

NETWORK

News

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Bill 160 Update from the MOL

On June 1, 2011, **Bill 160** received Royal Assent. The Bill amends both the Occupational Health and Safety Act and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act, 1997. It puts in place a legislative framework enabling the Ministry of Labour to implement many of the Expert Advisory Panel's recommendations.

Careful consideration has been given to when the various provisions come into force to ensure a smooth transition between the WSIB and the MOL. The amendments come into force at different times to allow for sufficient lead time for the ministry, employers, and other workplace parties, including agencies, to prepare for the changes.

In some instances, implementation of the Panel's recommendations also requires the development of new regulations and operational policies and procedures to support the legislative amendments. Changes will also require stakeholder consultation prior to implementing or proceeding with certain recommendations.

Provisions that came into force on June 1 include the appointment of the Prevention Council and the Chief Prevention Officer (CPO). There are also provisions that are in force now, but require further work and stakeholder engagement before being fully realized. These include:

- **Regulation defining "significant proposed changes"** – Bill 160 requires that when the Minister or CPO is considering any significant proposed changes to the funding and delivery of services for the prevention of workplace injuries and occupational diseases, the CPO must ask the Prevention Council whether the Council endorses the proposed change. The CPO must then advise the Minister of the Council's advice.



- **Training standards** – The CPO may establish training standards, approve providers and collect training information. Prior to implementing this provision, standards for both training programs and training providers would need to be established. Regulations for new training requirements would also need to be developed, e.g., for high hazard training.
- **Codes of practice** – To assist employer compliance with OHSA the Ministry would need to identify regulations and/or provisions of the Act for which a code of practice is to be established, and the Minister would need to approve the code.

There are provisions that require some lead time and will come into force on a date to be proclaimed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council in the future:

- **Health and safety representative training** – A regulation could be made to prescribe training requirements and provide any exemptions for training.
- **Changes to the reprisal provisions** – Work is underway to allow the Ontario Labour Relations Board (OLRB) to expedite proceedings, allow referrals by a health and safety inspector and allow functions to be prescribed for the Office of the Employer Adviser (OEA) and Office of the Worker Adviser (OWA). A regulation is needed to prescribe the functions of the OEA and OWA. The regulation could also prescribe the number of employees for which the OEA has such prescribed functions.

The following amendments come into force April 1, 2012, or sooner if proclaimed:

- WSIB’s prevention mandate transfers to the Ministry, including responsibility for oversight of the Health and Safety Associations (HSAs).
- Minister of Labour’s prevention responsibilities and powers.
- The power of either co-chair of the joint health and safety committee to make written recommendations to the employer.

In keeping with the Expert Panel’s recommendation #46, the Ministry of Labour and the IPC are focusing their efforts on the 11 priority recommendations. Work has begun on many of the recommendations. The full list of recommendations is available [here](#).

Chief Prevention Officer Announced

The Ministry of Labour has announced the appointment of **George Gritziotis** as Ontario’s new Chief Prevention Officer. The new CPO will oversee the development of an occupational health and safety strategy; coordinate and align the workplace health and safety system; and provide advice on prevention of workplace injuries and illness.



Interim Prevention Council (IPC)

The IPC has been established until the permanent Prevention Council is in place. The IPC’s attention has been focused on providing advice regarding Bill 160 and the recruitment of a CPO. More recently it has started to provide advice on the implementation of other priority recommendations. Information regarding the IPC members is available [here](#).

Health and Safety Review Project Secretariat

Four working groups with the support of the Secretariat have been established to address the priority recommendations of the **Dean Report**. Each working group has a designated lead with subject matter expertise. Working Group membership is representative of the system partner organizations. In addition to the four functioning working groups (communications, awareness training, reprisals, and data systems), research and background information gathering has begun on high-hazard training, organizational structure, and vulnerable workers/small business advisory committees.

Getting the Message Out

The Health and Safety Review Project Secretariat has been meeting with stakeholders and system partners to talk about the Expert Advisory Panel’s Report and activities related to the implementation of the Panel’s recommendations. In the first six months of 2011 the Secretariat made over 50 presentations to labour and employer organizations, industry associations and health and safety system partners. Fall 2011 promises to be just as busy with requests booked through to the end of November.

If your organization is interested in having a speaker from the Secretariat come out to talk about the Expert Panel Report and a look into the future of health and safety in the province of Ontario email us at healthandsafetyreview@ontario.ca.



Fall Safety Blitz Plans

As part of the Safe at Work Ontario compliance strategy, the Ministry of Labour (MOL) holds regular inspection blitzes targeting key hazards for enforcement and compliance.

