

Ontario Releases Province's First Integrated OHS Strategy



On Dec. 16, 2013, Ontario's Ministry of Labour released the province's first integrated strategy to prevent injuries and improve the delivery of workplace health and safety. The strategy, which builds on the recommendations from the Dean Panel, was developed in consultation with business, labour groups, OHS associations and residents.

According to Chief Prevention Officer George Gritziotis, 'This strategy reflects a critical step forward in occupational health and safety in Ontario ' providing a roadmap for transforming the occupational health and safety system. It focuses on the people and workplaces most in need of services, while also ensuring that all services are effective, accessible and efficient.'

Here's an overview of the new OHS strategy.

The Framework

According to a summary of the strategy, the Strategy Framework guides action for the OHS system by defining a common vision, goals and priorities.

The **Vision** is for all workplaces to be healthy and safe. The strategy has two distinct **Goals**:

- Target the areas of greatest need; and
- Enhance service delivery.

It identifies six **Priorities** to achieve those goals:

1. **Assist the most vulnerable workers.** Help workers that are more vulnerable than others to workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities due to individual and workplace factors, such as age, newness and literacy level.
2. **Support OHS improvements in small businesses.** Provide additional support to businesses with less than 50 workers that have limited resources and health and safety knowledge.
3. **Address the highest hazards that result in occupational injuries, illnesses and diseases.** Address work activities that lead to either a greater

frequency or severity of work-related injuries, illnesses and/or fatalities.

4. **Build collaborate relationships.** Work with existing and new partners both within and beyond the OHS system to leverage strengths, use resources more effectively and achieve better outcomes.
5. **Integrate service delivery and system-side planning.** Integrate planning and delivery of awareness, training and enforcement activities to align with strategic goals.
6. **Promote a culture of health and safety.** Promote attitudes, beliefs and behaviours in workplaces and society that place a high value on occupational health and safety.

The tools that will be used to deliver on these priorities include:

- Legislation and regulation (such as the recently released safety awareness training regulation);
- Enforcement and monitoring;
- Education and training;
- Advisory services;
- Programs and motivators;
- Awareness; and
- Research and data management.

Four principles guide the overall work of the OHS system:

1. **Shared leadership and responsibility** by all system partners and workplace parties;
2. **Stakeholder engagement** to ensure direct and meaningful input into the planning and delivery of actions;
3. Decisions supported by **best available evidence** and enhanced by continuous improvement of the quality and availability of data; and
4. **Transparency and accountability** to facilitate open, clear and up-to-date information on the system and the results of the strategy.

Next Steps

The strategy sets out a cohesive vision, goals and priorities for the next five years that will help all stakeholders collectively maximize the resources available to reduce workplace injuries, illnesses and fatalities in Ontario, says Gritziotis.

Going forward, the Chief Prevention Officer, with the advice of the Prevention Council, will contribute to achieving these strategic priorities by:

- Working with the MOL to align its operational plans, programs and policies with the strategy
- Working with the Health and Safety Associations and the WSIB to align their operational plans with the strategy
- Motivating workplace parties and the private training community to participate in the strategy
- Collaborating with all levels of government, other ministries and non-governmental organizations to achieve common goals.

The CPO will also issue annual reports that will describe progress in implementing the strategy and its impact, and hold all system partners

accountable.