

Safe At Work Ontario

TODAY

Issue #1 | April 2009

Welcome to the inaugural issue of *Safe At Work Ontario TODAY*. Planned as a quarterly edition, this newsletter will bring you up-to-speed with workplace health and safety issues at the Ministry of Labour.

In this premier issue, we have unveiled our health and safety compliance strategy – *Safe At Work Ontario*. You will also read about our first-ever internet posting of our Sector Plans, as well as some statistics from our Inspection Blitzes.

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A new strategy for workplace safety

SOPHIE DENNIS

Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations Division

In June 2008, the ministry launched *Safe At Work Ontario* (SAWO), a new workplace safety compliance strategy, designed to:

- Reduce workplace injuries and illnesses,
- Improve productivity for businesses and strengthen Ontario's economy,
- Lessen the burden on the health care system,
- Reduce costs for employers and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB),
- Provide a level playing field for compliant companies, and
- Improve the health and safety culture of workplaces.



With *Safe At Work Ontario*, we are taking a broader approach to safety than in the past. It is a risk-based sector-focused approach based on three pillars: Enforcement, Compliance and Partnership.

Safe At Work Ontario focuses on workplaces with higher-than-average lost-time injury rates and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) claims costs. But other factors are considered as well, including:

- The compliance history with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations,
- Hazards inherent to the work,
- The length of time businesses have been operating,
- The size of businesses,
- Incidents such as critical or fatal injuries, and
- The presence of new, young or otherwise vulnerable workers.

Our inspectors enforce the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA). They are now visiting more workplaces before injuries occur, focusing our resources where they are most needed. In other words, to avoid trouble later, we are looking for it now.

One of the ways our strategy seeks to improve the health and safety of Ontario workplaces is to check out the workplace Internal Responsibility Systems (IRS). The results of that first inspection determine the level of engagement and frequency of subsequent inspections for that workplace.

Furthermore, Ministry of Labour inspectors can refer workplaces to Health and Safety Associations for additional assistance and training.

Stakeholder Consultations

Stakeholders across Ontario met with Ministry of Labour representatives to discuss and learn more about *Safe At Work Ontario* – the ministry's workplace health and safety program. Stakeholder consultations were successfully held in January 2009.

Around the province...

Where to find MOL Health and Safety Program staff in 2009

April:

20-22: Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA) Health and Safety Canada 2009, Metro Toronto Convention Centre

May:

20-21: Superior Health & Safety Conference 2009, Sault Ste Marie

30-June 4: American Industrial Hygiene Conference & Expo (AIHCE), Metro Toronto Convention Centre

June:

11: Petrochemical Forum, Sarnia

Zero-tolerance inspection blitzes

DR. MAURICE BITRAN

Director, Occupational Health and Safety Branch

Injuries and fatalities can usually be traced to a few root causes that may vary by sector. The Ministry of Labour's proactive inspection "blitzes" on sector-specific hazards are designed to raise awareness and increase compliance with health and safety legislation in these critical areas. These blitzes are announced in advance, and information is posted on the ministry website. Reports summarizing results are also posted. The ministry tracks each sector to determine if the blitzes result in a long-lasting increase in compliance, and decrease in injuries.

[Link to the inspection blitz folder](#)



Inspection Blitzes

- **New and Young Workers (Industrial Sector): June 2008**

Our first inspection blitz of 2008 focused on the service and manufacturing sectors across the province. Inspectors made 1,047 field visits and issued 3,371 orders; 75 were stop work orders.

- **Electrical (Construction Sector): July 2008**

In July, 98 inspectors across Ontario participated in a blitz focusing on electrical hazards at construction projects. Inspectors made 539 field visits and issued 2,026 orders; 241 were stop work orders. There were also 13 Part 1 summonses and 41 Part 1 tickets issued.

- **Renovation/Demolition (Construction Sector): August 2008**

During August, 98 inspectors across Ontario participated in the demolition and renovation blitz, focusing on hazards found at renovation and demolition construction projects. Inspectors made 333 field visits and issued 809 orders; 62 were stop work orders. There were also 5 Part 1 summons and 8 Part 1 tickets issued.