These blitzes are announced in advance and the results are reported after they are completed. The ministry tracks each sector to determine if the blitzes result in a long-lasting increase in compliance and decrease in injuries.

PSHA regularly conducts webinars in partnership with the MOL to support blitz campaigns and our consultants are always available to help.

Mark Your Calendar! MOL Blitzes this Fall

Focus	Sector	Dates
Personal Protective Equipment	Industrial & Healthcare	October 1-31, 2011
Underground Mining (Ventilation Hazards)	Mining	October 1-31, 2011
Infection Control	Healthcare	November 1-30, 2011
Racking & Storage	Industrial, Construction, Mining & Healthcare	November 1-30, 2011

We're here to help

Contact your consultant to ensure your health & safety plan is up to date and complete. You can find all the information you need on our website including hazard information, upcoming blitz webinars and a full listing of our consultants.

www.pshsa.ca

Healthy Work Environments

Healthy work environments recognize that people are at the heart of any organization and give priority to the multiple aspects of the workplace that have an impact on the mental and physical wellbeing of employees including the cultural, social and job design conditions.

Studies have shown that healthy work environments do make a difference, improving overall job satisfaction, aiding recruitment and retention, and fueling productivity. Yet competing demands, time constraints, and a general lack of awareness can take their toll on even the most well-intentioned workplace health strategies.

To achieve a healthy work environment, we are often challenged to think differently about our culture, habits and day-to-day practices at work. We need to consider not only the risks and hazards in our environment, but also the myriad of factors that are having an impact on our staff. Consider for a moment your own work experience:



- What are the signals that will tell me when my staff is encountering an unhealthy element in their work?
- Have there been changes to the work process that may cause mental, emotional or physical problems?
- Has staff mentioned issues that are unresolved?
- What are the feedback systems in place that will alert me of problems?

A refresher on what goes into making a healthy work environment, and helpful, accessible resources, can encourage your workplace's dedication to ensuring the health of its' employees. This spring, PSHSA partnered with HealthForceOntario (HFO) on a new information portal dedicated to healthy work environments in the healthcare sector.

The Healthy Work Environments site – healthyworkenvironments.ca – brings together expert resources and leading practices with the individual experiences, success stories and practical ideas that are contributing to healthy work environments. There is a broad selection of free, downloadable tools and resources on a range of topics, from mental health, to MSDs, to safety culture.

While it was created for the health care sector, the Healthy Work Environment site is full of information that is pertinent to any organization or sector. The site will continue to expand and grow, and we invite you to send your own favourite resources and links to be considered for the site!

www.healthyworkenvironments.ca

Return to Work (RTW) - Communities of Practice

New this year, PSHSA has established Communities of Practice on a variety of topics. This is an excellent opportunity for clients with similar interests and needs to meet and work together to improve one component of their health and safety program.

The Return to Work Community of Practice will be of interest to organizations that have identified gaps in their Return to Work program, or have a number of high impact claims or high severity rates.

Over the course of four meetings participants have the opportunity to benefit from the sharing of Return to Work experiences with discussions on challenges and successes. In addition to networking, the brainstorming sessions enables participants to work with group members from similar organizations to identify possible solutions.

PSHSA consultants are available to facilitate the process, guide discussion, and provide tools over the four meetings. Participants begin by identifying gaps in their organization's return to work program. Following this, individualized action plans are developed and participants work on developing program components with a focus on:



- The Key Components of a Return to Work Program
- Addressing Program Gaps
- Case Management-Developing Tools to Round Out the Program
- Evaluating the Return to Work Program

Check our website for more information or [click here](#) to register for a RTW community of Practice and enter “communities of practice” into the search field to find a community in your area.

The Wexford Residence: A Health and Safety Success Story

Winner of the 2011 National Health Care Safety Award from the Canadian College of Health Leaders (CCHL), The Wexford Residence in Scarborough is



leading the pack in healthcare workplace safety. With a stellar record of 520 days without a single Lost Time Injury (LTI) from January 2010 to July 2011, we wanted to know more. How did they achieve a culture of safety, strong board support for health and safety initiatives, an engaged and dedicated Executive Director and CEO, and trained and aware staff?

The Wexford Residence is a seniors’ residence in Scarborough that combines independent apartments, long-term care and a seniors’ community centre. In 2006, the organization admittedly had a poor safety record. MSDs were the number one injury, largely caused by client handling, followed by slips, trips and falls. Contributing to this negative record were several systemic issues such as a lack of board awareness about the residence’s safety record, and the absence of a comprehensive Return to Work program. Commonly, injured employees were off work with no record of their status or progress.

