IRSST Study Identifies Hazards for Workers in ‘Green’ Jobs



Although the term ‘green jobs’ is fashionable and is in keeping with sustainable development, there’s very little information available on the safeness of such jobs for the workers for perform them.

The goal of a new study published by the IRSST was to produce a profile of green jobs in Qu□bec and assess the potential risks to workers’ health as a result of their exposure to chemicals and biological agents. More specifically, the researchers aimed to:

- Define the ‘green economy’ in Quebec;
- Identify ‘green jobs’;
- Determine which chemicals and biological agents workers might be exposed to; and
- Conduct a qualitative assessment of potential risks to workers’ health.

The researchers were able to identify some 400 job titles that could be considered green. These jobs were then grouped into 63 different occupations for which the potential chemical and biological risks were assessed’and 21 of them were deemed high risk.

Those occupations should therefore be the top priorities for health and safety research. More specifically, the findings

highlight the risks involved in waste management, a growing industry. (See, answers to 7 FAQs about hazardous waste.)

The researchers also concluded that the greening of the labour market isn't necessarily associated with safer jobs or totally new jobs, but rather with a transformation of conventional jobs, and changes in chemical and biological risks as technologies develop.

In the meantime, here are some tips for making green jobs safer for workers. And learn how to identify green alternatives to hazardous chemicals used in your workplace.

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