Connecting with Stakeholders

RENU KULENDRAN
Director, Occupational Health & Safety Branch

As we ended this year’s annual stakeholder consultations, I was reminded of the paramount role that our health and safety partners play in Safe At Work Ontario’s continued improvement and success.

Every year, the Ministry of Labour holds consultations to shape and improve our enforcement strategy, and to build closer partnerships with stakeholders. These sessions help us continue meeting the public’s needs. It’s also an opportunity to learn from our partners, obtain feedback on how the program is working, shore up support for new directions and identify areas for improvement.

In January and February, we again sought input from employers, labour representatives and specialists from industries and sectors across Ontario. This year, sessions were held in each of the ministry’s regions. We dedicated a session to small business in Toronto. A bilingual session was held in Ottawa. And we’ve made it easier for stakeholders and the public who were unable to attend the sessions to provide feedback.

This year, more than 140 people attended the consultations, more than double the number last year! Thank you for participating and providing us with valuable feedback. We’ve heard, for example, your calls for more guidance materials on compliance. Your comments continue to help us employ a strategy that fosters a strong health and safety culture.

During the consultations, we focused on our Safe At Work Ontario strategy in dealing with sector hazards. We addressed much of the feedback and recommendations that we received at last year’s consultations. We also discussed:

- A risk-based, targeted enforcement strategy by the Ontario government to address the underground economy
- A snapshot of our health and safety blitzes
- Sector plans
- New workplace violence and harassment legislation, and
- The recommendations from the Expert Advisory Panel on Occupational Health and Safety.
View CSA Standards Cited in OHSA Regulations

Thanks to a pilot project funded in part by the Ontario government, you can now read the relevant Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standards before you buy.


Registration to view the standards is required; however, you are under no obligation to purchase anything. CSA standards cited in Ontario’s occupational health and safety regulations are available online for many sectors, including industry, health care, mining, manufacturing, agriculture and construction.

If you were unable to attend the consultations, be sure to read a summary of the presentation that we’ve posted on our website. You can send your comments to us through the comment box or by email at: SAWOConsultations@ontario.ca.

Continued engagement with our partners is vital to the success and improvement of workplace health and safety culture across Ontario. I look forward to working with you to ensure that our workplaces are as healthy and safe as possible.

Ontario’s Workplace Health and Safety System

SOPHIE DENNIS  
Assistant Deputy Minister, Operations

Last month, our ministry announced it was appointing an interim prevention council to help improve workplace health and safety. This came after we accepted all the recommendations from the Expert Advisory Panel’s extensive review of Ontario’s workplace health and safety system. We are working on the Panel’s priority recommendations – and in turn, helping to foster safer and healthier workplaces across our province.

The report’s recommendations include:

• Appointing a Chief Prevention Officer
• Moving the workplace injury and illness prevention mandate from the WSIB to the ministry
• Requiring a new mandatory basic health and safety awareness training for all workers and supervisors
• Developing training requirements for high-hazard work
• Improving protections for vulnerable workers – including better protection for workers against employer reprisals when workers exercise their rights
• Increasing compliance supports for employers, particularly small businesses.

The full report is available on our website. These recommendations came as a result of comprehensive consultations with labour, business, and workplace health and safety organizations. As a ministry, we continually strive to improve the way we do things. The implementation of the Panel’s recommendations is part of a phased process that will bring real benefits to workplaces.

The interim council will help our province implement these key recommendations, including the hiring of a Chief Prevention Officer. I will also be attending its meetings to serve as a resource to council members in formulating their advice. The council is led by Paavo Kivisto, a former Deputy Minister of Labour and Assistant Deputy Minister of Operations Division.

On March 3, Ontario introduced amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act that would, if passed:

• Establish the Ministry of Labour as the lead for accident prevention, transferring it from the WSIB.
• Appoint a new Chief Prevention Officer to coordinate and align the prevention system.
• Create a new prevention council, with representatives from labour, employers, and safety experts, to advise the Chief Prevention Officer and the Minister.

The proposed amendments would also give the Minister of Labour oversight of the province’s Health and Safety Associations. The minister would also oversee workplace health and safety, education, training and promotion.

As we implement these recommendations, we must not lose sight of our number one goal: reducing injury and illnesses. We must stay the course, and ensure that our workplaces are healthy and safe for all Ontarians.

Thank you, and let’s continue working together to help ensure that our loved ones are able to come home at the end of every workday.

Know Your Employment Rights and Responsibilities

The Ministry of Labour helps foster healthy and safe workplaces across Ontario by enforcing the Occupational Health and Safety Act. It also enforces the Employment Standards Act and its regulations, which set the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees in most Ontario workplaces.

