



Health & Safety At Work TODAY

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Note from the Editor

In April 2009, the Ministry of Labour unveiled the first issue of *Safe At Work Ontario TODAY*, the ministry's health and safety publication and the precursor to this newsletter. In that inaugural issue, we had highlighted our new health and safety compliance strategy, *Safe At Work Ontario*. That strategy remains the cornerstone of our enforcement efforts to this day.

The quarterly newsletter underwent a rebrand in 2012 and became *Health and Safety at Work TODAY*, to reflect not only the ministry's compliance efforts, but its new prevention mandate.

Four years – and 15 issues – later, *Health and Safety at Work TODAY* has attracted tens of thousands of subscribers across Ontario interested in the latest news about workplace blitzes, regulations, resources, and prevention programs and products. And we thank our readers for their continued loyalty.

After a careful review, we have decided that this will be the last issue. We found that an overwhelming 95 per cent of the newsletter's subscribers also sign up to our monthly newsletter, *What's New*. Coupled with the fact that the same information is found in both newsletters, not to mention information comes out much faster in a monthly, it made sense to remove that duplication.

But not to worry – all of the content that you have grown accustomed to in this newsletter can still be found in *What's New*. To ensure you remain up-to-date on the ministry's latest news and resources, please [subscribe](#) to *What's New*.

If there is anyone you think would benefit by being a subscriber, please share the link with them. Also, you can always get up-to-the-minute information by following us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

We thank you for subscribing to *Health and Safety at Work TODAY*, and appreciate your continued interest in safe and healthy workplaces for Ontarians. We look forward to continuing to inform you of *What's New* every month so that all workers are able to go home safe and sound at the end of the day.

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Legislation Aimed at Stopping Sexual Violence and Harassment in Effect Sept. 8, 2016



Bill 132, the Sexual Violence and Harassment Action Plan Act (Supporting Survivors and Challenging Sexual Violence and Harassment), will come into effect on September 8, 2016. The act aims to make workplaces, campuses and communities safer and more responsive to the needs of survivors and to complaints about sexual violence and harassment.

The legislation includes several amendments to the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA). These amendments will enhance employer responsibilities with respect to workplace harassment that occurs in the workplace, including sexual harassment, by:

- providing a new workplace sexual harassment definition;
- requiring new elements that will need to be included in workplace harassment programs;
- adding new employer duties that will help to protect workers from workplace harassment.

To support compliance with the new requirements, the Ministry of Labour has created a [Code of Practice](#). The Ministry is also developing fact sheets and updating its guidance material to help workplaces comply. A dedicated enforcement team has also been established to respond to complaints and enforce the Occupational Health and Safety Act requirements.

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Ontario Funds Innovative Projects to Improve Occupational Health and Safety

Pesticide safety training for agricultural workers. Delivering resources to nail salon workers. Promoting workplace wellness in retirement homes by providing training modules on mental health and injury prevention.

Ontario is providing \$4.38 million to support projects such as these that will improve occupational health and safety for workers across the province. Investing in innovative approaches to health and safety will ensure that the realities of today's changing workforce are addressed and focus resources where they are truly necessary to save lives and prevent injury.

These projects will be funded through two Ministry of Labour initiatives:

- The Occupational Health and Safety Prevention and Innovation Program (OHSPiP), which supports workplace-focused innovation projects and collaborative partnerships that lead to improvements in occupational health and safety in Ontario.
- The Research Opportunities Program (ROP), which invests in research and educational projects that focus on occupational health and safety system priorities.

The funding will support initiatives that aim to improve safety for workers engaged in high hazard activities, protect vulnerable workers, help small businesses advance their health and safety practices, protect young workers, understand and support workplace mental health, and put occupational health and safety research into practice.

The successful projects strongly align with the province's ongoing prevention priorities and build on work being completed through the Construction Health and Safety Action Plan and Ontario's [Integrated Occupational Health and Safety Strategy](#).

Learn more about the [individual projects](#).

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Ontario Targets Fall Hazards at Workplaces



Falls are a leading cause of worker injuries and deaths in Ontario. In 2015, 10 workers died at construction projects from falls, while there were eight work-related deaths from falls at industrial workplaces. And between 1991 and 2015, 10 workers died in Ontario mines as a result of incidents involving falls.

The Ministry of Labour recently completed an inspection blitz targeting fall hazards. From May 16 to July 15, inspectors visited workplaces in the construction, industrial



and mining sectors. They went to low-rise and high-rise projects; retail, restaurants and other industrial workplaces; and mines and mining plants.

