

Health & Safety At Work **TODAY**

Issue #11 | Summer 2015

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**Work
shouldn't
hurt**

October is Global
Ergonomics Month. Watch for
news and events...

Safe At Work Ontario 2015-16 Sector Plans



As part of *Safe At Work Ontario*, the Ministry of Labour develops annual enforcement plans that focus on hazards and health and safety issues specific to workplaces in different sectors.

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CPO Interview: Construction Safety



Chief Prevention Officer George Gritzotis talks about what the ministry has been working on to strengthen workplace health and safety at construction projects.

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Protecting Outdoor Workers



Working outdoors in the summer months presents special hazards for workers, including heat stress, Lyme disease, the West Nile Virus and common hazardous plants in Ontario.

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Safe At Work Ontario 2015-16

Sector Plans



Sector plans detail ministry's enforcement priorities and initiatives

The Ministry of Labour has released new sector plans for the upcoming year. These plans focus on hazards specific to workplaces in various sectors of the economy. There is a plan for each of the industrial, health care, construction and mining sectors, as well as for the ministry's specialized and professional services. The plans outline what inspectors will be looking for during an inspection. They also detail program priorities, enforcement initiatives, blitz activities and regional initiatives planned for the year.

Annually, the ministry reviews and analyzes injury and illness data, consults with stakeholders and internal staff and works with ministry partners such as the health and safety associations and other partners to identify the enforcement focus for the upcoming year.

You are encouraged to review the relevant sector plans with your Joint Health and Safety Committee or health and safety representative to understand some of the common compliance issues that are identified in workplaces like yours.

See the [Sector Plans](#).

Interview with the Chief Prevention Officer



With the construction season well underway, the Ministry of Labour is reminding those who work on construction projects to stay safe on the job. *Health & Safety At Work TODAY* recently spoke with George Gritzotis, Ontario's Chief Prevention Officer, on what the ministry has been working on to strengthen workplace health and safety at construction projects.

Thanks for taking the time to join us, George. With the summer season upon us, why is it important to be vigilant about health and safety at construction sites?

Gritzotis: Our data tells us that construction is typically a sector that suffers a lot of fatalities and injuries. While it represents around seven per cent of employment in Ontario, it has represented about 29 per cent of fatalities. It's work that can be risky by nature if the appropriate controls are not in place. And because of the seasonality, some short-term construction jobs, especially renovation, have people focusing on the deliverable and less on safety.

New resources

Alert: [Carbon Monoxide Hazards from Using Gas-Powered Pressure Washers in Parking Garages](#)

In the spring and summer, enclosed parking garages are often cleaned using gas-powered pressure washers to remove the deposits that have accumulated over the winter months. In 2014, seven workers were treated for carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning and one died after using gasoline-powered pressure washers in poorly ventilated underground parking garages. Learn about the hazards, precautions.

Video: [Inspection of a Soft Rock Salt Mine](#)

Join a Ministry of Labour mining inspector on a visit to the Goderich salt mine on the shores of Lake Huron.

Guides in Spanish (Mexican):

- [A Guide for Joint Health and Safety Committees and Health and Safety Representatives in the Workplace](#)
- [Workplace Violence and Harassment: Understanding the Law](#)
- [Guide to the OHSA](#)

Since 2003, we have seen reductions in injuries – however – we have not seen sustained decreases in the number of fatalities and as long as there's one death, that's one too many. That's one worker who won't be coming home to his or her family at the end of the day. So we must all redouble our efforts.

There have been a number of fatalities at construction sites these past few months, especially involving those working from heights. What's the ministry doing to curtail that?

Gritziotis: We've just implemented new mandatory working at heights training standards, which just came into effect in April. These new training requirements set a baseline of high quality, consistent training for the high-hazard activity of working at heights.

Also, last year, we introduced a regulation that very few provinces have in place. We brought in mandatory occupational health and safety awareness training for workers and supervisors. This regulation makes basic health and safety training mandatory for *all* workers and supervisors in the province who are covered by the Occupational Health and Safety Act. These minimum training requirements are designed to help prevent workplace incidents and injuries by ensuring workers and supervisors are aware of their roles, rights, and responsibilities.

The ministry is also working on mandatory training specifically for construction workers. Can you tell us a bit more about that?

Gritziotis: Sure. We're moving forward on an important recommendation coming out of the Expert Advisory Panel report, which is to develop mandatory entry-level training for all construction workers. So we've worked with stakeholders and established a standard. We plan to begin consulting in the next few months on both a standard and a regulation on how that particular standard will apply.