The steps that The Wexford Residence took to move to a safer workplace are a rags-to-riches-style health and safety success story.

Culture of Safety

From the top down, Executive Director Sandy Bassett and the Board of Directors at Wexford have worked hard to create a culture of safety that supports health and safety planning and policies. By involving the Board, Bassett has acquired buy-in leading to significant investments in time and money. Safety is a standard item on meeting agendas and it is discussed at every opportunity to create and maintain awareness. In turn, employees know that the organization values health and safety, and that they’re encouraged to report hazards. Informal staff leaders, also called “safety champions”, bring forward concerns and Bassett readily responds. There is a certain amount of pride and satisfaction amongst staff in holding a high safety record. A counter in the lobby

displays the number of days that The Wexford Residence has maintained zero LTIs. “Safety is always front and centre,” says Bassett. Her commitment and that of her team has created a culture of safety that’s alive within the organization at every level.

Financing for major initiatives-Focus on MSD prevention

To address the problem of MSD injuries related to client handling, Bassett requested new equipment to replace the beds and improve overhead lighting. They added mechanical lifts through funding from the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care Lift Initiative and introduced other improvements including microfibre mops and a mobile cart for moving heavy garbage bins. All positions at the facility have Physical Demands Analysis (PDA) and recently, ergonomic assessments have been completed. With this detailed information, they have made informed decisions about equipment purchases for computer stations, seating, supplies and more.

Staff education

In addition to talking about health and safety at meetings and creating an open dialogue with staff, the Wexford developed an incident investigations program to provide teaching opportunities about safety hazards in specific circumstances. Through a team approach, management investigates incidents and speaks with the staff involved. They discuss why the accident happened and how to prevent it.

The Wexford also sets annual training goals that reflect current issues of concern to ensure staff are educated on preventing injuries. Training in Gentle Persuasive Approach GPA® was one of the organization’s goals, recognizing that resident aggression was a major contributor to injuries. Staff education at the Wexford is responsive to the challenges they face, and seeks to eradicate the problems through prevention.

Addressing the Gaps

The Wexford management was careful to listen to staff about the challenges they faced in order to create new policies and procedures that effectively addressed those issues. Part of this information came in the form of an internal survey, which indicated that there was a need for better hazard reporting and correction of unsafe practices. Bassett and her team also worked with PSHSA to review the structure and functioning of the Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC).



Health and Safety program improvement was also facilitated by joining Safety Groups Program, which required them to complete five safety elements per year and The Wexford joined the National Falls Collaborative, part of an RNAO/Safer Healthcare Now initiative.

The Wexford now boasts a comprehensive health and safety program, with a strong Return to Work component. Their Health and Safety program focuses on preventing workplace injuries and their RTW program focuses on early intervention by contacting employees as soon as injuries happen and encouraging return to work as soon as possible to limit the severity and duration of the absence.

Senior management has regular health and safety duties as well. These include a biweekly review of injuries, quarterly reports on resident and staff safety, and monthly inspections in addition to those of the JHSC.

Results

The Wexford has not only seen a reduction in employee injuries, but also a reduction in employee sick time as a result of these improvements. In addition to a reduction of staff injuries, The Wexford has also seen an improvement in resident safety with a reduction of adverse events, supporting recent research that indicates “employee safety equals resident safety”. This achievement was recognized by Accreditation Canada, an external peer review process organization, which gave The Wexford a full three-year accreditation award.

It’s a very holistic health and safety system at The Wexford, and one that many other organizations can emulate. Challenges for Long Term care Homes continue but Bassett indicates that their established safety culture has allowed them to keep health and safety at the forefront- even in times of change.

Safe Driving

Despite our highest hopes that summer would last forever, fall brings a resumption of our daily routines, work and school schedules. There’s a sense of renewed purpose and often a feeling of acceleration. Sometimes in the midst of our busy day, we get impatient and look for ways to cut corners. Driving and traffic is a perfect example.

That’s why fall is an ideal time to focus on motor vehicle safety. According to the WSIB, motor vehicle collisions on Ontario roads are the greatest single cause of all Ontario worker fatalities. Two of the top driver conditions and actions that contribute to fatal collisions include being inattentive (e.g., from fatigue or distractions) and aggressive behaviour such as driving too fast.

With so many potential dangers, drivers who are on the roads daily as part of their jobs are much more likely to encounter

motor vehicle incidents (MVIs). But much can be done to prevent motor vehicle accidents through support and training that teaches driving awareness and safety skills.