Inspectors checked that employers were properly assessing and addressing hazards that could cause workers to fall, such as inadequate training and safety measures.

The final blitz report will be released on the ministry's website.

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Other Summer Inspection Blitzes



Workplace injuries and fatalities can usually be traced to a few root causes that can vary by sector. The Ministry of Labour's health and safety inspectors conduct proactive blitzes and initiatives on sector-specific hazards – such as falls – across the province throughout the year.

These blitzes are designed to raise awareness of hazards, and workplace rights and responsibilities, while increasing compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations.



New and young workers inspection blitz

Young workers in Ontario continue to be injured. Ontario has launched a [seven-week blitz](#) to ensure the safety of young people while working at their summer jobs. From July 18 to Sept. 2, an enforcement blitz is targeting industrial workplaces where new and young workers are employed. Inspectors are checking that employers comply with the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Mobile crane and material hoisting blitz

Hazards involving mobile cranes can lead to severe injuries and fatalities of workers or members of the public. In August and September, the ministry is focusing on hazards involving mobile cranes – including those related to material hoisting – at construction sites in a [province-wide blitz](#). Inspectors are checking that employers are taking appropriate action to assess and address these hazards, and to protect workers.

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Protecting Outdoor Workers



Summer's here, and many Ontarians are welcoming the warmer days.

But working outdoors can present many hazards such as heat stress, Lyme disease, West Nile virus and common hazardous plants in Ontario.

Heat stress

Working where it is hot puts stress on your body's cooling system. Heat, especially when combined with other stresses such as hard physical work, fluid loss, fatigue or some medical conditions, could lead to serious consequences for workers.

Employers must take steps to protect their employees from the effects of this hazard. There are many things employers can do to protect workers from heat stress, including:

- reducing the temperature and humidity through air cooling
- providing air-conditioned rest areas
- increasing the frequency and length of rest breaks
- scheduling strenuous jobs for cooler times of the day
- providing cool drinking water near workers

Learn more about how to protect workers from [heat stress](#).

Tick bites and Lyme disease

Blacklegged ticks that can transmit Lyme disease are in Ontario. Workers who work in certain outdoor areas are at risk for tick bites and developing Lyme disease, and should protect themselves.

Those at risk include outdoor workers, especially those in southern Ontario who may work in wooded, bushy areas or in tall grasses.

So what must employers do to protect workers?

<https://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/hsawtoday/issue15.php>

- Determine if workers may be at risk of getting tick bites and developing Lyme disease.
- Take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of workers from Lyme disease as required.
- Provide workers with information, instruction and supervision to protect the health or safety of the worker as required. Ensure workers are aware of the risk and know how to identify the presence of ticks, how to prevent or minimize exposure, and how to treat a tick bite that has occurred.
- Make sure supervisors know what is required to protect workers from Lyme disease as required.
- Ensure that appropriate personal protective clothing as required is provided.
- When made aware that a worker has developed Lyme disease from exposure at work, report to the Ministry of Labour as an occupational illness as required.

Learn more about how to protect your workers from [Lyme disease](#).

Mosquitoes and West Nile Virus

The warmer temperatures also bring out the mosquitoes. The chance of being bitten by a mosquito infected with West Nile virus is very small. Person-to-person contact does not spread the virus. It cannot be spread directly from a bird to a human.

However, as a safety precaution, it is still important to minimize exposure to mosquitoes in areas where West Nile virus has been documented.

Some of the precautions that workers can consider for the protection are:

- Wear protective clothing. Mosquitoes are attracted to darker, more intense colours. Subject to other safety requirements, select light-coloured clothing, including long-sleeved shirts or jackets, and long pants. Tuck pants into socks for extra protection.
- Reduce your exposure by eliminating likely breeding sites at your workplace. Where possible, eliminate standing water in yards, grounds, parking lots, ditches and flat roofs on a regular basis (or at least once a week). For example, clean up and empty any local containers of standing water such as old tires, barrels, cans or any items of any kind that could hold standing water for any period of time outdoors.
- Take particular care at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Apply a mosquito repellent containing DEET or another federally approved personal insect repellent according to the directions on the label, before outdoor activities. The amount of DEET in the insect repellent should be no greater than 30 per cent for adults.
- If you are unable to use DEET products, you may wish to use one of the other federally approved insect repellents.

Learn more about how you can protect your workers from the [West Nile Virus](#).

Hazardous plants

Hazardous plants that can cause painful skin reactions from inadvertent exposure by skin contact can be found throughout Ontario.