The ministry is now providing more resources – including a multilingual toll-free number – to send a message to employees and employers: Know your employment rights and responsibilities.

On January 17, 2011, Ontario expanded its Employment Standards Information Centre (1-800-531-5551) to provide service in 23 languages, from Arabic to Vietnamese. The call centre allows Ontarians to ask experienced staff about employment standards, filing a claim and where to find more information.

The ministry has also created online, interactive tools for employers and workers to calculate entitlement and obligations. These tools complement the ministry’s health and safety tools.

A new downloadable and printable high-resolution poster is now available in 23 languages. The poster helps Ontarians to understand their employment rights and responsibilities, directing them to the ministry’s multilingual resource portal at ontario.ca/employmentrights. This portal provides information in 23 languages on issues such as employment rights, filing a claim and how employees are protected.

The ministry has produced two videos that are available in multiple languages on employee rights under the Employment Standards Act, 2000 and how to file a claim. The new resources complement the ministry’s efforts to modernize Ontario’s employment standards, including improvements that lead to faster resolution of claims that were implemented on January 19, 2011.
Follow Us on Twitter, Talk to Us on Facebook, Watch Us on YouTube

In 2010, the Ministry of Labour launched its Facebook page to connect with Ontarians. Through Facebook, the public can learn about new ministry initiatives, legislation and resources. It also allows the public to connect with helpful ministry staff.

The ministry is always seeking new ways to talk with its stakeholders and the public, whether through electronic newsletters or expanded phone services. Facebook is one of the social networks through which Ontarians can connect with the ministry that includes Twitter and YouTube.

The ministry’s Twitter page, @Ontminlabour, keeps subscribers up-to-date about ministry and workplace safety news, new tools and important messages from our stakeholders. Follow on Twitter, and get up-to-the-minute updates on the ministry’s health and safety, employment standards and labour relations initiatives.

Meanwhile, visitors can learn about workplace hazards, health and safety inspections, and their employment rights and responsibilities on the ministry’s YouTube page.

Social media are transforming the way citizens get their information. And they’re also changing the way they communicate with government. The ministry welcomes everyone to submit information and ideas; discuss health and safety, labour relations and employment standards issues; and comment on any new initiatives through all of these channels.

New Compliance Tools

The ministry launched new health and safety-focused web tools in November 2010. These tools have been developed to raise awareness of common slips, trips and falls hazards at the workplace. One tool has been developed for each of the following sectors:

- **Construction**
- **Health Care**
- **Industrial** (kitchen), and
- **Mining**.

Employers and workers can use these interactive tools to help identify these common hazards and to provide preventative suggestions. The tools are easy to use.

New Hazards Posters (slips and falls, loading docks)

A new loading dock hazard awareness poster with key points aimed at employers and workers is now available. The poster is available in English and French, and is set to be translated in multiple languages, from Spanish to Chinese.

The poster raises awareness of hazards leading to slips and falls for workers and employers. The employer’s duties regarding health and safety are also outlined.

NEW on the MOL website:

**Videos**
- Loading Dock Safety

**Posters**
- Loading Dock Safety Practices
- Prevent Slips and Falls

**Fact Sheets**
- Prevent Slips, Trips and Falls in all Workplaces

**Guidance Material**
- Alert: Concrete Blocks Used for Material Storage

**Blitz Reports**
- Musculoskeletal Disorders Blitz, all sectors
  (September 15 - November 15, 2010)
- Mobile Equipment for Surface and Underground Mines, Mining
  (June 2010)
- Heavy and Light Equipment, Construction
  (June - July, 2010)
- Fall Hazards, Industrial
  (May 2010)
- Safe At Work Ontario Stakeholder 2011 Consultation
  Presentation
New Health and Safety Videos

Last year, the MOL launched two instructional videos for the construction sector: Fall Hazards in Low-Rise Construction in April, and Safety on Swing Stages in October. These videos are featured on the ministry website, as well as the ministry’s YouTube channel.

In spring 2011, the ministry is continuing to provide online compliance resources by producing a Loading Dock Safety video, which highlights potential hazards at loading docks and in shipping and receiving areas. The video raises awareness of the hazards that inspectors may focus on during an inspection. It focuses on hazards associated with the flow of materials and goods in and out of workplaces.

Quick Facts: Loading Docks

• Loading docks are found in most industrial sectors. But, they are often given a secondary focus by employers in terms of health and safety, e.g., in a manufacturing environment.
• Serious injuries and fatalities continue to occur at loading docks and in workplace shipping and receiving areas.
• Key hazards include:
  - pedestrian traffic hazards associated with vehicles and mobile material handling equipment
  - hazards in the general work environment associated with housekeeping and maintenance
  - inadequate securing and immobilization of vehicles against accidental movement
  - lack of machine guarding and equipment lockout
  - hazards associated with the operation of material handling equipment
  - ergonomic hazards associated with manual material handling activities,
  - and fall hazards.
• The workplace internal responsibility system (IRS) is reinforced in the video.

