

Health & Safety At Work TODAY

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Occupational Health and Safety in Ontario: 2014-15 Annual Report



The Ministry of Labour has released an [annual report](#) on the state of workplace health and safety in Ontario. The *Occupational Health and Safety in Ontario: 2014-15 Annual Report* includes accomplishments of the occupational health and safety system over the past fiscal year, such as initiatives and legislative changes, and provides a preview of what’s ahead.

“I hope that this annual report uncovers opportunities to promote a culture of occupational health and safety in workplaces and communities right across Ontario,” said Chief Prevention Officer George Gritziotis.

In 2014-2015, several new initiatives and legislative changes were introduced to improve occupational health and safety in the province, including:

- the launch of the Working at Heights Training requirements to reduce fatalities associated with falls from heights
- the completion of the Mining Health, Safety and Prevention Review and early implementation of the recommendations
- expanding the Occupational Health and Safety Act to include certain unpaid students, learners and trainees

- 33,541 training sessions delivered by health and safety associations to workers, employers and supervisors across Ontario
- 70,604 field visits conducted by Ministry of Labour inspectors, including inspection blitzes targeting hazards in the construction, health care, mining and industrial sectors

These activities, along with others highlighted throughout the report, demonstrate how the ministry is working with its partners to improve occupational health and safety in Ontario. They also describe an ongoing transformation to a more integrated, efficient and transparent occupational health and safety system.

The ministry has also presented performance data and results to measure its progress in achieving the goals of the province's integrated strategy to prevent injuries and illness, and improve the delivery of workplace health and safety initiatives.

"It's imperative that we continually challenge ourselves to find innovative ways to prevent workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities," Gritziotis said. "Together, we can make great strides towards the goal of healthy and safe Ontario workplaces."

[Read the report online.](#)

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Noise Regulation to Apply to All Ontario Workplaces



Ontario has extended noise protection requirements to all workplaces in the province under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The new regulation comes into force July 1, 2016.

Noise is a serious occupational health hazard. Worker exposure to noise from machinery, processes and other sources that is not properly controlled or eliminated may cause permanent hearing loss. Over the last five years, the average annual costs for noise-induced hearing loss (NIHL) claims for all sectors in Ontario exceeded \$50 million a year, according to Workplace Safety and Insurance Board statistics.

This regulation will help protect the health of Ontario's workers from NIHL, a leading cause of occupational disease for Ontario workers. The regulation prescribes an eight-hour time-weighted exposure limit of 85 dBA. It also sets out new general requirements regarding the selection, care and use of hearing protection devices.

The regulation will extend noise protection requirements currently set out in the Industrial Establishments, Oil and Gas – Offshore and Mines and Mining Plants Regulations to all other workplaces, including construction projects, health care facilities, schools, fire services, police services, amusement parks and farming operations.

Learn more about the [regulation](#).

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Improving Construction Safety in Ontario

Ontario is improving safety for construction workers by amending three regulations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. The amendments are consistent with the changes outlined in a proposal posted during a 60-day public consultation in late 2014. Some of the amendments act on recommendations put forward by the construction industry's advisory committee, the Provincial Labour-Management Health and Safety Committee.

Key amendments include those to the:

- **Construction Projects Regulation (O. Reg. 213/91)**
 - added new requirements for the safe operation of rotary foundation drill rigs, including

new drill rig operator training requirements

- enhanced and clarified provisions relating to exposure to carbon monoxide, and other fumes and gases, released from internal combustion engines
- strengthened fall protection measures
- added the requirement for a Notice of Project form to be filed with the ministry prior to starting construction of an ice road for vehicles, machinery or equipment, over frozen water, slush or wetlands
- corrected errors, omissions and inconsistencies; updated outdated references, and clarified certain requirements
- **Control of Exposure to Biological or Chemical Agents Regulation (Regulation 833)**
 - extended the application of the regulation (e.g., occupational exposure limits) to construction projects; and
 - enabled the future use of ‘codes of practice’ approved by the Minister of Labour
- **Confined Spaces Regulation (O. Reg. 632/05)**
 - consequential amendments were made under this regulation to ensure consistency with changes to Regulation 833

For more information on the amendments and the coming-into-force dates of the provisions, please visit the Government of Ontario’s [e-Laws website](#) or the [Regulatory Registry](#).