According to Drive for Life, a leader in decision-based driver training, drivers need to be aware of why they get distracted and to know how to manage that impulse. Most accidents happen when drivers are distracted for three seconds or more, whether that’s from something outside the car or something inside the car. While we can’t avoid noticing distractions, Drive for Life trains drivers to notice external events or items, but quickly look back to the road ahead as they process the information. By creating awareness and changing behavior through training, the risks of MVIs can be decreased.

As a driver, here are six easy things you can do today to stay safe on the road:

- Slow down: drive within the speed limit and adjust your speed for weather and road conditions. Follow vehicles at a safe distance.
- Relax: in stressful driving conditions, take a deep breath and relax. An aggressive state of mind will come through in your driving behaviour.
- Stay alert: don’t drive until you are mentally and physically able to. If you become drowsy or uncomfortable, pull over immediately and take a break.
- Plan ahead: plan your route before you start out. If you’re unfamiliar with where you’re going, check your map or plot the route with GPS, before you start off.
- Buckle up: wearing a seat belt is the law and it could end up saving your life. Wearing your seat belt properly will dramatically increase your chances of surviving a motor vehicle collision. If you are the driver, ensure all children 16 years and under are properly secured.
- Don’t drink and drive: refuse to ride with someone who may be impaired. Plan ahead: choose a designated driver before going out or set some money aside for a taxi.



As an employer, if a work related MVI occurs at your organization, be sure to conduct a thorough investigation. Often employers do not look further than the police report. However, the police report is looking for cause; it does not consider how to prevent a similar incident from happening in the future. The employer’s investigation should consider all the risk factors for driving, including people, driving environment, vehicle and work practices, such as scheduling.

PSHSA has specialized preventative training for drivers, as well as information resources on how to set up your own safe driving program. You can find a list of courses as well as a full selection of manuals, DVDs and other resources on our website at www.pshsa.ca.

Need Specialized Health and Safety Expertise in Your Organization?

We can help!

Public Services Health & Safety Association (PSHSA) has recently launched a comprehensive series of new service offerings to provide a high level of specialized



consulting to assist Ontario employers with their health and safety needs. Whether you need simple advice on your health and safety plan or at the more complex or involved level, require health and safety audit assistance, or even temporary help to perform an ergonomic assessment for your organization, we can help.

The PSHSA now offers specialized consulting in the following areas:

- Ergonomics
- Industrial Hygiene
- Health and Safety Program Auditing
- Infection Control Programming
- Emergency Services Programming (Police, Fire, EMS)

“Each of these specialized services will be provided by a core group of staff with various certifications such as Certified Canadian Professional Ergonomist or an Industrial Hygienist, etc.,” says John Bryden, Director of Prevention Services who manages the Specialized Services program. “The objective of this new service offering is to provide hands on specialty consulting to assist employers with a particular issue or develop a specific program within their organization.”

PSHSA’s Ergonomic now feature 12 Certified Ergonomists located across Ontario. “These staff specialists in provide a variety of ergonomics related services in order to reduce Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs). This can be done via specific job assessments, hazard identification, physical demands analysis, procurement standards, job design or entire program development,” says Bryden. “MSDs represent over 50% of lost time injuries in Ontario so this new service is timely to assist employers reduce or eliminate these types of preventable injuries.”

Many employers have a health and safety program and feel they have everything in place, yet they are still experiencing costly injuries and illnesses. “Often they need an outside expert to review their program and identify gaps or issues that could be the cause of these incidents. PSHSA now offers a comprehensive health and safety auditing service that does just that,” comments Monica Szabo, Director, Central West Prevention Services. “We now have over 20 staff certified by CSA in proper auditing protocols. Applying the CSA methodology to PSHSA’s new auditing approach will result in a comprehensive assessment of a company’s health and safety program and will be able to identify gaps or weaknesses.” In addition to the identification component, this service will also work with employers to identify and implement solutions to close the gaps and improve policies and procedures which will lead to improved health and safety performance.

These are just a few details regarding the new specialized services PSHSA is now offering employers. “PSHSA’s goal is to be a one stop shop for all the health and safety needs of its clients and to assist employers to improve their health and safety performance. These new service options are a major step in this objective,” states Patti Boucher VP of Prevention Services. “Employers have been requesting this type of service so we created what we believe is a strong solution to meet that need,” says Boucher.

Contact your **regional consultant** to find out more about these specialized service offerings.

PSHSA and CPKN Keep Police Officers Safe with E-learning Courses

As a police supervisor, the health and safety of officers under your command depends on you. In the course of day-to-day operations, police supervisors need to know what legislation applies to the workplace



in general and what aspects of the legislation apply to them personally. Knowing this is essential for protecting officers from injury, limiting the personal liability of the supervisor, and assisting the employer in achieving legislated and moral obligations to protect workers.