And, as a reminder, in October 2010 we posted a video about swing stage safety. In the video, a Ministry of Labour health and safety inspector explains what he looks for during a swing stage inspection.

Quick Facts: Swing Stages

• The mandatory personal protective equipment on a swing stage includes a complete fall arrest system with a life line tied back to a suitable anchorage system. It also includes general construction requirements such as hard hats, safety boots and glasses as necessary for the work being performed.
• The major hazard involved with swing stage work is falls from heights as well as swing stage collapse. This is why it’s critical for all workers to ensure that they perform daily checks on their equipment, including the roof set up, the stage itself, as well as any personal protective equipment and life line systems.
• Employers and supervisors are required to ensure that their workers are properly trained and that the equipment they have is suitable for use.
• During an inspection, MOL inspectors review the anchorage systems and the general rigging practices that are in use, ensure that lifelines are protected from abrasion, and check that the overhang allowance is in accordance with the manufacturer’s instructions, which is to be posted on the outrigger beam.
**Inspection Blitzes**

Since 2008, we have conducted 25 inspection blitzes (as of March 2011) focusing on specific hazards across numerous industries.

Eleven blitzes have been conducted since April 1, 2010 – the beginning of the ministry’s fiscal year – targeting workplace health and safety hazards:

- Fall-related hazards (Industrial sector)
- New and Young Workers (Construction, Industrial and Health Care sectors)
- Mobile Equipment (Mining)
- Heavy and Light Equipment (Construction)
- Personal Protective Equipment (Mining)
- Musculoskeletal Disorders (Construction, Industrial, Mining and HealthCare)
- In addition, the industrial portion of the MSD blitz contained a component related to falls off ladders that may occur when MSD hazards such as awkward postures or high forces exist.

Nearly 17,000 orders and more than 1,000 stop-work orders were issued during our blitzes. Our inspectors visited more than 7,000 workplaces in 2010.

As part of the recent MSD blitz, the ministry is providing four guidance sheets on hazards associated with ladder use. This information provides more detailed ergonomic guidance to help reduce the risk of falls from ladders.

The ministry also provides [blitz results](#) after each blitz, outlining the blitz’s focus, the inspection activity, an analysis of the orders given and further steps.

**Steps for Life**

Get your walking shoes on, leash your dog, gather your co-workers and round up the family! On May 1, more than 4,000 walkers will take to the trails when Threads of Life holds its annual [Steps for Life five-kilometre walk](#).

The event is more than just a fabulous opportunity for a healthy walk with family and friends in 18 Ontario communities. It’s a poignant reminder of the importance of the work we do every day to prevent workplace tragedies. Ministry of Labour staff will be joining the walks in every community.

Along the walking path, you’ll see pictures and stories of victims of workplace trauma. Some of these victims suffered an occupational disease, some were critically injured. Others had lost their lives on the job. They will be young and old, male and female. They literally put a face to statistics. Most will be the faces of workplace injury victims in your community. You may have the honour of walking shoulder-to-shoulder with the victims’ families.

Steps for Life raises funds for the charitable organization, Threads of Life. It
Tell us what you think!

Please take a minute to complete our brief online survey. We want to know what you think about Safe At Work Ontario TODAY – and what you would like to see in future issues. Thanks!

consists of a network of volunteers who deliver important services to families of workplace injury victims. They fill a void that the ministry, WSIB and others are unable to fill during an injury investigation and the legal processes that often follow. Every Threads of Life volunteer is a family member who has “been there.” Their loved ones were victims of workplace trauma. Their families have been through “the system,” and can provide advice on what to expect, who to contact and, more important, provide one-on-one peer support. They are a friend at a very difficult, dark time.

Shirley Hickman lost her 21-year-old son, Tim, to a workplace accident in 1996. She formed Threads of Life in 2003 along with other parents who lost children to the workplace: Paul Kells, Rob Ellis, a ministry staff member, and representatives of the Ontario Federation of Labour. Besides support for families, Threads of Life also has a speakers’ bureau. It trains victims and their families to make public presentations to tell their stories and promote prevention.

One mother was determined to make a difference. Her one idea – support for families – has created a national organization, united families across the country, engaged governments and compensation boards, delivered much-needed services and raised awareness that all accidents are preventable.

To get more information about the walk being held in your city – there are five new Ontario communities hosting walks this year – please visit the Steps for Life website.

