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# Occupational health and safety in Ontario (April 2022 – March 2023)

An annual report on Ontario's health and safety system from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.

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## Summary of the report

- Introduction
- Measuring long-term outcomes
- The year (2022–2023) in numbers
- Objective 1: build and use the best evidence to target initiatives, measure performance and increase system oversight
- Objective 2: improve occupational health and safety (OHS) knowledge and practices
- Objective 3: support workplace parties to fulfill their OHS roles and responsibilities and achieve excellence
- Objective 4: make OHS easier for small businesses
- System focus: preventing occupational illnesses
- System focus: improving work-related mental health and preventing workplace violence and harassment
- Conclusion
- Appendices

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## A message from Ontario's occupational health and safety system leaders

This past year was an important one for the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development and our ongoing collaboration with Ontario's occupational health and safety (OHS) system partners (<https://www.ontario.ca/page/ontarios-occupational-health-and-safety-system>). We continued to make progress towards improving workplace health and safety. We leveraged new evidence to better inform our work. We aligned efforts and resources. We collaborated to achieve common goals. The initiatives and services we delivered reflect the unwavering dedication of each individual and organization within the OHS network.

The launch of the Prevention Works strategy (<https://www.ontario.ca/document/prevention-works>) in July 2021 marked a significant milestone in our journey. At its heart is a vision of **an Ontario where workplaces promote and practice health and safety in their everyday work and are free from occupational injuries, illnesses and fatalities**. Prevention Works enables us to continuously assess Ontario's workplace landscape. It also provides the evidence-informed tools we need to make changes that matter.

### Highlights in 2022–2023

- We enhanced the evidence base. We engaged with industry experts to understand the highest-risk hazards at the sector level, their root causes and control strategies.

- We improved OHS knowledge and practices in workplaces. Approved training providers delivered **Working at Heights** training to over **220,000 workers**. Approved training providers also delivered **Joint Health and Safety Committee** certification training to over **48,000 learners**.
- We supported compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. We conducted **7,593 field visits to 6,336 workplaces and issued 13,550 orders and requirements** during multiple outreach and enforcement initiatives in the construction, health care, industrial and mining sectors.
- We launched the **Workplace Naloxone Program**. This program provides free nasal naloxone kits to businesses and free staff training. From December 2022 to March 2023, **792 eligible workplaces** have benefited from the program. We've funded training for 632 learners on how to recognize and safely respond to a worker opioid overdose. We also funded the distribution of 666 kits.

As you will see throughout this report, the OHS system is becoming more data-driven and outcomes-focused. For example, this year we introduced a series of key performance indicators (KPIs). These KPIs measure OHS system performance over time. They also demonstrate the impact of the Prevention Works strategy. KPIs are specific to each goal of Prevention Works. Together they demonstrate how the system is working as a whole to make a difference.

Our long-term goal is to reduce workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities. We are committed to measuring and reporting on our progress toward this goal each year.

Looking ahead, we must remain vigilant, adaptable and collaborative as we pursue safer and healthier workplaces. Together, we can continue to make a positive impact on the well-being of workers across Ontario. Together, we can help ensure that our province remains one of the safest jurisdictions in which to work.

We want to acknowledge that the success of our OHS system is a shared accomplishment. Our thanks to each of our system partners and stakeholders for playing a crucial role in advancing health and safety in Ontario's workplaces.

#### **Dr. Joel Moody**

Chief Prevention Officer (CPO) / Assistant Deputy Minister, Prevention Division

#### **Sandra Lawson**

Assistant Deputy Minister, Fair, Safe and Healthy Workplaces Division

#### **David Beaulieu**

Assistant Deputy Minister, Strategic Policy Division

## **A message from Prevention Council**

The Prevention Council works towards improving health and safety across Ontario. We take pride in providing advice to the Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development and the Chief Prevention Officer on the prevention of workplace injuries and occupational diseases. Our approach is both preventative and proactive.

In 2022–2023, Council members shared their knowledge and experiences across the multiple sectors they serve. We were able to provide different perspectives and insights on areas where we could make long-lasting health and safety impacts.

