



## Global Scan

January, 2009

“Global Scans” are a free service brought to you by [Global Training Edge](http://www.globaltrainingedge.com/). Each Scan highlights major or interesting news in occupational health and safety, with a concentration on Canada.

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### **Nova Scotia Recognizes Safety Leaders**

Individuals, organizations and employers who strive to ensure a safe and healthy workplace can now be recognized through a new awards program in Nova Scotia.

The [Workers' Compensation Board](#) and [Nova Scotia Labour and Workforce Development](#) are the drivers behind the first annual Mainstay Awards, celebrating excellence in injury prevention and return-to-work programs. Fifteen awards will be distributed in six categories:

- Safety Award of Excellence
- Safety Transformation
- Special Award for Small Business
- Individual Safety Champion
- Employer Safety Champion
- Employer Return to Work Champion.

The winners will be announced during a luncheon on May 5, 2009.

View [details](#).

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### **NL Correctional Officers to Get Batons, Vests**

The [Newfoundland and Labrador Department of Justice](#) has released the independent review of adult corrections in Newfoundland and Labrador called “[Decades of Darkness: Moving Towards the Light](#)”. The review contains 77 recommendations to help improve the living conditions and the availability of programming for inmates, along with the working conditions of correctional officers and others in the corrections system. The Minister has accepted in principle all 77 recommendations of the consultants, subject to budgetary and collective bargaining processes. Among the recommendations is one that suggests that correctional officers receive protective vests and that collapsible batons be issued to officers for use when escorting inmates to and from correctional facilities. The Minister stated these should be available by March 31, 2009.

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### **Alberta Company Charged After Employee Sexually Assaulted**

[Alberta Employment and Immigration](#) has charged Garda Canada Security Corporation under the Occupational Health and Safety Act after an employee was raped at a jobsite. Although the attacker himself was previously convicted, the Government laid the OH&S charge “for the greater good of society”.

Story from *Safe Supervisor*, Bongarde Media Co., January, 2009.

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### **Minimum Age of Employment Lowered to Age 15 in Saskatchewan**

Saskatchewan has changed the [Minimum Wage Regulations](#) to allow 15-year-olds to work in hotels, restaurants, educational institutions, hospitals and nursing homes. Prior to this change, the minimum age for working in those five sectors was 16.

Fifteen-year-olds will not be allowed to work more than 16 hours per week to ensure they have sufficient time for school work. The change will be reviewed in May 2009, following a consultation process starting in January. The government will also look at an absolute minimum age of employment in Saskatchewan and other employment standards to protect the well-being of young people entering the workforce.

View [details](#).

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### **OSHA Revises Field Operation Manual**

The US [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) has revised its [Field Operations Manual \(FOM\)](#). The new FOM now provides OSHA officers with a single source of updated information and guidance to help in scheduling and conducting inspections, enforcing regulations, and encouraging continual improvement in workplace safety and health.

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### **OSHA Publishes New Fact Book**

The new OSHA [Fact Book](#) examines how that agency has influenced the decline in workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities and helped protect employees' safety and health.

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### **US Mine Deaths Fell to All-time Low in 2008**

Preliminary data from the U.S. Department of Labor's [Mine Safety and Health Administration \(MSHA\)](#) show that mine fatalities in 2008 fell to an all-time low, recording a 31 percent drop from 2007. Metal/nonmetal mines recorded the lowest level of fatalities since statistics were first recorded in 1910, and the fatality level in coal mines was the lowest recorded number since 2005. The agency reached a series of milestones, including:

- the first-ever completion of all mandated safety and health inspections,
- the first-ever issuance of a pattern of violation notice,
- the implementation of eight final rules,
- the successful collection of delinquent penalties from several scofflaw mine operators.

Of the 51 fatalities reported, 28 of the victims were at surface operations, while 23 miners died in underground mining accidents. Fifteen workers died in accidents involving powered haulage – 10 in coal mines and five in metal/nonmetal mines – which was the leading cause of fatal mining accidents in the U.S. during 2008.

