

## McGuinty Government Working To Prevent Musculoskeletal Disorders

February 26, 2010

The McGuinty government is committed to preventing musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and other injuries in Ontario workplaces.

MSDs are injuries and disorders of the muscles, tendons and nerves. They can develop as a result of ongoing exposure to such things as repetitive work, forceful exertions such as heavy lifting and carrying, awkward postures and vibrating equipment that can affect the bones, joints, ligaments and other soft tissues.

MSDs can occur in any type of workplace. They account for 43 per cent of all lost-time injuries in Ontario. In 2008 this amounted to:

- More than 33,000 injured workers;
- A loss of more than 1.2 million working days; and
- More than \$726 million in medical and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) costs.

### INITIATIVES

In January 2006, the Ministry of Labour (MOL) launched a Pains and Strains Campaign to:

- Increase awareness of ergonomics-related injuries;
- Focus more on prevention;
- Enhance training of ministry health and safety inspectors;
- Develop new resource materials;
- Implement better tracking of ergonomics-related inspections; and
- Increase ergonomic expertise.

In February, 2007, the Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario (OHSCO) – comprised of the Ministry of Labour, WSIB and Ontario's health and safety associations – released an MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario and an accompanying resource manual. These materials informed workplaces on how to protect workers from ergonomics-related injuries.

In February, 2008, OHSCO released an MSD Prevention Toolbox, a resource kit containing examples of MSD prevention information sheets, sample surveys, hazard identification tools and prevention strategies.

In April 2009, the Ministry of Labour conducted an enforcement blitz in which inspectors checked for hazards leading to the onset of MSD at construction, industrial, healthcare and mining workplaces across Ontario.

During that blitz, inspectors visited 1,593 workplaces and issued 4,541 orders under Ontario's [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#). Of those orders, 601 were related to MSD issues.

A similar MSD blitz is planned for Ontario workplaces this fall.

Enforcement blitzes are part of the ministry's [Safe At Work Ontario](#) strategy which focuses on:

- Enforcement;
- Compliance; and
- Partnership.

## **NEW ONLINE TOOL**

The government's latest MSD-prevention initiative is the launch of a new interactive online tool on the ministry's website.

The tool – featuring a musculoskeletal figure – provides information on how to recognize signs and symptoms of MSDs and suggests what to do about reducing the hazards associated with pains and strains in the workplace.

When users click on various parts of the figure's body, information pops up indicating tasks that may be the cause of an MSD and recommends ways to reduce the hazards.

The tool can be viewed at [www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/pains/pains\\_strains.php](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/pains/pains_strains.php)

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Emily Bullock, Minister's Office, 416-326-7713  
Bruce Skeaff, Communications Branch, 416-326-7405

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