Many people are familiar with poison ivy, but may not be aware of some of the more toxic plants, including giant hogweed and wild parsnip. These particular plants can cause serious skin reactions and result in long-lasting scars. Other hazardous plants include poison sumac and stinging nettle.

Those who work in certain outdoor areas where these hazardous plants are grown are at risk of exposure, and should become familiar with these plants to protect themselves. Workers who may be exposed include construction workers, road crews, emergency response workers, forestry workers, loggers, farmers, camp counsellors, among others.

Other hazardous plants include poison ivy, poison sumac and stinging nettle.

Some tips to protect yourself from such plants include:

- Become familiar with the above hazardous plants in order to identify them by sight.
- Never touch or brush up against any of these plants with bare skin.
- If you must work near the plant, cover your body using impermeable coveralls and boots, rubber gloves, and use a face shield to protect your eyes and face from contact with the plant. Use of impermeable protective clothing increases the risk of heat stress so appropriate precautions should be taken to prevent heat stress.
- Thoroughly wash your boots and rubber gloves first with soap, water and a scrub brush before taking off your protective clothing.
- Remove clothing carefully to avoid contact with sap that may be on your clothing.

- Wash rubber gloves again before removing them.
- Lastly remove protective eyewear if wearing them.
- Put non-disposable clothing in the laundry and wash yourself with soap and water.
- Wash all equipment that has touched the plant, sap or oil.

To learn more about how to protect workers from such hazards, how to identify these plants, and what to do if you are exposed to them, read the ministry's "[Protecting Workers from Hazardous Plants](#)" information sheet.

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Ministry of Labour Reaches Out to Small Businesses



The Ministry of Labour is working with small businesses across Ontario to increase awareness of workplace rights and responsibilities and to improve the resources to help them comply with the law.

In June, more than two dozen summer students from the ministry began visiting 5,000 small businesses across the province to boost awareness of the Employment Standards Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act. They also distributed a resource kit – that includes information sheets, posters, handouts and other resources – to provide businesses with more information to help them comply with

legislation.

The businesses were also asked if they want to complete a survey on their familiarity with health and safety awareness training, workplace harassment legislation, ergonomics and where small businesses can go for advice. The information will then be used by the ministry to improve its resources for small businesses and how to best reach them.

For current resources, please visit the ministry's webpage for [small businesses](#).

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New Ministry Video Focuses on Veterinary Clinics



The Ministry of Labour has released a new video focusing on what inspectors look for during inspections at veterinary clinics and animal hospitals. The video highlights some of the health and safety hazards at these workplaces, appropriate controls, rights and responsibilities, and what to expect when a ministry inspector visits the workplace.

The video also covers:

- care and use of personal protective equipment
- hazards such as ergonomics-related strains and injuries
- chemical and biological hazards
- radiation safety

[Watch the video.](#)

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Ontario Changes Legislation to Improve Mine Safety



Ontario has amended Regulation 854 (Mines and Mining Plants) under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

The amendments include:

- new requirements for mines and mining plants to conduct risk assessments and have formal traffic management programs
- strengthening existing requirements on water management, including requiring underground mines to have a water management program, and ground control
- enhancing and clarifying requirements on conveyors, specifically requirements for guarding and emergency stopping devices/pull cords
- updating training requirements for surface diamond drill operations to reflect changes to the modular training program
- amendments to several miscellaneous provisions to update terminology and certain industry standards, clarify certain requirements and revoke sections that are no longer necessary

Most of the amendments will come into force July 1, 2016. New requirements relating to risk assessments, ground control, water management and traffic management will come into force on Jan. 1, 2017, to provide stakeholders with time to comply.

Also, Schedule 68 of Regulation 950 under the Provincial Offences Act has also been amended. This is the schedule of offences for Regulation 854 (Mines and Mining Plants) and allows a Ministry of Labour inspector to issue a ticket to a specific workplace party where they observe a contravention in a workplace. Learn more about those [amendments](#), which come into effect on October 1, 2016.

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Noise Protection Requirements Extended to All Workplaces



The Ministry of Labour has extended noise protection requirements to all Ontario workplaces under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. Worker exposure to noise from machinery and other sources that is not properly controlled or eliminated may cause permanent hearing loss.

Examples of workplaces covered by this regulation (Ontario Regulation 381/15) include:

- construction projects
- health care facilities
- schools
- farming operations
- fire services
- police services
- amusement parks

The noise regulation took effect on July 1, 2016. The regulation aims to protect Ontario's workers from noise-induced hearing loss, a leading cause of occupational disease for workers.

Key changes include:

- prescribing, for workers exposed to noise, a maximum time-weighted exposure limit of 85 decibels over an eight-hour work shift
- requiring employers to put in place measures to reduce workers' exposure based on a "hierarchy of controls," which could include engineering controls, work practices, and the use of personal protective equipment in the form of hearing protection devices
- requiring employers who provide a worker with a hearing protection device to provide adequate training and instruction on that device.

For more information, see [O.Reg 381/15](#).

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New Requirements for Drill Rig Operation



New requirements relating to the safe operation of rotary foundation drill rigs on construction projects came into effect on July 1, 2016.

Rotary foundation drill rigs are used for boring holes in soil for the placement of foundations or earth retention structures. The requirements relate to new technical and operational requirements to ensure the safe operation of drill rigs on construction projects, as well as new drill rig operator training and prerequisite qualification requirements.

With the new requirements, Ontario is now a Canadian leader on drill rig operator training. No other jurisdiction in Canada has explicit training requirements for drill rig operators in their health and safety legislation.

These changes will build on actions that the province is already taking to improve safety for construction workers including the [Working at Heights Training](#) requirements and the development of Ontario's [Construction Health and Safety Action Plan](#).

Learn more about the [new requirements](#).

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Suspended Access Equipment



<https://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/hsawtoday/issue15.php>



Ontario has made amendments to strengthen and clarify existing requirements relating to the use of suspended access equipment. The amendments were made to the Construction Projects Regulation under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Key amendments include:

- introducing a requirement for notifying the Ministry of Labour before putting suspended access equipment into service for the first time at a project
- introducing requirements for roof plans and site-specific work plans
- introducing training requirements for workers who may use or inspect suspended access equipment
- enhancing existing design, operational, technical and engineering requirements
- strengthening and enhancing existing inspection, testing and maintenance requirements
- miscellaneous amendments to clarify certain requirements

The amendments will come into force on January 1, 2017. For more information on the amendments, please see [Ontario Regulation 213/91](#).

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Ontario Changes WHMIS Requirements



Ontario has amended its WHMIS requirements to adopt new global standards for classifying hazardous workplace chemicals, and providing information on labels and safety data sheets.

The new international standards are part of the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals.

The amendments affect various requirements governing labels and safety data sheets for hazardous workplace chemicals. Also affected are definitions, terminology and provisions that protect confidential business information related to hazardous workplace chemicals. The changes reflect amendments to the federal Hazardous Products Act and new Hazardous Products Regulations, which came into force February 11, 2015.

The new requirements in Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act and WHMIS Regulation came into effect July 1, 2016. To give workplace parties time to adjust to the new requirements, there will be a transition period to gradually phase out the old requirements.

- Employers have until May 31, 2018, to continue to receive and use hazardous products with either the old WHMIS labels and safety data sheets or the new ones.
- Employers have from June 1, 2018, to November 30, 2018, to bring any hazardous products still in the workplace with the old WHMIS labels and safety data sheets into compliance with the new requirements.
- By December 1, 2018, the transition to the new WHMIS labels and safety data sheets must be complete.
- During the transition, employers must ensure workers are trained on both the old and new labels and safety data sheets for as long as both are present in the workplace.

More Information

- [WHMIS FAQs](#)
- [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#), including WHMIS amendment
- [WHMIS Regulation 860](#), including amendment
- [WHMIS Regulation 860](#), prior to amendment
- [WHMIS.org](#)

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Regulation 833 Extended to Construction Projects



As of July 1, 2016, Regulation 833 (Control of Exposure to Biological or Chemical Agents) applies to construction employers and their workers. Under Regulation 833, employers are required to limit the exposure of workers to certain hazardous biological or chemical agents.

For more information, please see the table outlining the [Occupational Exposure Limits](#) for Ontario Workplaces.

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Ontario Students Win National Prize for Video Focusing on Mental Health



A group of Markham students has placed second in the national “It’s Your Job” video contest for its clip on workplace mental health. The contest asks secondary school students to develop an original video that can be used in social media to illustrate the importance of working safely. Students from Markville Secondary School won first place in the Ontario portion of the contest, beating more than 70 other entries with their video focusing on the effects that accumulated stress can have on one’s mental health.

The team and their school both received \$2,000 in prize money for the provincial win from the Ontario Ministry of Labour and the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board. The students’ video, “[Breakdown](#),” then went on to compete against winners from the other provinces and territories. A team from Winnipeg won first place for its video “[Safe Work 2016](#).”

Visit the [national video contest page](#) to view the winning videos.