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Strengthening Health and Safety Protections for Miners

The ministry recently consulted on various proposed amendments to Regulation 854 (Mines and Mining Plants) under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. If approved, the proposed amendments would strengthen and improve requirements for worker health and safety by:

- introducing new requirements for mines and mining plants to conduct risk assessments and have formal traffic management programs
- strengthening existing requirements for water management and ground control
- updating training requirements for surface diamond drill operations to reflect changes to the modular training program made by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities
- amending miscellaneous requirements to update terminology and certain industry standards and/or clarify certain requirements

In addition, the proposal, if approved, would make corrections to and incorporate explicit references to appropriate workplace parties in the offences listed under Schedule 68 of Regulation 950 under the Provincial Offences Act.

The consultation period ran from November 25, 2015, to January 15, 2016. The proposed amendments were developed in consultation with the Mining Legislative Review Committee, which was established to provide advice to the Minister of Labour on health and safety issues in the mining sector. The amendments would implement key recommendations from the [Mining, Health, Safety and Prevention Review’s final report](#). They would also address recommendations made in recent Coroner’s Jury inquests into fatalities in the mining sector.

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Deadline for Student “It’s Your Job” Contest Approaching

The Ministry of Labour’s “It’s Your Job” video contest for Ontario’s secondary school students is well underway to



help raise awareness of workplace health and safety. Just a reminder that the deadline for entries is March 11, 2016.

With this year's optional theme being "Speak Up! Speak Out!" students can create a video showcasing:

- advice on how to ask employers and co-workers questions about workplace safety without fear or embarrassment
- a message to employers on how to make it more comfortable for youth to ask them questions about workplace safety, **OR**
- any other health and safety messages students wish to convey.

The first-place winner will receive the top prize of \$2,000. The second place winner will receive \$1,500, and the third-place winner will get \$1,000, with the prize money being contributed equally by the ministry and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board. A corresponding cash prize will be presented to their respective schools. And not only will the top video move on to the national contest, where it will compete with winners from other Canadian provinces and territories for additional cash prizes, it will be viewed and voted on by Canadians during Fan Favourite voting.

This year, the national first-place winner will also receive a trip to Ottawa to attend the North American Occupational Safety and Health Week launch ceremony, where his or her video will be featured.

Visit the [student video contest page](#) and [watch last year's winning videos](#).

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Ontario Passes Legislation for Injured Workers, Broader Public Sector and Firefighters

Ontario has passed legislation that amends three separate acts affecting workers – helping to further ensure the rights of employees across the province are protected.

The Employment and Labour Statute Law Amendment Act, 2015, will amend the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, the Fire Prevention and Protection Act and the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act to:

- Allow Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) survivor benefits to be calculated based on the average earnings, at the time of diagnosis, of the deceased worker's occupation rather than the current legislated minimum, which will potentially increase the amount of support survivors receive
- Prohibit employers from trying to prevent workers reporting workplace injury or illness to the WSIB by making it an offence to do so
- Increase maximum corporate penalties from \$100,000 to \$500,000 for conviction of an offence under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, such as knowingly providing a false or misleading statement to the Board or willfully failing to inform the Board of a material change in circumstance in connection with an obligation of the employer under the act within 10 days of the change.
- Require the WSIB Board of Directors to appoint a Fair Practices Commissioner to act as an ombudsman for injured workers, employers and WSIB service providers
- Help reduce the potential for disruption and delay for workers in the broader public sector when there are changes to bargaining units following certain events such as amalgamations or restructurings
- Provide more dispute resolution tools for the professional fire services sector by allowing labour relations disputes to be heard by the Ontario Labour Relations Board as opposed to the Ontario Courts

These improvements for injured workers are in addition to [legislation](#) that will restore indexed benefits to all partially disabled workers in Ontario.