The Council had the opportunity to collaborate with the ministry and discuss priorities for 2022–2023. We engaged with primary care physicians in occupational illness and issues that persist related to COVID-19. We explored lessons learned from COVID-19. We also provided recommendations on how to improve OHS in a post-COVID-19 world.

We would like to thank Erin Oliver and Patrick Bourgeois for the leadership, direction and support they provided while they served as Chair. We would also like to welcome our newly elected Chair, Stephen Chaplin. We look forward to working with him to protect and improve the health and safety of Ontario's workers.

#### **Prevention Council members 2022–2023\***

##### **Blair Allin**

National Health and Safety Representative, International Brotherhood of Boilermakers

##### **Brian Arnold**

Fire Chief, Cambridge Fire Department

**Patrick Bourgeois (Vice-Chair)**

Construction Manager, Peter Kiewit Sons ULC  
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**Stephen Chaplin (Chair, as of February 2023)**

Vice President of Health, Safety & Environment, EllisDon

**Rodney Cook**

Vice President Workplace Health and Safety Services, Workplace Safety and Insurance Board

**Cora DeMarco**

Manager, Technical Mining

**Colin de Raaf**

Director of Training, Christian Labour Association of Canada

**Daniel Fleming**

Manager, Training and Development GTA  
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**Dr. Isra Levy**

Vice President of Medical Affairs and Innovation, Canadian Blood Services

**Lee-Anne Lyon-Bartley**

Executive Vice President, Health, Safety, Environment and Quality, Dexterra Group

**Bill Mader**

Insulator, Local 95

**Erin Oliver (Chair)**

Vice President of Health, Safety and Sustainability, Modern Niagara Group Inc.  
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**Patricia Pereira Janicas**

Director, Health & Safety, Kenaidan Contracting Ltd

**Dustin Philp**

Plant Chairperson, Tormont-Concord Unifor Local 112

**Sandro Pinto**

Executive Director, Laborers’ International Union of North America (LiUNA) Local 183  
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**Peter Rowe**

Director, Chair of the Regulatory Committee, Ontario Petroleum Institute

**James St. John**

Business Manager/Financial Secretary, Central Ontario Building Trades

**Roger Tickner**

President, Tickner and Associates Inc.  
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Find the current membership of the Prevention Council (<https://www.pas.gov.on.ca/Home/Agency/360>) in the government's listings of agencies and public appointees.

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## Executive summary

This report reviews the state of workplace health and safety in Ontario. It also presents the many ways the ministry and its partners are working to improve it.

In 2021, when we launched our Prevention Works strategy, Ontario had the lowest rates of work time lost due to injury across Canada. But even one workplace injury or death is one too many. As a system, we are committed to continuous improvement and to providing ongoing support to workplaces to improve occupational health and safety.

We share our progress each year in this annual report. Here are just a few of the highlights from 2022–2023:

- Approved training providers delivered **Working at Heights** training to over **220,000 workers**, a 16% increase from 2021–22. Approved training providers also delivered **Joint Health and Safety Committee** certification training to over **48,000**

**learners**, a 26% increase from 2021–22. These numbers were above our targets for the year.

- We launched the **Workplace Naloxone Program**. This program provides free nasal spray naloxone kits and free staff training to eligible workplaces. From December 2022 to March 2023, **792 eligible workplaces** have benefited from the program. This includes 632 learners trained on how to recognize and safely respond to a worker opioid overdose and 666 naloxone kits distributed.
- Over **350,000** unique users accessed the ministry’s free health and safety awareness training e-learning modules for workers and supervisors.
- The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) enrolled **1,075** new businesses in the **Health and Safety Excellence program** between April 1, 2022 and March 31, 2023. Small businesses continue to be one of our focus areas.
- Ministry inspectors increased their proactive field activities in 2022-23 by **14% to a total of 41,088**. The total number of both proactive and reactive field activities was **77,404** at **35,407 workplaces**.
- We introduced key performance indicators specific to each **Prevention Works Objective to measure the impacts of the collective efforts** across the system to reduce injuries and fatalities.
- The WSIB saw approximately **\$700,000** in rebates associated with the WSIB’s Ontario Safe Employer Rebate Program. This is a 33% increase from last year.

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