In 2008, MSHA assessed 198,700 civil penalties for violations of mine safety and health legal requirements, compared with 130,100 in 2007. The dollar amount of assessed penalties more than doubled in that time frame, from \$74.5 million in 2007 to \$194 million in 2008. The number and dollar amounts of civil penalties in 2008 are the most ever assessed in a single year.

Seventy-four flagrant violations were assessed in 2008, compared with 15 in 2007. They were assessed at a total for each year of \$11,474,400 and \$2,588,200, respectively.

See [detailed fatality statistics](#).

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### **ACGIH Revises TLVs**

The [American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists \(ACGIH\)](#) has ratified the 2009 Threshold Limit Values (TLVs) for Chemical Substances and Physical Agents and Biological Exposure Indices (BEIs). As these limits are adopted in many Canadian jurisdictions, the ratifications essentially are regulatory changes in many places. The changes include:

Chemical substances

- Beryllium and compounds
- Bromoform
- Dibutyl phosphate
- Diethanolamine
- Endosulfan
- Ethanol
- Ethyleneimine
- Ferbam

- Lead arsenate
- Methyl parathion
- Propyleneimine
- Rubber solvent (Naphtha)
- Sulfur dioxide
- Sulprofos
- Vanadium pentoxide
- VM & P naphtha

Electromagnetic Radiation and Fields

- Static Magnetic Fields

Biological Exposure Indices

- Carbon disulfide
- Tetrachloroethylene

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### **COSH and APHA Release Agenda for Federal Action in 2009**

The United States' [Council for Occupational Safety and Health](#) and the Occupational Safety and Health section of the [American Public Health Association](#) have developed an [agenda for federal action in 2009](#) to protect workers' health and safety. The key points of the platform include:

1. Put worker health and safety first by making the agenda a top priority of the President and Congress,
2. Ensure health and safety protection of all workers through tough enforcement of existing regulations, new worker protections, and research,
3. Count all occupational injuries and illnesses and increase funding for Federal and State-based public health tracking programs,
4. Increase worker participation in workplace safety and health programs and protect workers from retaliation,
5. Eliminate disparities in the high rates of deaths, injuries and illnesses among all workers.
6. Reform workers' compensation programs to ensure appropriate and equitable remedies for the costs of occupational injuries and illnesses for all workers.
7. Reduce or eliminate widespread use of toxic chemicals to protect workers on the job and to safeguard the communities in which we all work and live.

The platform has been [endorsed by over 50 organizations](#).

View the [full platform](#).

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### **NSC Calls for Cell Phone Ban While Driving**

The [National Safety Council](#) is calling on motorists to stop using cell phones and messaging devices while driving, and is urging governments to ban the behavior.

To accelerate this change, the NSC's effort will be three-fold:

- Advocating laws
- Educating the public and businesses about the risk of cell phone use while driving

- Supplementing distracted driving content in their defensive driving training. The NSC notes that more than 50 peer-reviewed scientific studies have identified the risks associated with cell phone use while driving.

See [details](#).

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### **Higher Fines for British Offenders**

The [Health and Safety Offences Act 2008](#) came into force on January 16, 2009. This new Act increases penalties and provides courts with greater sentencing powers for those who break health and safety law in Britain.

The effect of the Act is to:

- raise the maximum fine which may be imposed in the lower courts from £5,000 to £20,000 (CAN\$8,760 to CAN\$35,000) for most health and safety offences;
- make imprisonment an option for more health and safety offences in both the lower and higher courts;
- make certain offences, which are currently triable only in the lower courts, triable in either the lower or higher courts.