National Day of Mourning

Every April 28, we pay our respects to, and remember, the thousands of workers who have been killed, injured or suffered illness as a result of work-related incidents.

We also honour the many families and friends who have been deeply affected by these tragedies.

Every worker has the right to return home safe at the end of each workday.

By working together – with employers, workers and our health and safety partners – we can prevent worker injuries and deaths before they occur.

On April 28, we reaffirm our commitment to making Ontario a safer place for workers so that no one ever suffers another workplace tragedy again.

Ministry of Labour Contact Centre

One number for workplace health and safety:
1-877-202-0008

Remember, we have one toll-free number to call to report a workplace health and safety incident, critical injury, fatality or work refusal. The public can also call this number if they suspect unsafe work practices or for general inquiries. The number operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
NAOSH Week: Safety and Health – a Commitment for Life!

North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week runs from May 1 until May 7, 2011.

Every year, health and safety advocates and organizations across North America mark NAOSH Week by promoting awareness of workplace health and safety through local, provincial and national events.

During this week, organizations can learn more about workplace health and safety by participating in or sponsoring health and safety events such as training sessions, contests and community events.

NAOSH Week is led by the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering (CSSE) in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS), Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC), and Threads of Life, in concert with the American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE) and partners in Mexico.

NAOSH Week website
NAOSH on Twitter

Workplace Health and Safety Events

Northern Ontario

Partners in Prevention Conference
Sault Ste. Marie, April 12-13
Delta Waterfront Hotel
Ministry of Labour will have several speakers at this event: Wayne De L’Orme, Murray Baker and Peter Augruso

Mining Health and Safety Conference
Sudbury, April 19-21
Holiday Inn, Sudbury

Safety Event
North Bay, May 5
Location TBA

Southern Ontario

Future Building Kingston
Kingston, March 29-30
Kingston Expo Centre
An interactive exhibition that provides young career seekers with the opportunity to experience hands-on activities in all areas of the construction sector.
**Partners in Prevention Conference**
Mississauga, May 17-18
International Centre
Canada’s largest health and safety event, and the flagship of the Partners in Prevention Conference Series. Ministry of Labour will have a variety of speakers and a booth in the trade show.

**MOL and HSO Insider Workshops**
Windsor, March 23
Holiday Inn Select, 8:30 - 4:00

London, March 25
Lamplighter Inn and Convention Centre, 8:30 - 4:00

Sarnia, March 31
Quality Inn, 8:30 - 4:00

Mississauga, March 31
Centre for Health & Safety Innovation, 8:30 - 4:00

Burlington, April 7
Holiday Inn, 8:30 - 4:00

Peterborough, April 14
Parkway Place, 8:30 - 4:00

Kingston, May 31
8:30 - 4:00

Ottawa, June 2
8:30 - 4:00

**For more information on events, training and services, contact our health and safety system partners:**

**Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB)**
WSIB provides no-fault workers’ compensation and promotes workplace health and safety. For information about prevention, claims forms, health issues, return-to-work programs, and links to other health and safety organizations, visit the WSIB website at [http://www.wsib.on.ca](http://www.wsib.on.ca).
Call toll-free: 1-800-387-0750.

**Health & Safety Ontario**
Health & Safety Ontario oversees four health and safety organizations dedicated to providing health and safety training and education to workers and employers.

1) **Infrastructure Health & Safety Association (IHSA)**
Serves: construction, electrical and utilities, aggregates, natural gas, ready-mix concrete and transportation.
Toll-free: 1-800-263-5024 / [http://www.ihsa.ca](http://www.ihsa.ca)

2) **Public Services Health & Safety Association (PSHSA)**
Serves: hospitals, nursing and retirement homes, residential and community care, universities and colleges, school boards, libraries and museums, municipalities, provincial government and agencies, police, fire, paramedics and First Nations. Toll-free: 1-877-250-7444 / [http://www.pshsa.ca](http://www.pshsa.ca)
3) **Workplace Safety North (WSN)**
   Serves (provincewide): forestry, mining, smelters, refineries, pulp and paper, and printing industries.

4) **Workplace Safety & Prevention Services (WSPS)**
   Serves: agriculture, manufacturing and service sectors.

**Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers (OHCOW)**
OHOW provides comprehensive occupational health services and information.
Toll-free: 1-877-817-0336 / [http://www.ohcow.on.ca](http://www.ohcow.on.ca)

**Workers Health & Safety Centre (WHSC)**
As Ontario’s designated health and safety training centre, the WHSC provides training for workers, their representatives and employers from every sector and region of the province.
Toll-free: 1-888-869-7950 / [http://www.whsc.on.ca](http://www.whsc.on.ca)