

# Ministry of Labour enforcement blitz

Enforcement blitzes are something the Ministry of Labour (MOL) does as part of its Safe at Work Ontario strategy for enforcing the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. During a blitz, inspectors target specific hazards during their visits to workplaces. Earlier this year, MOL inspectors conducted blitzes on warehouses, small businesses, and excavations. Here's what they found.

## Warehouse blitz

In February and March, MOL inspectors visited warehouses and retail establishments with storage areas as part of an enforcement blitz. The goal of the blitz was to raise awareness of the common hazards in warehouses and to promote compliance with legislation and best practices. During these visits, inspectors paid particular attention to

- lifting devices and forklifts
- racking and storage systems
- loading dock areas
- mezzanine floors
- hazards that could lead to slips, trips, falls, or musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

Over the course of the two-month blitz, inspectors made 1,425 visits to 1,096 workplaces. They issued 3,990 orders, of which 134 were stop work orders. The most frequently issued orders were for an employer's failure to

- ensure equipment, materials, and protective devices were maintained in good condition
- ensure a lifting device was examined by a competent person
- keep floors free of obstructions, hazards, and accumulations or debris, ice, or snow
- ensure materials were transported, placed, or stored so that they would not tip over or endanger a worker's safety when they were removed.

## Small Business blitz

The Small Business blitz began on April 1, 2013, and continued until March 31, 2014. During that time, MOL inspectors visited businesses with fewer than 20 employees. Most of them were businesses that had registered with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) but had had no prior contact with WSIB or MOL. The goal of the blitz was to encourage

employers to identify and control hazards, support vulnerable workers by raising awareness of workers' rights, and raise awareness of the internal responsibility system.

During workplace visits, MOL inspectors checked that

- the core elements of the internal responsibility system were established, implemented, and maintained
- employers had identified hazards and controlled them
- non-compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and its regulations were being remedied
- vulnerable workers were aware of their rights
- workplace parties were being directed to resources in the health and safety system.

During the year-long blitz, MOL inspectors made 1,589 visits to 1,190 small businesses. They issued 4,014 orders, which included 50 stop work orders. An order was issued most often because the employer had failed

- to post the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*
- to take reasonable precautions to protect workers' health and safety
- to prepare a health and safety policy and maintain a program to implement the policy.

## Excavation blitz

This blitz, which ran throughout May, targeted excavation hazards at construction projects. It included excavations dug to install utilities, excavations for building foundations, and trenches dug along the right of way on roads. The goal was to raise awareness of the dangers of excavations.



# Results

During their site visits, MOL inspectors focused on

- support for excavation walls
- location of utilities
- safety measures to prevent slips, trips, and falls.

During this one-month enforcement blitz, MOL inspectors made 1,094 visits to 957 workplaces. They issued 2,191 orders, of which 186 were stop work orders. Seventy-five per cent of the orders were issued under the Regulation for Construction Projects. Orders were issued most frequently because the employer had not ensured that

- excavations were in compliance with proper support systems
- workers were wearing protective headwear
- adequate emergency procedures were in place.

## See the full reports

For each enforcement blitz, the MOL publishes the results on its website at [labour.gov.on.ca](http://labour.gov.on.ca). Go there to view the complete reports.



## New training requirements for working at heights

Falls continue to plague Ontario's worksites. In 2013, 10 workers died in fall-related incidents on construction projects and falls were responsible for 25% of lost-time injuries (LTIs) for IHSA member firms.

The Ontario Ministry of Labour (MOL) has announced changes to Regulation 297/13: Occupational Health and Safety Awareness and Training that will come into effect on April 1, 2015. As of that date, workers on construction sites will need to complete a working at heights training program that has been approved by the Chief Prevention Officer before they can work at heights. This training will be valid for three years from the date of completion.

Workers who have already received training will have two years (until April 1, 2017) to complete an approved working at heights training program. As of January 5, 2015, there are no approved training programs, but anyone who is exposed to fall hazards on the job is legally required to have fall protection training.

The **Working at Heights Training Program Standard** and **Working at Heights Training Provider Standard** laid out minimum learning outcomes for working at heights training programs and the requirements for approved training providers. Reducing working at heights injuries and fatalities through standardized training was a key recommendation of the Expert Advisory Panel on Occupational Health and Safety in 2010. The Ontario government committed to implementing all of the recommendations proposed by the Expert Advisory Panel.

IHSA will be releasing additional information on the new standards and how *IHSA's Working at Heights—Fundamentals of Fall Prevention* training will fit into the future of fall-related training in Ontario.

For more information, visit the MOL's Working at Heights Training page at [labour.gov.on.ca](http://labour.gov.on.ca) or download the Update on Working at Heights Training in Ontario presentation available at [ihsa.ca](http://ihsa.ca)