

Prevention System Realigning to Serve Clients Better

A Collection of Articles from OSSA's e-newsletter, The Advocate

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Prevention System Embarks on Bold Restructuring Plan

Economic challenges plus poor health and safety outcomes demand change

The Advocate has been keeping you up-to-date on some of the changes that will affect you as part of Ontario's Road to Zero strategic plan. Last September, we told you about the annual 7% injury reduction rate that all firms must achieve just to break even on their premium rates. In December, you read about the WSIB's new service delivery model, which is well underway. Now, find out how merging Ontario's 12 health and safety associations (OSSA included) into four new associations will serve you better.

As newspapers daily attest, the recession is pushing many Ontario businesses to find ways to reach a wider customer while striving for efficiencies and improved service delivery. The Ontario Prevention System—made up of the Ministry of Labour (MoL), Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), and 12 health and safety associations—is not immune from these economic realities.

For the Prevention System, however, there is more at stake. Consider the repercussions of these unacceptable health and safety outcomes:

- On average, 100 traumatic fatalities a year, each tragedy flying below the radar of public consciousness;
- 260 deaths from occupational disease each year;
- 1,600 lost time injuries each week.

Last year, the Prevention System did what many businesses are doing. It undertook a critical assessment and restructuring of its programs and services, so that it can better meet the needs of its customers: Ontario workplaces, employers and workers.

On February 19, the WSIB Board of Directors approved a [business case for the realignment of the Ontario health and safety system](#), with 12 health and safety associations distilled to four. One of the four new associations will combine OSSA with the Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA) and Farm Safety Association (FSA).

Our promise to you, our customers, throughout this transition will be to maintain, indeed improve, our level of service. Here's what you can expect in the coming months.

Improved customer service

Today, Ontario's 12 health and safety associations each have their own human resources, operations, client services and product development business units.

Watch for these changes:

- New Boards of Directors established and CEOs hired for each of the four new health and safety associations in 2009;
- Visible synergies in the system: reducing overhead to free up resources for front-line field consultants, whose purpose is to directly impact or influence workplace health and safety;
- A critical assessment and restructuring of the Prevention System's programs and services, to promote more consistently delivery across the province.

More consistency in how you're measured and serviced

Today, an employer can be visited by the MOL, the WSIB and a health and safety association, and each time be exposed to different measures and approaches. In addition, the safety performance of some government sector employers is measured using different criteria than for private sector firms. Adding to the confusion is the presence of 12 different health and safety associations with 12 different sets of phone numbers, websites, products, services and price points.

What you can expect to see in the future:

- Clear, transparent and consistent communication of the roles and responsibilities of Prevention System partners and business;
- "One door" with one phone number and one website, for employers to navigate one straight path to sector-specific solutions;
- The same access to services for workplaces in every region of Ontario – from the Great Lakes to the far North.

Better support for small and micro business

To reach Zero, employers and workers need encouragement, and better products and services—less cost, clearly understandable, accessible, and relevant to their workplace.

Improvements you will see:

- Innovative and cost-effective health and safety solutions designed for new workers and small business, which represent a significant proportion of Ontario worksites and workers;
- An infusion of front-line health and safety field consultants will help businesses leverage their health and safety investment for an improved bottom line and corporate culture;
- Better communication, which will assist all businesses, large and small, understand their obligation to set and achieve a goal of Zero.

The Road to Zero

This is a bold plan, designed to support a future with [Zero workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses](#). The Prevention System believes its plan will provide the foundation for

Ontario to emerge as a global leader in prevention, regardless of economic conditions—where champions for prevention can be found in every workplace, every school and every household; where workers and employers benefit from being engaged with the Prevention System; and where all are inspired and enabled to eliminate the terrible burden of workplace fatalities, injuries and disease.

More updates in the June edition of *The Advocate*. In the meantime, if you have questions, please email OSSA President and CEO Elizabeth Mills at ceo@ossa.com.