- **Falls (Industrial Sector): September 2008**

In September, our inspection blitz focused on the transportation, wholesale, industrial services, and wood and metal fabrication sectors. Inspectors made 935 field visits issuing 18 Part 1 tickets and 2628 orders, 183 of which were stop work orders.

- **Electrical (Industrial Sector): November 2008**

In November, inspectors checked for electrical hazards in industrial workplaces. Information on this blitz will be available on our website shortly.

- **Forklifts (Industrial Sector): February 2009**

- **Struck By Equipment (Construction Sector): March 2009**

- **Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSD) Blitz (Industrial Sector/Specialized and Professional Services): April 2009**





Enforcement

The Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) came into effect on October 1, 1979. It sets out the general principles and duties for workplace parties, establishes procedures for dealing with workplace hazards, and provides for enforcement of the law in situations of non-compliance.

The OHSA is based on the principle that workplace parties should have the primary responsibility for occupational health and safety, as they are in the best position to identify health and safety problems and develop appropriate solutions. This Internal Responsibility System (IRS) is the underlying philosophy of occupational health and safety legislation in all Canadian jurisdictions.

The Ministry of Labour (MOL) enforces the OHSA. Inspectors have broad powers to inspect any workplace; investigate any potentially hazardous situation, critical injury, fatality and work refusal; order compliance with the Act and regulations; stop unsafe work from being performed; and initiate prosecutions.

[A Guide to the Occupational Health and Safety Act](#)

Program-specific activities

Ergonomics

Ergonomics-related hazards continue to pose risks to workers. Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) account for the greatest proportion (43 per cent) of all lost time injuries (Source: WSIB). MOL increased its attention on these hazards in 2006, with the launch of its Pains and Strains Campaign.

In each *Safe At Work Ontario* sector plan, there is a focus on ergonomics:

- Industrial – inspectors focus on tasks identified as having a high incidence of MSDs,
- Construction – inspectors determine if employers have written MSD policies/procedures, worker training and if tasks pose a high risk of MSDs,
- Mining – inspectors include an MSD awareness component in their Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) meetings, and
- Health Care – inspectors focus on client handling and the availability and use of equipment.

In addition, the MOL focuses on workplaces with lost-time MSD rates greater than eight times the provincial average.

Occupational hygiene

Hygiene interventions in workplaces help identify, assess, and control risk factors which contribute to occupational diseases and illnesses among workers. These interventions focus on the reduction of occupational exposure identified in the Construction Sector, Mining Sector, Industrial Sector, and Health Care Sector Plans.

The key initiatives are:

- Proactive hygiene visits in the health care sector,
- Targeting industries according to chemical exposure hazards inherent to the work,
- Enforcement of new and revised Occupational Exposure Limits (OELs),
- Air quality surveys to support enforcement of proposed and adopted OELs,
- Enforcement of amended noise exposure limits, and
- Compliance with designated Substance Regulations, R.R.O. 1990, Regulation 833, Workplace Hazardous Management Information System.

Sector news

Construction: Notice of Project (NOP) forms go online

Today, constructors across Ontario can avoid manually filling in the Notice of Project (NOP) form and mailing it to the MOL. All they need to do is visit the MOL's website, set up a one-time online account and submit the form electronically.

Launched on December 12, 2008, this new internet service saves a lot of time and effort. "I think it's going to be a win-win situation for everybody, because no matter where you are in the province, if you can get on the web, you can enter your project notice and the ministry will know about it instantly," says Mike Chappell, provincial coordinator of MOL's Construction Health and Safety Program.

View CSA standards online

Ontario and all other Canadian jurisdictions are working with the Canadian Standards Association (CSA) to make it easier to access CSA standards referenced in occupational health and safety legislation. Now, you can view more than 80 CSA standards related to workplace health and safety regulations made under Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act online. Registration on the CSA website is required to view the standards, but no purchase is necessary.

Visit the Ministry of Labour at <http://www.ontario.ca/CSAstandards> and follow the link to register and view CSA standards.

This is a pilot project funded by the provinces and territories of Canada and Human Resources and Social Development Canada, in cooperation with the CSA.

An NOP form must be submitted in the circumstances set out in Construction Projects Regulation (O. Reg. 213/91) whenever a constructor is building something in Ontario that is expected to cost more than \$50,000 in material and labour. In the past, constructors had to go to the MOL office to pick up the forms, or request the MOL office to mail the forms out. They would then have to fill it out by hand, and provide information like their name, address and any other identifiers each time they filled out an NOP form.

However under the new system, once constructors set up their online account on MOL's website, information like their name and address will automatically appear, and they would need to submit only new project-related information each time they fill out the NOP form.

[Link to Health and Safety forms](#)

Announcement of permanent funding for the Health Care Team

On November 3, 2008, at the Ontario Hospital Association's Annual Conference, the Minister of Labour announced that the MOL received permanent funding for a new Health Care Team. The team will work to improve enforcement of occupational health and safety statutes in health care workplaces for more than 500,000 workers in Ontario's hospitals, long-term care homes, doctors' offices, medical laboratories and other health care workplaces.



The new team will support the MOL's *Safe At Work Ontario* strategy and:

- Promote a culture of health and safety in health care workplaces,
- Help enforce compliance with health and safety legislation in health care sector workplaces,
- Ensure that health care providers are better prepared for emergencies, including outbreaks of infectious diseases,
- Support a committee of sector representatives who advise the Minister on occupational health and safety matters,
- Assist employers and employees in health care and all other sectors to prevent occupational diseases, and
- Further strengthen partnerships in Ontario's occupational health and safety system (e.g., with the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Ontario Safety Association for Community and Healthcare, etc.). These and other organizations work with the MOL to develop coordinated compliance strategies.

Links

Ministry of Labour website

[Home Page](#)

[Health and Safety Report Card](#)

[Protecting Young Workers](#)

[View CSA Standards](#)

Safe At Work Ontario Sector Plans

[Construction Sector Plan 2008/09](#)

[Health Care Sector Plan 2008/09](#)

[Industrial Sector Plan 2008/09](#)

[Mining Sector Plan 2008/09](#)

Occupational Health and Safety

[Health and Safety Home Page](#)

[Feedback \(OHS\)](#)

Other health care news

An amendment to the Needle Safety Regulation 474/07 will take effect on the later of April 1, 2009, and the day that certain provisions of the Long-Term Care Homes Act 2007 come into force. This Regulation requires the use of safety-engineered needles to protect workers against needle stick injuries and exposure to blood-borne pathogens. The amendment extends the coverage of the Regulation from its current application in hospitals to also include: long-term care homes, psychiatric facilities, laboratories and specimen collection centres. For further information on the Needle Safety Regulation and its amendments, please see

http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca/htm/regs/english/elaws_regs_070474_e.htm

Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario (OHSCO) Integrated Planning

The Ministry of Labour, its health and safety prevention partners, and the WSIB are committed to eliminating all workplace injuries and illnesses. We have an effective system, but we can do more to reach all firms and to ensure that we respond to workplace safety needs in a flexible, proactive way. To achieve this, we are delivering our programs through an integrated approach. This integrated approach is based on the shared goal to eliminate workplace injuries and illness. The goal of each partner – and the prevention system – is to help Ontario workplaces reach ZERO fatalities, injuries and illness.

Integrated delivery will improve efficiency and system delivery of services and intervention support. There is one common, transparent system-wide approach for engaging workplaces. The process for identifying firms needing engagement has been improved. The selection process incorporates local knowledge and priorities. In previous years, the system prevention program was based on a single year's experience. The new approach looks at multi-year patterns. There are a number of triggers that bring one of the members of the prevention system to a workplace. The engagement strategies reflect partners' strengths and capabilities. The resources of system partners are allocated to ensure the most appropriate use of resources.

Call

416-326-3835
(Greater Toronto Area)

1-800-268-8013
(Toll free province-wide)

Safe At Work Ontario
Enforcement > Compliance > Partnership >