We also continue to work closely with our stakeholders to get the message out, whether it's through our school system, unions and employer associations. And we're taking a proactive approach to health and safety by continuing to conduct inspection blitzes every year to raise safety awareness and help prevent injuries and fatalities. Enforcement campaigns are essential to raising awareness on key hazards at workplaces. They send an immediate message that compliance with the law is non-negotiable and workplace safety will not be compromised.

We're working closely with health and safety associations to reach out to the roofing community, for example, to inform them about the change in the law. You've probably also heard our ads on the radio.

We're trying not to use just government regulation, but we're using our networks, messaging, education, and awareness. It's a multiplicity of activities all focused on preventing falls from heights, and sustaining those activities.

Why would this training help construction workers?

Gritziotis: It's foundational health and safety, and it helps participants understand and identify hazards. One very important part of taking mandatory entry-level training is to understand that if you're asked to do something unsafe, you can refuse to do it. And there are laws to protect workers if they are punished, such as if an employer decides to terminate employment.

It's not the only health and safety training, but it's an important foundational piece to help them understand that there are other hazards that will require them to undertake higher-risk training. Also, a lot of youth and new Canadians or new people coming into the industry need to be aware that, as a result of the nature of the industry, foundational knowledge is needed to keep them safe.

Will stakeholders have the opportunity to provide their input during this process?

Gritziotis: Oh yes, definitely. They will have the opportunity to provide input on both the standard and the application of the regulation. I encourage interested parties to check back on the website for more information.

The Premier had directed the Minister of Labour to look at creating a construction action plan. How is this going to help the construction industry and its workers?

Gritziotis: We've established an advisory panel of employer and labour representatives from the construction sector to advise the government on the establishment of an action plan that will allow us to address a number of different issues related to education, training, compliance and enforcement. The most important part of the action plan is it starts to talk about how all partners can work together to address the health and safety needs of the industry.

In the early days, we'll be looking at residential renovation. And down the road we may look at other areas. There are seven theme areas, from ensuring legislation and regulations are better understood to building awareness among young people. It also has us thinking about working with other levels of government. For example, we're looking at the whole notion of working with authorities at the municipal level to help us get the word out about health and safety.

So it's going to be a very comprehensive plan. It's going to be the kind of plan, that while we're facilitating it, it'll be owned by all our stakeholders.

So at the end of the day, who is responsible for the health and safety of workers at construction projects?

Gritziotis: Everybody. Everybody's responsible for playing a role. Government is responsible from a regulatory point of view. Employers have to take all reasonable precautions to protect the

worker. They have to build it into their own companies through health and safety management systems. And workers have responsibilities, too, to work in compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations.

My expectation as CPO is that people go well beyond what's in the regulations because by definition, regulations are just the minimum standard. My expectation is that everybody functions at a high level. We're doing our part through development of regulations and standards, but at the end of the day, all stakeholders have to own health and safety, and they all have to do their part. Both by reinforcing what we're doing, and putting out echo messages. Promote it to your suppliers, your networks and your peers.

Do you have any advice that you would give those in the construction sector to improve their health and safety culture?

Gritziotis: Over the day, frequently stop and talk about prevention. Don't just do it once a week – do it every day. Talk about prevention as much as you can. And just make it a way of doing business, a way of life in construction. Health and safety isn't something you just do because it's the regulatory red tape. It's a way of working embedded into your working processes, your productivity and in everything you do. Whether it's looking at a piece of new equipment, figuring out what the impact is to health and safety, all the way through to doing a wrap-up at the end of the day on whether there were any issues that would allow us to learn and pass on to others.

Sounds like good advice. Thanks for taking the time to speak to us, Mr. Gritziotis.

Protecting Outdoor Workers



As summer proceeds, many Ontarians are welcoming warmer days outdoors in the wake of record-breaking lows this past winter.

But working outdoors presents many hazards. Working where it is hot puts stress on your body's cooling system. When heat is combined with other stresses such as hard physical work, loss of fluids, fatigue, or some pre-existing medical conditions, it may lead to heat-related illness, disability or even death. [Learn how to protect workers from heat stress.](#)

Workers who work in certain outdoor areas are also at risk for tick bites and developing Lyme disease, and should protect themselves. Blacklegged ticks that can transmit [Lyme disease](#) are in Ontario, and in more areas than previously thought.

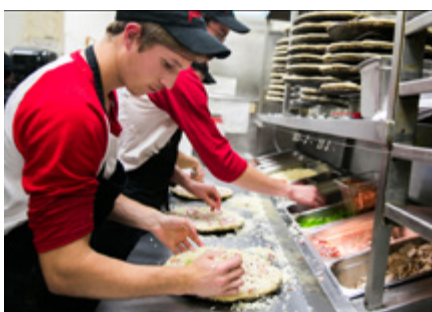
The warmer temperatures also bring out the mosquitoes. The chance of being bitten by a mosquito infected with the

West Nile Virus is very small. However, as a safety precaution it is still important to minimize exposure to mosquitoes in areas where the [West Nile Virus](#) has been documented.

While outdoors, workers can also touch hazardous plants, which in some cases can lead to serious skin reactions and permanent scarring. Learn about [common hazardous plants](#) in Ontario.

The summer is often a time for work and play for many Ontario workers and their families. But learn to take the necessary precautions to ensure that hazards found outdoors are properly addressed.

Summer Inspection Blitzes



New and Young Workers- May 1-August 31, 2015

Studies show that new and young workers in Ontario are three times more likely to get hurt during their first month on the job than any other time.

The blitz will focus on two groups. The first group is the new young worker 15-24 and the second group is the new older worker, older than 25 who has been on the job for less than six months or reassigned to a new job.

From May through August 31, Ministry of Labour (MOL) inspectors are conducting an enforcement blitz to continue to promote health and safety to new and young workers in Ontario in a number of sub-sectors.

Industrial inspectors will focus on the following sectors:

- Farming operations
- Agricultural services
- Tourism, hospitality and recreation restaurants
- Retail
- Vehicle sales and service
- Wholesale
- Automotive
- Food, beverage and tobacco
- Sawmills & logging

Inspectors will focus on the following key priorities:

- Provision of Training and Information by Employer
- Supervision
- Minimum age requirements
- Guarding/lockout

- IRS-Joint Health and Safety Committee/health and safety rep
- Slips, trips and falls
- Personal protective equipment
- Musculoskeletal disorders



Trenching Hazards, Construction, July-August 2015

As part of the province's *Safe At Work Ontario* strategy, in July and August 2015, Ministry of Labour construction inspectors will be conducting proactive inspections at construction projects where trenching activities are taking place. The purpose of the blitz is to raise awareness about the dangers of trenching, increase compliance with health and safety regulations and ultimately prevent workplace injuries that could arise while carrying out trenching activities.

Trenching Dangers

Trench collapses caused by unsupported trench walls are much more likely than other trench related incidents to result in worker fatalities. Other potential trenching hazards include:

- Falls into trench, exposure to underground services or overhead electrical cables
- Falling loads
- Hazardous atmospheres
- Unstable nearby structures such as other buildings
- Mishandled or poorly placed materials
- Incidents involving vehicles and other mobile equipment including contact with overhead powerlines while digging, to name a few

Workplaces Visited

Inspectors will target projects where trenching activities are taking place. Some examples include projects where workers are:

- Installing new, repairing and upgrading existing underground services including, water and sewer systems, gas distribution lines and communication and hydro cables
- Waterproofing foundations of commercial buildings and private homes
- Stabilizing soil in a trench known as "soil retention"
- Digging basements for residential housing
- Doing road construction and repair that involves for example trenching for placement of sewer / storm water conduit

Events

October is Canada's Healthy Workplace Month



Inspector Focus

Construction inspectors will check for compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations which may include but is not limited to the following:

- The trench walls are being supported by systems that meet the regulatory requirements when a worker is required to enter the trench
- Materials near the trench opening are stored and moved safely
- Adequate emergency evacuation procedures from the trench are in place for situations such as flooding or fire
- When work is being done near energized electrical lines, the required regulatory precautions are being taken
- While workers are working in the trench, a spotter is located in close proximity above ground
- Underground utilities are located and marked on the ground prior to digging of the trench
- A barrier is erected around a trench that is more than 2.4 metres deep to prevent workers from falling in
- Precautions have been taken as required to protect and prevent damage to structures adjacent to a trench such as residential basements

Mobile Equipment Traffic Control Measures, Mining, July-August 2015

In July and August 2015, Ministry of Labour mining inspectors will visit underground and surface mines to conduct a blitz. They will check for hazards involving vehicles and mobile equipment that could result in worker injury or death.

Mining inspectors will check for compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations.