Learn More

- [Review the Workplace Safety & Insurance Act, 1997](#)
- [Read the Public Sector Labour Relations Transition Act, 1997](#)
- [Learn more about the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997](#)

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Blitz Results



Struck By Hazards

Workers are at risk when working near construction traffic. One of the biggest dangers is of a worker being struck, which could lead to serious injuries or death.

In May and June 2015, Ministry of Labour inspectors conducted a blitz at construction sites across Ontario. The inspectors focused on the hazards of working around vehicles and large pieces of mobile equipment.

They conducted 1,494 field visits to 1,313 workplaces, and issued 3,056 orders under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), including 261 stop-work orders. Some of the workplaces were visited more than once.

Of the orders:

- 79 per cent (2,403 orders) were issued under the [Regulations for Construction Projects](#)
- 20 per cent (622 orders) were issued under the OHSA
- 1 per cent (31 orders) were issued under other regulatory requirements

The three most frequently issued orders under Construction Regulations involved a failure of employers to:

- ensure workers were protected from falls
- ensure workers used personal protective equipment when required
- provide traffic control and planning, and organize vehicle and equipment operation at the construction project

Read the full [blitz report](#)



New and Young Workers

New and young workers in Ontario are three times more likely to be injured during their first month on the job than at any other time.

From May 1 to August 31, 2015, Ministry of Labour inspectors conducted a health and safety enforcement blitz in the industrial sector focusing on young workers aged 14 to 24, and new workers who were on the job for less than six months or assigned to a new job. Some of the sectors they visited included retail, restaurants, tourism and hospitality, wholesalers, and wood and metal fabrication.

During the blitz, ministry inspectors conducted 3,396 visits to 2,704 workplaces and issued 11,470 orders under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations. This included 209 stop-work orders. Some of the workplaces were visited several times. An average of 3.38 orders were issued per workplace visit.

Three frequently issued OHSA orders involved employers' failure to:

- post a copy of the OHSA in the workplace [OHSA S. 25(2)(i) – 709 orders or 6.2 per cent]
- maintain equipment in good condition [OHSA S. 25(1)(b) – 626 orders or 5.5 per cent]
- take reasonable precautions to protect workers' health and safety [OHSA S. 25(2)(h) – 507 orders or 4.4 per cent]

The blitz results indicate new and young workers continue to be exposed to many of the same hazards in

workplaces across all sectors, regardless of the size of the workplace or nature of business. Workplace parties should continue to work together to identify and control hazards involving new and young workers.

The ministry will continue to target new worker safety during routine workplace inspections of Ontario's industrial workplaces. Inspectors will continue to check that new and young workers:

- are informed, instructed and supervised, as required
- are working in accordance with the OHSA requirements
- meet minimum age requirements, as required, under the Industrial Regulations

Read the [full report](#) for more information, including other top violations that were found in specific sectors.



Traffic Control Measures in Mines

Haulage trucks, loaders and excavators are a common sight in mines across Ontario. Workers who work in mines can be at risk of serious injury from hazards involving motor vehicles and mobile equipment. Between 2000 and 2014, 12 workers died in Ontario mines as a result of incidents involving such objects.

Last summer in an inspection blitz, the Ministry of Labour targeted traffic control hazards in underground and surface mines that could result in workers being injured

or killed.

During the blitz, inspectors conducted 99 visits to 85 mining workplaces. Inspectors issued 274 orders under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations, including 21 stop-work orders.

They checked that employers were complying with the OHSA and its regulations. This included checking that mines had good traffic control procedures in place to protect workers (Section 106 of Regulation 854). Traffic control measures are used when the vehicle or equipment operator's visibility is limited, because these situations can put pedestrians or workers on foot who are near the vehicle at risk of injury.

The results confirm the ministry's need to continue focused enforcement on mobile equipment traffic control hazards in underground and surface mines. This includes the need for mining inspectors to focus on requirements for vehicle maintenance and use (Section 105 of Regulation 854) during future inspections, including ensuring:

- pre-operational vehicle checks have been done
- electrical work is being done in accordance with good electrical practices (Reg. 854, Section 155)
- machine guarding requirements are being complied with (Reg. 854, Section 185)
- conveyor guarding requirements are being complied with (Reg. 854, Section 196).

