



Global Scan

November/December, 2008

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

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[Workplace Health and Safety Comes to Grade 9 Classrooms in NS](#)

[NS WCB Releases Injury Data on Worst Companies](#)

[Ontario Hires Officers Just for Health Care](#)

[Saskatchewan Workplace Smoking Ban](#)

[Worksafe BC Expands Into New Languages](#)

[CCOHS Introduces New Message Board](#)

[OSHA Releases Enforcement Summary](#)

[OSHA Issues Final Rule on Personal Protective Equipment](#)

[AIHA Survey Names Top Health and Safety Issues](#)

[Britain Develops New Safety Strategy](#)

Workplace Health and Safety Comes to Grade 9 Classrooms in NS

Grade 9 students in Nova Scotia will learn about the importance of workplace health and safety and injury prevention through a pilot program planned for 2009. The program aims to reverse the trend of an increasing number of injuries to Nova Scotia workers younger than 20, while the overall number of workplace injuries is declining. The departments of Education and Labour and Workforce Development, and the Workers' Compensation Board have come together to develop the eight hours of in-class instruction.

Like many other provinces, the number of youth joining the workforce in Nova Scotia is increasing. According to Statistics Canada, 70,000 Nova Scotians aged 15 to 24 are part of the workforce. In 2007, more than 4,000 youth were injured in the workplace, with 1,000 of those injured losing time from work.

The instruction will be offered as part of the compulsory Healthy Living program.

See [press release](#).

[Back to top](#)

NS WCB Releases Injury Data on Worst Companies

In response to a court ruling, the [Nova Scotia Workers Compensation Board](#) has released the [names of the companies with the worst safety records](#). These companies consistently have an experience ratio (claims cost to payroll) that is at least 200% higher than their rate group.

For these firms, the WCB levies a surcharge as a penalty. The surcharge is cumulative. In the first year, the surcharge is capped at 20% of the base rate; if the firm's safety performance doesn't improve, the surcharge can increase up to 40% the next year, 60% the following year, etc. See [details](#) and [list of companies for 2009](#).

[Back to top](#)

Ontario Hires Officers Just for Health Care

Responding in part to the recommendations in the SARS Commission report, the Ontario Government has created a new permanent team of specialists to help improve health care worker safety. The 17 new health care specialists will enforce occupational health and safety laws in health care workplaces for the more than 480,000 workers in Ontario's hospitals, long-term care homes, doctors' offices, medical laboratories and other health care workplaces.

The new team will help enforce compliance with health and safety laws, ensure health care providers are better prepared for emergencies, support a committee of sector representatives on occupational health and safety matters, and assist employers and employees in health care and all other sectors to prevent occupational diseases.

See [press release](#).

[Back to top](#)

Saskatchewan Workplace Smoking Ban

On May 31, 2009, Saskatchewan workplaces will be smoke-free.

Under the existing smoking regulations, workplace smoking is allowed in certain designated smoking areas only. When the workplace smoking ban takes effect, smoking will be prohibited in all enclosed workplaces, including buildings, vehicles, other enclosed structures and underground mines with the following exceptions:

1. traditional First Nations and Métis spiritual or cultural ceremonies;
2. designated smoking rooms for residents and visitors of long-term care homes that are allowed by the Ministry of Health's Tobacco Control laws;
3. areas of underground mines that are located more than 10 metres from other workers; and
4. some self-employed businesses, vehicles and camp living accommodations with permission and when others are not present.

See [press release](#).

[Back to top](#)

WorkSafe BC Expands Into New Languages

[WorkSafeBC](#) now offers general information and online resources in Chinese, simplified Chinese and Punjabi. The pages are accessible through translated links located at the top right of the [WorkSafeBC](#) home page.

The three new offerings provide information for workers and employers on:

1. how to report a work-related injury and start a claim;
2. details for employers on how to register a business; and
3. links to WorkSafeBC's translated health and safety publications.

The pages also include welcome web casts in Mandarin, Cantonese, and Punjabi that provide a brief overview of the available online tools and resources.

The languages were chosen based on the frequency of calls and requests received by WorkSafeBC. Later this year, pages in Spanish, Vietnamese, French, and Korean will be added to WorkSafeBC's web site.

See [press release](#).

[Back to top](#)

CCOHS Introduces New Message Board

The [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety](#) (CCOHS) has launched [Workscape](#), an online discussion board where people interested in health and safety can exchange ideas and information to help make workplaces healthy and safe.

Free to join, [Workscape](#) was created primarily as a resource for the Canadian health and safety community. However, anyone around the world with an interest in occupational health and safety can participate. [Workscape](#) members can share their experiences as well as post information, comments and questions on various topics including chemical safety, ergonomics, healthy workplaces, laws and compliance, and training and education. Users can also find and post messages about job opportunities, seminars, and conferences. [Workscape](#) features informal areas where members can introduce themselves and network with other health and safety professionals across the country.

For more information or to join the online community, go to [Workscape](#).

[Back to top](#)

OSHA Releases Enforcement Summary

The [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA) has released a summary of enforcement statistics for 2008. In the two major programs of National Emphasis Programs (NEPs) and the Enhanced Enforcement Program (EEP), OSHA did 8730 and 2471 inspections respectively (out of 38,591 total inspections).

See [details](#).

[Back to top](#)

OSHA Issues Final Rule on Personal Protective Equipment

The final rule on Clarification of Employers' Duty to Provide Personal Protective Equipment and Train Each Employee was published in the Federal Register on December 12, 2008. The rule revises [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) (OSHA) standards to clarify that, for employers to be in compliance, they must provide personal protective equipment (PPE) and hazards training for each employee covered by the standards.

Each employee not protected may be considered a separate violation and penalties assessed accordingly. This revised language is consistent with language in other standards for which per-employee citations have been upheld.

The final rule amendments do not add new compliance obligations. Employers are not required to provide new kinds of PPE or hazards training or use a different approach than what is already

required. Additionally, employers are not required to provide PPE or training to employees not already covered by existing requirements.

For [press release](#).

[Back to top](#)

AIHA Survey Names Top Health and Safety Issues

The [American Industrial Hygiene Association](#) (AIHA) recently announced the results of its biennial membership survey. The top public policy issues of concern to AIHA members are:

- Permissible Exposure Limits (PELs) Updating
- Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS)/Globally Harmonized System (GHS)
- Nanotechnology
- Professional Recognition/Title Protection
- Laboratory Accreditation.

See [details](#).

[Back to top](#)

Britain Develops New Safety Strategy

The British [Health and Safety Executive](#) (HSE) launched a consultation on its new strategy: “The Health and Safety of Great Britain: Be Part of the Solution” in December. The new strategy was developed in response to:

1. the recent slowing of improvement in Great Britain's health and safety performance;
2. the changing industrial landscape with an increase of small businesses and the self-employed;
3. the different risks posed by new sectors;
4. the need to regain the health and safety brand from those who misuse it to proliferate bureaucracy and as an excuse for other things.

Among the strategy's goals are:

1. HSE and Local Authorities will continue to work together to investigate work related incidents and secure justice;
2. encouraging strong leadership and championing a common sense approach to health and safety;
3. building competence of those charged with delivering health and safety in workplaces;
4. promoting the benefits of worker involvement, whether the workplace is unionised or not;
5. customising the support for small businesses to help them comply with their health and safety obligations;
6. avoiding catastrophes in Britain's high hazard industries; and
7. taking account of the wider issues that impact on health and safety and its delivery.

See the [press release](#) and [strategy information pages](#).

[Back to top](#)