PSHSA and the Canadian Police Knowledge Network (CPKN) have been working together to develop e-learning programs for both police supervisors and front-line officers that take learners through the legislative requirements of the

Occupational Health and Safety Act. CPKN is a non-profit organization that develops and delivers online training solutions and related e-learning services to the Canadian police and law enforcement communities.

Currently available in both English and French, the Occupational Health & Safety: Supervisor course is designed to ensure that police supervisors understand how health and safety is integrated into emergency and non-emergency events, including the work conducted at the police facility. This course will assist the police supervisors in achieving the ultimate goal of protecting their workers. Currently, over 4000 learners have registered for this course.

This fall, the Front-line Officer program will be available. The job of a Front Line officer is to ensure the safety of the public and that is a job that can only be done if the officer maintains his/her own safety. This program provides information to help the front-line officer to recognize, assess and control the numerous hazards in the workplace. It is based on the premise that all workplace parties share a role in the protection of workers. An understanding of each of these roles and responsibilities is essential in protecting workers from injury. Initially, the English version will be offered for a four month free learner pilot to gather participant feedback. This feedback will be used to enhance the final course offering which will be available early 2012, along with a French version.

E-learning offers many advantages both for individual learners and organizations. It is accessible 24/7 from any internet-connected computer, allowing flexibility and self-paced study. It also tracks and records learner progress and delivers consistent messages and information to learners.

The courses are accessible at CPKN.ca at a cost of \$25 per participant.

Reducing injuries among grounds maintenance workers

Lawn cutters, landscapers, arborists and others responsible for maintaining public and private grounds are more at risk for injuries, and more likely to be killed on the job than other workers.

For groundskeepers, the most common injuries are contact with machinery or equipment, transportation incidents, falls, and exposures. But according to Monica Szabo, a director at PSHSA, "there's no reason why grounds maintenance workers should be at greater risk than any other workers. The work may involve a unique combination of hazards, but the individual hazards are common to a number of industries. Workplaces in many sectors deal with cutting tools, ladders, lifting devices, machinery, heat stress." More needs to be done to keep groundskeepers safe.

The nature of the work

Recreational facilities, public buildings, parks, hospitals, university campuses, government offices all typically employ or contract for grounds maintenance workers. The work may involve operating on- and off-road vehicles, heavy equipment and power tools. This work may take place at heights, along roadways, and in all weather and seasons. Contracted workers may travel to multiple sites in a day, and perform a wide range of tasks under varied circumstances.



Prevention challenges

Challenges in the grounds-keeping industry come in many forms, including the following:

- workforce: often comprises permanent, part-time and/or seasonal staff, including young and new workers, who have a range of job experience, literacy levels and OHS training
- nature of the work: multiple tasks in a day, involving a wide range of equipment
- training requirements: from the comprehensive (rights and responsibilities, WHMIS, personal protective equipment, etc.), to task- and hazard-specific (overhead power lines, tree work, bodies of water, unstable and slippery ground surfaces, steep grades, trenches, roadway traffic, etc.)
- supervision: because workers tend to travel throughout the day, and often work on their own, they have limited access to onsite coaching and guidance
- limited internal resources, common in any sector with a high number of small businesses. Many lack the resources to employ OHS professionals, and business owners and supervisors may lack the knowledge, skills and resources to identify hazards and develop safe work practices.

Taking action

"Having full-time health and safety staff is not a prerequisite to injury prevention," says Szabo, "commitment is." Here are suggested steps to help create a health and safety program in your workplace that will reduce injuries among your grounds maintenance workers:

- Conduct a hazard assessment to identify hazards that your workers may be facing.
- Inform yourself of the nature of the hazards, recommended injury prevention strategies, and available resources.

- Develop and implement prevention strategies, with worker input, that address specific hazards and tasks and are suitable by language and literacy level.
- Ensure ongoing hazard identification is conducted by knowledgeable people at the beginning of each workday and before work begins at other sites throughout the day.
- Use tailgate or toolbox safety training techniques and repeat and reinforce safety topics regularly. Make the safety topics specific to the tasks, location and season. Topic possibilities include: tree care, safe operation and maintenance of machinery and vehicles, preventing slips, trips and falls and use of ladders and lifting devices.
- Encourage continuing safety education through training courses, workshops and conferences, and offer certification training, even if you have fewer than 20 employees.

PSHSA has groundskeeper safety seminars for both summer and winter, chainsaw and other specialized training courses, as well as variety of information resources. Our consultants can help you develop your health and safety program and can help you customize a training program that meets the needs of your work environment. Check our website for more information.