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### **New International Guidelines Outline Safe Use of Nanomaterials in the Workplace**

The [International Organization for Standardization \(ISO\)](#) has published a technical report that provides occupational safety information for those involved in the manufacture and use of nanomaterials in the workplace. [ISO/TR 12885:2008, Health and Safety Practices in Occupational Settings Relevant to Nanotechnologies](#), is designed help companies, researchers, workers and others prevent adverse health and safety consequences during the production, handling, use and disposal of manufactured nanomaterials. This document is broadly applicable across a range of nanomaterials and applications.

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### **UK Report Published on Nanotechnology**

The [Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution \(UK\)](#) has published a report on [Novel Materials in the Environment: The case of nanotechnology](#). The report was prompted by concerns about potential releases to the environment from industrial applications of metals and minerals that have not previously been widely used.

A major conclusion of the report is that nanomaterials are hugely variable in their nature. They are not a uniform class of materials, and attempts to regulate or legislate solely on the basis of their size or how they are made are misguided. It is the functionality of materials including nanomaterials, i.e. what they do and how they behave, that matters and this should form the basis of governance and regulation.

The Commission identified three areas of particular concern:

- profound ignorance and uncertainty about the behaviour of some types of nanomaterial in the environment or the risks that they pose for human health

- the nanoform of an element or material may have significantly different properties to its bulk form
- more sophisticated third and fourth generation nanoproducts may represent a further step change in functionalities and properties, which would be even more difficult to capture in a regulatory system primarily focussed on the bulk chemical properties of a material.

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### **New Report on Occupational Skin Diseases and Dermal Exposure**

The [European Risk Observatory](#) has just released a report on [Occupational Skin Diseases and Dermal Exposure](#). The report gives an overview of dermal exposures and skin diseases, contains the principal policies and practices in the European Union and concludes with challenges, prospects and recommendations.

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### **New Report on Vibration**

The [European Risk Observatory](#) has just released a report on [Workplace Exposure to Vibration in Europe](#). The report notes that one in three European workers is exposed to vibration at work and for some sectors, such as construction at 63%, this figure is much higher. This report brings together specialists from eight European institutes to produce an overview of the challenges facing the occupational safety and health community in managing occupational vibration risks. The situation in six Member States – Belgium, Germany, Spain, Finland, France and Poland – is examined, and research information is presented covering all Member States.

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### **New Report on Risks Faced by Hospitality Workers**

The hospitality industry is an increasingly important source of jobs in Europe, and employs a high proportion of relatively unskilled young and migrant workers. Working conditions are often difficult, with long working hours and physically demanding tasks. In addition, the sector is characterised by atypical working patterns, with seasonal and shift work being common.

A new report by the [European Agency for Safety and Health at Work](#) (EU-OSHA) focuses on the risks faced by workers in the hotels, restaurants and catering (HORECA) sector. The report, [‘Protecting Workers in Hotels, Restaurants and Catering’](#), showcases examples of good practice in dealing with workplace risks, as well as giving an overview of policy in the area, and describing changes that are taking place in the sector.

The report documents a deterioration in working conditions in the HORECA sector from 1995 to 2000 in relation to working hours, job demands and job autonomy. The workforce in the HORECA sector also faces a large number of psychosocial risks: long, non-standard and unpredictable working hours, a lack of control over work, heavy workloads, and time pressure, which lead to increased stress levels, and lack of work-life balance.

Violence, harassment and discrimination – from customers, colleagues and employers – are more commonly encountered by workers in the HORECA sector than others. They are more often faced with intimidation (12% versus 8.5%), physical violence (6.5% versus 3.5%) and unwanted

sexual attention (8% versus 2%). Moreover, workers in the HORECA sector experience greater discrimination (10.5% versus 6.5%). Workers in pubs, discotheques, nightclubs and bars are particularly at risk.

Since 90% of all HORECA establishments in Europe are very small (with up to 10 workers), employers often lack the time and resources fully to implement laws at a company level. The report includes a number of excellent examples of successful risk prevention, which are of use not only in restaurants and hotels, but also in school canteens, clubs and bars.

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