Posted in the December 2008 edition of *The Advocate*

Your Health and Safety Services Are About to Get Better

All hands on deck to achieve Road to Zero

In the fall edition of *The Advocate*, we told you how your company will need to reduce its injury rate by 7% for each of the next five years—just to break even on your premium rates. It's all part of a system-wide challenge to achieve zero workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses, as outlined in the WSIB's five-year strategic plan, called the [Road to Zero](#). In this edition, we'll tell you what other changes are in the works—including the WSIB's [new service delivery model](#), and a redesigned prevention system.

The Road to Zero is driving changes in how the WSIB and prevention system does business, with a goal of helping workplaces achieve their 7% annual reductions in injury rates. Here's a high-level look at what's coming down the pipe, and how it will affect you.

Role of WSIB: introducing a new service delivery model

The WSIB is changing how it delivers services to Ontario businesses. The new model will be implemented in phases, starting with Ottawa in September 2008, with the rest of Ontario following by mid 2009. The goal: to help businesses drive down “persistence”: the proportion of all your organization's lost-time days this year that occurred from health and safety incidents in previous years.

What you're going to see is a “triage” approach to service. Think of a hospital emergency ward, where an intake coordinator assesses patients' needs and streams them to the appropriate service or specialist. Firms with an injured worker will go through a similar process.

WSIB specialists, each with a different area of focus, will be assigned to collaborate with workplaces, as needed, to determine:

- Eligibility of the claim;
- A customized plan to help the injured employee return to work;
- Medical and health care interventions that will help injured workers recover;

- Revenue decision-making services that would help firms minimize their costs;
- What new or improved prevention, disability management and compliance programs are needed.

Role of the prevention system: streamlining operations

The WSIB is also looking externally for improvements. Today, 14 WSIB-designated health and safety associations provide prevention services to Ontario's various business sectors. The OSSA, for example, focuses on the service sector.

Soon, this part of Ontario's prevention system will look different, and in a way that's better for business. The goal: to align our efforts in a way that will allow us to reach more of you, and help you drive down lost-time incidents and manage risk.

Consultations with individuals and groups across the system are still underway, and final decisions have not yet been made. However, what we can share right now is that the new system will be smaller and better integrated, with fewer, distinct associations and a renewed focus on the "customers" of the system: workers and workplaces.

A transformed prevention system would:

- Increase the resources and expertise available to your workplace;
- Simplify access to system resources by consolidating points of contact;
- Focus resources on areas with greatest need;
- Improve access to services for more remote locations.

Role of the business sector: three things you can do

1. Know your numbers. Review your WSIB reports, or call your WSIB representative, to determine your:
 - *Injury trends*: are your trends coming down by 7% or more each year?
 - *Rate group average*: how do your LTIs compare to the rate group that your premium rate is set for?
 - *Persistency rates*: Are you getting injured workers back to work quickly, and within the same year?
2. Make a plan to achieve your 7% reduction year over year:
 - Call OSSA for a consultation;
 - Join an [OSSA Safety Group](#);
 - Review the story in this edition of The Advocate on how the gaming industry is addressing its health and safety issues.
3. Be an advocate for change by asking questions, voicing concerns and offering solutions: make sure that what you valued in the old system, migrates effectively to the new system.
 - Call your WSIB representative or OSSA contact.

What's driving these changes

On average, every week in Ontario:

- Two people die from a workplace incident
- Five people acquire an occupational disease

- 1,600 injuries cause lost time from work

That's a tragic human cost to the injured, their families and communities. And it's an enormous financial cost, as well—to workers, employers and society—especially when injured workers do not return to work, and recover, as quickly as possible. Indeed, fixing your return to work program represents your most effective short-term way of saving money, allowing you to channel your savings into improving your prevention program. At a time when resources and finances are constrained, you can make your health and safety program an asset on your balance sheet.

How many companies are losing money:

- Ontario's frequency and total number of injuries has been coming down by about 5% per year since 1997.
- But "persistence"—old claims that have never been resolved—is rising steadily.
- That means more and more claims are persisting for longer periods of time, representing a hit to the bottom line for both WSIB and business.
- For many companies, the bulk of their costs come from claims that happened a year or more ago and were never properly resolved.

Here's the bottom line

Everything—from the WSIB's new service delivery model, to Workwell, to incentive programs like NEER, to how the health and safety associations will be organized—will be aligned to help workplaces achieve the new performance standards (annual 7% reduction in injuries), and return injured employees to work as quickly as possible.

