

October Ministry of Labour Inspection Blitz Reinforces the Importance of Personal Protective Equipment

In 2009, there were 5,641 allowed lost-time claims in Ontario related to the head, feet (including toes) and eyes¹. With proper personal protective equipment (PPE), many of these injuries could have been prevented.

PPE is a critical safeguard for your employees and your business. Without the proper protection, employees are vulnerable to the risk of injuries and even death. Providing the proper equipment to work safely not only protects your employees, it protects your business from the risk of reputational damage, increased compensation and training costs (for replacement workers) and reduced productivity. These are expenses your company does not need!

During the month of October, the Ministry of Labour (MOL) will be conducting an inspection blitz on PPE to ensure workplaces are complying with the requirements of the *Occupational Health & Safety Act (OHS)*. Businesses in the industrial and health care sectors will be targeted. Industrial inspections will center on workplaces that include wood & metal fabrication, vehicle sales & service, food & beverage, wholesalers, education, and may also include farming operations.

Although all types of PPE could be inspected, the main focus of the blitz will be head, eye and foot protection. Inspectors will be checking to ensure the selection, use and care of PPE, as well as worker training in the use of the required PPE are being met.

Are you prepared for an MOL inspector visit? Here are a few questions to help you assess your readiness.

What is PPE?

PPE is any piece of equipment worn by a worker that protects them from injury by preventing their exposure to health and safety hazards. Some examples of common PPE include hard hats, safety glasses, steel-toed boots, earplugs, gloves and respirators. *OHS*A legislation, your workplace hazards and the specific job tasks of your workers will determine what PPE is required.

Do you know what the law says about PPE?

Section 25(1) under the *OHS*A requires employers to:

- Provide equipment, materials and protective devices
- Make sure they are used as prescribed
- Maintain them in good condition

¹ Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, Statistical Supplement to the 2009 Annual Report, Table 9.

The *OHSA* also requires workers to use or wear the equipment, protective devices or clothing that has been prescribed.

Do you know what PPE your employees need?

In order to know what PPE is required for your workplace, you must identify the hazards that workers encounter on the job and the protective measures required by the *OHSA* legislation. If you haven't already conducted a hazard assessment of your workplace, this is a good place to start. Information on hazard assessments and access to a workplace hazards inspection form can be found on the Health & Safety Ontario website (<http://www.healthandsafetyontario.ca/Resources/TopicList/Hazard-Assessment.aspx>).

PPE Information, Tools & Resources

To learn more about PPE and how your workplace can address the upcoming blitz, visit the Health & Safety Ontario website (<http://www.healthandsafetyontario.ca/Resources/Topics/PPE.aspx>).

This article is provided by Workplace Safety & Prevention Services.

ABOUT WSPS:

Workplace Safety & Prevention Services (WSPS) provides industry-specific health and safety products, training and consulting services to 154,000 businesses and 3.8 million employees in Ontario's agricultural, manufacturing and service sectors.