



Mandatory OH&S Awareness Poster



As we know, the Minister of Labour, in March of 2010 appointed an Expert Advisory Panel (the Dean Panel) to review the Occupational Health & Safety system in Ontario. Throughout that year, the Panel, which included organized labour, employers, and the academic community, consulted with stakeholders across the province to identify improvements to the occupational health and safety system. This review included the prevention of workplace injuries, illnesses, and fatalities, and the enforcement of Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHSA). On December 16, 2010, the Minister accepted the Panel's report and its 46 consensus recommendations.

One of the Panel's "high priority" recommendations, was the creation of a Health and Safety Poster that would explain the key rights and responsibilities of the workplace parties (that being employers and employees), including how to obtain additional health and safety information and how to contact a Ministry of Labour (MOL) inspector. The Panel further recommended that it should be made mandatory for all employers to post this Health and Safety Poster in the workplace.

It was the Panel's view that many workers had little or no understanding of the Occupational Health and Safety Act, including their rights and obligations as workers or the obligations of employers and supervisors. The Dean Panel also advised that this health and safety poster be made available in multiple languages, so that all employees are made aware of their rights and obligations.

As a result, and under the OHSA, employers are now required to post the OHSA and any explanatory material prepared by the Ministry, which includes the aforementioned poster. A review of the poster, produced by the MOL, summarizes "workers' health and safety rights and responsibilities and the responsibilities of employers and supervisors. It also reminds employers that they must **not** take action against workers for following the act or for raising workplace health and safety concerns, and seeking enforcement of the OHSA."

To ensure that employers have sufficient time to become aware of the new rule to display this poster, **the Ministry has indicated that inspectors will not begin to enforce this requirement until October 1, 2012.**

The Poster can be downloaded, in several languages, from the Ministry of Labour's Web Site at www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/poster_prevention.php. The Ministry requires that the poster be displayed in a print size of not less than 8.5 x 11 inches. Limited quantities of printed copies are also available, free of charge, (English and French versions only) through the various health and safety organizations of the Province:

- ◆ Health & Safety Ontario
- ◆ Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers
- ◆ Workers Health & Safety Centre

Printed copies are also available, at no charge, through Service Ontario Publications.



The Mathews Dinsdale Minute



As part of the ongoing efforts in Ontario to improve our Occupational Health & Safety system there are a number of new initiatives currently ongoing. We thought this was a good opportunity to bring some of them to your attention.

- At the beginning of May, the Ministry of Labour commenced a four month “blitz” targeting new and young workers at industrial and construction locations. The Ministry is attempting to ensure that students at summer jobs and new workers in Ontario are properly trained and not placed at risk. The Ministry’s focus on these workers likely arises from the fact that many of them will not be experienced about their rights or the potential hazards in the workplace.
- The Ministry of Labour has issued a new poster to be put up on workplaces outlining the basic rights and obligations of workers, supervisors and employers. This poster is available in a downloadable format at the Ministry of Labour’s website. Employers are required to have this document posted in the workplace, though the Ministry’s website advises that “enforcement” won’t commence until the beginning of October.
- The Ministry of Labour has, at the end of June, closed a second consultation period on a new “Supervisors” workbook being developed. This 30 page document is intended to ensure supervisors are aware of their obligations and properly informed so that they can protect the workers under their responsibility. While not finalized, the draft is available on the Ministry of Labour’s website.

Finally, with the weather so far this summer having been very hot, you may want to consider the potential issues that arise from physical work in these temperatures. While often your employees will be working in climate controlled environments, this is not always the case and it is important to make sure that steps are taken to avoid heat stroke in your workers.

Each step of the way, every new initiative in the area of Health & Safety invariably places more responsibility on you, the Employer. It is important that you always strive to remain up to date and “ahead of the curve” so that your workplace isn’t the one where a terrible accident happens.



Helmets to Hardhats Gala A Great Success



The Helmets to Hardhats fundraiser which took place on May 23rd at was an outstanding success, raising more than \$700,000 in start up costs for Helmets to Hardhats Canada. AAO, a major contributor to this event, supports this initiative which mirrors a similar program that has been operating in the United States.

For members who do not know, Helmets to Hardhats is a non-profit program designed to ensure the seamless transition of Canada’s military personnel into the unionized construction industry anywhere in Canada.



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