



Making high-hazard work safe

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This issue of *IHSA.ca Magazine* is dedicated to high-hazard activities, such as working at heights, working on busy jobsites with many trades working in close proximity, operating vehicles and heavy equipment, and working on or near high-voltage powerlines.

“High hazard” is a term that describes much of the work many of you do every day, since the majority of firms that IHSA serves perform high-hazard activities. That’s why one of IHSA’s strategic goals is to reduce the injuries, fatalities, and diseases that accompany high-hazard work. The Ministry of Labour is also making high-hazard activities a strategic priority in its *Integrated Health and Safety Strategy for Ontario*.

Over the last two years, IHSA has produced special issues of *IHSA.ca Magazine* dedicated to topics such as working at heights, fall prevention, struck-by injuries, powerline contact, and motor vehicle incidents (MVIS). That’s because these are among the top causes of fatalities and serious injuries for IHSA member firms.

In 2013, falls were responsible for 25% of lost-time injuries (LTIs) and 45% of critical injuries, while struck-by objects accounted for 16% of LTIs and 19% of criticals.* In terms of fatalities, MVIs claimed the lives of 18 workers, while 10 workers died from falls, 6 workers died after being struck by material or equipment, and 4 died of electrocution.*

These may be just numbers, but they represent 38 hard-working Ontarians like you and me who didn’t return home safe from work at the end of the day. Even for those who did return home, their lives may never be the same if they suffered a serious injury.

However, IHSA believes that high-hazard activities do not have to be dangerous. There’s a lot that can be done to make high-hazard work safe. An example is in the utility sector. Among IHSA member firms, the lowest LTI rates in 2013 were in Rate Groups 833, 835, and 838 (Electric Power Generation; Oil, Power, and Water Distribution; and Natural Gas Distribution). These workers perform high-hazard activities, but systemic controls and prescriptive processes have greatly reduced the number of injuries and therefore the risk involved in this high-hazard work. That’s not just the hope, but the plan for all of IHSA’s Rate Groups—to make workers safe, especially those who work in high-hazard industries.

As expected, in this issue you will see articles that deal with falls, struck-by injuries, MVIs, and powerline contact, but you will also see articles about the distractions caused by cell phones, highlights of IHSA’s Annual General Meeting, results from recent MOL blitzes, and recent changes to the OTM Book 7. Also highlighted is the role played by IHSA’s Labour-Management Network in making high-risk work safer by developing safe work guidelines and by helping to raise awareness of health and safety in their communities.

Regardless of whether high-hazard activities are part of your daily work, it’s always important to stay focused, to follow safe work practices, and to be aware of your surroundings. In addition to the valuable information in this magazine, there are more resources available on the **Topics and Hazards** section of our website. There you’ll find web pages dedicated to high-risk hazards such as fall prevention and working at heights, struck-by hazards, motor vehicle incidents, electrical hazards, heavy equipment, cranes and concrete pumps, trenching and excavation, confined space, asbestos, and traffic control.

*Statistics provided by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB).