face as required by Section 93 of Regulation 854

### Tools:

- [Ground Control in Underground Mines](#)
- [Safety Blitz Targets Underground Mines this Fall](#)

## Water management blitz

**Date:** February and March 2015

**Type:** Mining

This blitz will apply to the Underground Mining subsector only.

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### Rationale

If not managed effectively, water in the underground workplace can endanger workers. There have been recent fatalities associated with water introduced to material handling systems causing a run of material that has engulfed workers.

Water has many uses underground in drilling and crushing, and controlling dusts associated with blasting, mucking and transferring of material. If the use of water is not managed properly in regards to these operations, mines run the risk of water infiltrating ore passes, raise, and underground bins associated with crushers, picking belts, loading pockets thereby increasing the risk of material in these locations becoming saturated/lubricated to the point where an unannounced or unexpected release of the material occurs in the workplace. There is a continued need by the MOL to check that mine operators have the necessary procedures, and methods to control the use of water, as well as the equipment to ensure that accumulated water in the workplace is managed properly.

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### Blitz focus

The goal of this blitz is to check that mines manage the use and the removal of accumulated water where present in the workplace. Water management will be evaluated according to the requirements in Section 87 of Regulation 854:

- that workplaces are kept free from the accumulation or flow of water
- that there are measures in place to properly manage the drainage of water from high risk areas in the underground environment (ore passes, chutes, or raises)
- to ensure excess water is drained to a pumping system capable of pumping water to surface

## Resources

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### Legislation

- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)
- [Regulation for Mines and Mining Plants Regulation 854](#)
- [Awareness Training Regulation](#)

**Note:** Regulations made under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#), Revised Statutes of Ontario, 1990, Chapter O.1 as amended. For the complete Table of Regulations reference, please see:

- [www.e-laws.gov.on.ca](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca) (updated every two weeks)
- [The Ontario Gazette](#) (published January and July)

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### Publications

- [A Guide for Joint Health and Safety Committees and Health and Safety Representatives in the Workplace](#)
- [Guide to the OHSA](#)
- [Prevention Starts Here Poster](#)
- [The Internal Responsibility System \(IRS\)](#)
- [Awareness Training Regulation \(Material for training\)](#)
- [Safe Mining in Underground Mines](#)
- [Prevent Musculoskeletal Disorders \(MSDs\) in Mines](#)
- [Safe Mining in Pits and Quarries](#)
- [Occupational lung cancer symposium: causes and screening](#)

## External resources

Infrastructure Health and Safety Association (IHSA)

- [Rate Group Statistical Data](#)

[www.ihsa.ca](http://www.ihsa.ca)

Workplace Safety North (WSN)

- [Free Resources](#)

[www.workplacesafetynorth.ca](http://www.workplacesafetynorth.ca)

Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB)

- [2012 WSIB Statistical Report](#)

[www.wsibstatistics.ca](http://www.wsibstatistics.ca)

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## Section 21 Committee

The ministry is involved in the Mining Legislative Review Committee (MLRC), one of a number of MOL partnerships. This committee is established under Section 21 of the OHSA to provide advice to the Minister of Labour on occupational health and safety in the Mining Sector. Meeting regularly, the MLRC allows for dialogue on safety concerns between industry management and labour and submits joint recommendations to the minister for improvements.