Read the [full report](#).

Trenching Hazards

Workers can be seriously injured from hazards involving the construction of trenches, which are excavations that are deeper than they are wide. Generally, a trench is excavated to install or repair underground utilities such as sewers, electricity, watermains, natural gas and telecommunications lines, and to construct foundations for buildings or other structures.

Trenches can be dangerous due to their depth and relatively narrow opening that can limit escape in an emergency. Workers can also be at risk due to widely varying soil types, unstable ground conditions and high water content.

In July and August 2015, the Ministry of Labour conducted a safety blitz focusing on hazards involving trench construction. Ministry inspectors conducted 994 field visits to 862 workplaces and issued 1,683 orders under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and [Regulations for Construction Projects](#). This included 151 stop-work orders. Some of the workplaces were visited more than once.

Construction inspectors checked for safety issues involving:

- excavation and trenching support systems
- identification, location and marking of utilities before work is undertaken
- measures taken to prevent falls by workers, and
- trench work notification to the Ministry of Labour

Of the orders issued, four frequently issued trench-related orders under the Regulations for Construction Projects involved a failure of employers to ensure:

- trenches that were four feet or deeper had proper support systems to prevent the walls from collapsing onto workers [Section 234(1)]
- material, excavated soil and equipment were kept a safe distance from the upper edge of the trench's wall to prevent the material from falling onto workers and to maintain the wall's stability [Section 233]
- workers were wearing personal protective headwear to protect workers in the trench from falling debris [Section 22], and
- adequate written procedures exist for emergencies and are posted in a conspicuous place at the construction project [Section 17]

Inspectors continue to encourage all workplace parties – workers, supervisors, employers and constructors – to work together to keep the workplace safe, to ensure compliance with health and safety laws, and to identify and control hazards involving the excavation of trenches.

Read the [full report](#).

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February 29 is International RSI Awareness Day



Did you know repetitive strain injuries (RSIs), also known as musculoskeletal disorders (MSD), are among the most common types of worker injuries? RSIs may not be life-threatening, but they can be life-changing. The impact of these injuries can also be debilitating; some may have trouble even getting out of bed in the mornings.

Each year on the last day of February, workplaces mark RSI Awareness Day to promote avoidance of these injuries to improve the well-being of workers across the province.

The goal of the day – now in its 17th year – is to raise awareness of the debilitating nature of repetitive strain injuries to tendons, muscles, nerves and joints in the neck, back, chest, shoulders, arms and hands – and how to prevent them. Work shouldn't hurt!

Look for tools and resources on our [Musculoskeletal Disorders / Ergonomics webpage](#).

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Building and Working Safely on Ice Covers in Ontario

Working, travelling and parking on frozen surfaces of ponds, lakes and rivers can be hazardous if the ice cover cannot safely support the load. Learn best practices for the construction of roadways and working platforms that rely on floating ice for structural integrity in an [Infrastructure Health & Safety Association guideline](#).

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New Resources

- Alert: [Temporary Aluminum Guard Rail Post Assembly](#)

- Alert: [Unguarded Rotating Trolley Track Hoist Drums](#)
- [Golf Ball Retrieval: Diving Regulation Requirements](#)

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Court Bulletins

[Court Bulletins](#) are announcements about convictions for violations of Ministry of Labour legislation.

- Tree Removal Service Fined \$50,000 After Worker Struck by Tree Limb
- City of Welland Fined \$150,000 After City Worker Dies from Infection Following Injuries
- Ingredion Canada Inc. Fined \$150,000 in Death of Worker in Port Colborne
- Dare Foods Limited Fined \$60,000 After Worker Injured By Conveyor
- Company Fined \$60,000 After Worker Injured By Conveyor
- RJM Farms Inc. Fined \$82,500 in Death of Worker
- Kenzington Burger Bar Fined \$50,000 After Worker Suffers Kitchen Burns

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