View the winning videos of the [Ontario contest](#), held by the Ontario Ministry of Labour.

Congratulations to all the winners!

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October is Global Ergonomics Month



Have you experienced work-related pains or injuries affecting soft tissues, muscles, tendons, ligaments, joints, blood vessels or nerves?

Or do you know someone who has?

These injuries may be associated with Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) hazards in the workplace. MSDs are the number one type of workplace lost-time injuries in Ontario.

MSDs are injuries and disorders of the musculoskeletal system, including the muscles, tendons, nerves and spinal discs. They can develop as a result of ongoing exposure to repetitive work, and forceful exertions such as heavy lifting, pulling and pushing. They can also arise because of awkward postures that can affect the bones, joints, ligaments and other soft tissues.

The month of October has been designated as Global Ergonomics Month by the International Ergonomics Association to raise awareness of ergonomics and MSD hazards. The Ministry of Labour, along with its occupational health and safety system partners, will be engaging in various activities to raise awareness of MSDs in the workplace.

Employers and workers are encouraged to take part in the planned activities or to develop their own to raise awareness. For more information, visit the ministry’s [MSD web page](#).

Resources

The MSD Prevention Series provides information, approaches and tools for reducing the risk of MSDs in the workplace.

- [MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario, Part 1 \(PDF\)](#)
- [Resource Manual for the MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario, Part 2 \(PDF\)](#)
- MSD Prevention Toolbox, Part 3
 - [Part 3A: Getting Started \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Part 3B: Beyond Basics \(PDF\)](#)
 - [Part 3C: More on In-depth Risk Assessment Methods \(PDF\)](#)

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Blitz Results: Occupational Disease 2016



Workers may be at risk for occupational diseases due to physical, chemical or biological exposures in underground and surface mines. These hazards can result in workers experiencing serious injuries, long-term health effects, and even death. In fact, occupational disease is one of the biggest contributors to fatalities in mines.

Between 2005 and 2014, 184 workers died in Ontario’s mining sector as a result of occupational diseases.

When workers are exposed to such chemical, biological or physical hazards, it can result in:

- cancer and breathing problems from airborne dust particles, exhaust and other fumes caused by blasting, crushing, smelting, refining and other mining processes
- hearing loss from noise
- damage to a worker's hand and arm tissue caused by the use of vibrating tools and other equipment

In February and March 2016, the Ministry of Labour visited mines and mining plants across Ontario in an inspection blitz. Its inspectors conducted 59 visits to 39 workplaces, and issued a total of 149 orders – including nine stop-work orders – under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations.

Learn more about [what the inspectors found](#).

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Blitz Results: Safe Operation of Machinery



Workers can be exposed to hazards when machines are improperly guarded or locked out during maintenance, repair and other activities. These hazards can result in serious injuries such as the amputation of limbs or death.

In 2013, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board received a number of claims from workers who missed time at work due to injuries. These included:

- 1,641 workers who were caught in or compressed by equipment
- 246 workers who were rubbed or scraped by friction or pressure, or jarred by vibration

Also, that same year, 15.5 per cent of orders issued to employers for violations of the Regulation for Industrial Establishments involved machine guarding.

Earlier this year, the ministry conducted an enforcement blitz on the operation of machinery at industrial workplaces. They visited workplaces in sectors like wood and metal fabrication; manufacturing, chemical and plastics; automotive and sawmills. They focused on workplaces known to have machinery and hazardous processes and equipment, and where complaints have been received and where there is poor compliance history.

They made 1,315 visits to 1,023 workplaces, issuing a total of 4,853 orders under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations.

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

- equipment, materials and protective devices provided by the employer were maintained in good condition
- a lifting device was examined by a competent person and safely operated within the load capacity
- an in-running nip hazard or any part of a machine, device or thing that could endanger the safety of any worker was equipped with, and guarded by, a guard or other device that prevents access to the pinch point

Learn more about [what the inspectors found](#).

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New Diving Page



Injuries sustained by commercial divers are usually fatal. A lack of operation and contingency planning is often the root cause of diving incidents. Divers are at risk if hazards are not identified and adequately handled, and if emergency management measures and procedures are not in place. Learn how to protect commercial divers via the ministry's [new diving page](#).

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Hazard Alert: Collapsible Bins



Open-top, collapsible plastic bulk containers offer a convenient way to store and transport a wide range of items. These types of collapsible plastic bulk containers can suddenly collapse inward, potentially injuring workers. One worker in Ontario sustained serious neck injuries after falling head-first into a bin. Learn how to [protect workers](#) from this hazard.

