

## Blitz Targets Workplace Chemical Hazards

*McGuinty Government Committed To Eliminating Workplace Injuries*

### NEWS

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Ontario is continuing its efforts to reduce workplace injuries by focusing on hazards involving chemicals used in all workplaces, especially at swimming pools and spas, dry cleaning operations, metal fabrication shops and health care facilities.

Throughout September, Ministry of Labour occupational health and safety inspectors will focus on hazards involving disinfecting chemicals (such as chlorine), dry cleaning solvents, metal-working fluids and detergents. The inspectors will check that workers have been trained to work with chemicals that could endanger their health if not handled properly. They will also check that chemicals are stored safely and properly labelled and that protective equipment such as respirators and eye-wash fountains are available to workers.

Inspectors will take enforcement action as appropriate for any contraventions found under the Occupational Health and Safety Act and its regulations.

This initiative is part of the province's *Safe At Work Ontario* [blitz strategy](#) announced in July 2008. Keeping workers safe means increased productivity for Ontario's economy and less strain on the province's health care system.

### QUOTES

"Hazardous chemicals are a fact of life in many workplaces, but correctly handled, they should not cause harm. We are determined to eliminate all workplace injuries, including injuries and illnesses related to chemical exposure. All workers have a right to come home each day to their families, safe and sound."

– Peter Fonseca, Minister of Labour

### QUICK FACTS

- The Ministry of Labour compliance program that ran from April 1, 2004, to March 31, 2008, reduced the workplace annual injury rate by 20 per cent, or more than 50,000 incidents.
- During the ten years from 1999 to 2008, according to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, 23,789 workers suffered lost-time injuries related to chemical exposure.
- Because of the drop in the annual rate of lost-time injuries, employers have avoided about \$5 billion in direct and indirect costs during the four years ending March 31, 2008. Reduced injuries also result in less strain on the health care system, and fewer workers off the job means increased productivity for Ontario's economy.
- Ontario employs more than 400 full-time occupational health and safety inspectors.

**LEARN MORE**

Read more about the [Safe at Work Ontario](#) strategy to strengthen workplace safety.

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