Targeted workplaces:

- Recently reopened or new mines
- Mines where previous incidents were observed
- Mines with a poor compliance history

Inspectors will focus on:

- Measures and Procedures: that measures and procedures are in place for traffic control
- Worker Visibility: that workers have retro-reflective material on headgear and outer clothing
- Effective Illumination: that illumination is made available when insufficient lighting exists
- Worker Safe Location: procedures are in place when equipment is operated by remote control



Stop Falls

Falls from heights and same-level falls can happen anywhere, anytime. Falls result in a significant number of worker injuries and deaths, especially in construction. These injuries and fatalities are preventable. Use the resources below to keep yourself and your workers safe. www.Ontario.ca/StopFalls

**STOP!
FALLS!**



- Clearance Requirements: that the workplace's engineered design meets the clearance requirements for the safe operation of large equipment
- Worker Training: that workers are properly trained and supervised

Blitz reports

Slips, Trips, Falls

From February 2 to March 15, 2015, Ministry of Labour inspectors conducted an enforcement blitz at industrial workplaces in Ontario. They focused on hazards involving slips, trips and falls.

Inspectors visited a range of industrial workplaces and checked that employers were properly assessing and addressing hazards that could cause workers to slip, trip or fall, as required by the:

- Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)
- Regulations for Industrial Establishments

The goals of this blitz were to:

- Raise awareness of slips, trips and falls at workplaces
- Increase workplace compliance with the law and
- Prevent injuries and illnesses that could arise from unsafe work practices

Ministry inspectors conducted 1,084 visits to 946 workplaces and issued 3,603 orders under the OHSA and its regulations. This included 65 stop work orders. Some of the workplaces were visited several times.

The top three most frequently issued orders involved employers' failure to:

- Keep floors and other work surfaces free of hazards and accumulations of refuse, snow or ice
- Maintain equipment, materials and protective devices in good condition
- Provide mandatory general awareness health and safety training to workers and supervisors

Read the full Report

Water Management, Mining

In February and March 2015, the ministry conducted a blitz focusing on water management in Ontario's mining sector.

The blitz focused on hazards associated with water management in underground mines.

Inspectors and engineers checked:

- That water which might endanger workers was removed from the workplace, and excess was pumped to surface
- High risk areas where water may be introduced to a stope, raise, pass or chute and that written procedures for managing and communicating the hazards were in place
- That access to workplaces were not at risk of being blocked by an uncontrolled run of material, and that barriers were in place to prevent workers from entering hazardous/dangerous locations
- That a record of the dangerous conditions was logged in the supervisor's log book to inform other workers as required, and remained until hazard was corrected or removed
- That inspections and maintenance of the pumping systems were being completed to ensure prompt removal of water from the workplace

Ministry inspectors conducted 43 field visits to 28 workplaces and issued 178 orders under the OHSA, including 22 stop-work orders.

Of those orders, the three most frequently issued orders involved:

- Failure to take every precaution reasonable in circumstances for protection of workers [OHSA S. 25 (2)(h)]
- Stop work on any place, equipment, machine, device, article, thing, process or material until order is complied with [OHSA S. 57 (6)(a)]
- Failure to ensure equipment, materials and protective devices provided by employer are maintained in good condition [OHSA S. 25 (1)(b)]

Inspectors also found that there was an increase in violations involving:

- The installation, maintenance, and operation of electrical equipment in accordance with good electrical practices
- Providing a safe means of access to a workplace by a walkway, stairway, or ladderway when workers are required to work, operate, maintain or service equipment

The results of this blitz verify the need to continue focused enforcement activity in the above-noted areas now and in future.

[Read the full Report](#)

Court Bulletins

June 2015

- Ottawa Landscaping Company Fined \$100,000 in Death of Worker
- 407 East Constructor Fined \$50,000 After Equipment Contacts Overhead Power Line
- Company Fined \$70,000 After Worker Suffers Fracture
- Failure to Comply With Order to Pay Workers Draws \$30,000 in Fines
- Property Company Fined \$50,000 After Worker Suffers Injuries to Hands
- Company Fined \$80,000 After Worker Suffers Burns

May 2015

- Roofing Company Fined \$65,000 After Worker Injured In Fall
- ArcelorMittal Dofasco Inc. Fined Total of \$130,000 for Safety Violations
- Schaus Land and Cattle Co. Limited Fined \$90,000 After Worker Dies in Fall
- Power Utility in Sarnia-Lambton Fined \$120,000 in Electrocution Death of Worker
- Cambridge Towel Company Fined \$50,000 After Worker Injured
- Company and Employers Fined After Kingston Fire That Endangered Workers, Injured Crane Operator
- Toronto Builder, Masonry Company Both Fined in Death of Worker
- Supermarket Convicted In Forklift Death
- Drewlo Construction Ltd. Fined \$60,000 In Injury to Worker
- GRC Contracting/1381694 Ontario Inc. Fined \$90,000 In Death of Worker
- Employer, Crane Company Found Guilty in Fire That Endangered Crane Operator