For more information:

Call your WSIB contact or [OSSA](#) with your questions.

Posted in the September 2008 edition of *The Advocate*

Your rate group improved its health and safety performance... but 2009 premiums still went up

How the rules have changed under the WSIB's Road to Zero

The WSIB introduced its five-year strategic plan—Road to Zero—in 2008. The plan sets a goal of zero fatalities and a 7% reduction in injury rates from 2007 levels for each of the next five years, starting in 2008. It used to be that if your rate group maintained the status quo in terms of its health and safety performance year over year, premium rates would do the same. Not any more. Here's what's going to happen.

Your premium rates for 2009 were based on several assumptions, the two most important of which are that:

- your rate group will achieve at least a 7% reduction in injury rates in 2008;

- your rate group will achieve an annual reduction in claim costs and persistency (how long a claim continues to be open, measured in months).

These same assumptions apply for 2010 through 2013, when the WSIB will launch its next five-year strategic plan.

Here's what it means to you:

- If your rate group maintains the same injury rates it is currently experiencing year over year, premiums will go up year over year;
- You will only break even if you achieve a 7% reduction each year, over the next five years.
- Therefore, if your rate group:
 - Achieves a 7% reduction in injury rates: your premium rate will stay the same;
 - Exceeds the minimum 7% reduction: your premium rate will go down;
 - Does not achieve a 7% reduction: your premium rate will go up.

How is Ontario's service sector affected in 2009?

The WSIB has announced that there's a net "no change" on premium rates for all rate groups in 2009, which means the premium rates for some rate groups will go up and for others they will go down. Next year, premium rates for 13 of the 19 service sector rate groups will go up by 4% or more.

Kudos to the six service sector rate groups that did *not* go up:

- Beer stores (premium rate is down);
- Vehicle services and repairs;
- Restaurants and catering;
- Hotels, motels and camping;
- Personal services;
- Advertising and entertainment.

What can you do?

First, be informed:

- Check out the [WSIB letter to employers, news release and Q&A](#);
- Eliminate surprises by [estimating your 2009 premium](#) using the WSIB's calculator.

Second, take steps to further reduce your injury rates, claim costs and claim persistency:

- Are decision-makers in your organization aware of the factors driving future premium rates for your rate group and your firm?
- What systems, programs, resources and tools do you have in place to drive down—and keep driving down—these performance numbers?
- Get help; for example, participate in OSSA's two-part "Getting Started" program, specifically for organization owners and general managers, to be held in easy-to-access locations across Ontario.

Sign up for OSSA's two-part "Getting Started" program of workshops

A. OSSA Risk Assessment workshops

- A three-hour session (several have been scheduled over the summer and fall).
- You will walk away with:
 - The business case for health and safety;
 - An evaluation of your company's performance against regulations;
 - The inside track on how Ontario's prevention system functions, and how it can add value to your operations;
 - A better understanding of your legal obligations under the *Occupational Health & Safety Act*;
 - An action plan relevant to your firm to get you started.
- Cost: \$99 per person

B. OSSA Group Consulting workshops

- A half-day session (just two have been scheduled for fall).
- You will walk away with a better understanding of workplace compliance and hazards.
- Cost: \$99 per person for those who attended the Risk Assessment workshops; or \$198 per person for those attending the Group Consulting workshops only.

At the end of the workshops, the business owner will have a solid grasp of the health and safety fundamentals needed to develop a health and safety program designed to reduce injuries and illnesses.

Other OSSA interventions you can ask for:

- Enrollment in an [OSSA Safety Group](#) (now recruiting for 2009);
- [Certification training](#);
- Many [health and safety awareness courses](#), such as Safe Lifting, Ergonomics, Early & Safe Return to Work;
- A [compliance checklist](#) that will walk you through the regulations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act;
- A [professional review](#) of your Joint Health & Safety Committee; health and safety policy and program; hazards; and orientation training—find out what MOL inspectors typically look for;
- A [Practice Workwell Audit](#): be prepared by voluntarily stepping through the process.

[Contact OSSA](#) for more information.