

THE safety mosaic

connecting people with health and safety news

So far this year, seven young workers have lost their lives at work.

In a departure from our regular 'Frontline' feature story, we are reprinting an open letter from Minister of Labour, Brad Clark to Ontario employers and young workers. It is a powerful reminder to all Ontario businesses to keep our workplaces safe for our young workers.

August 30, 2002

For many of us, this summer was one filled with joy and happiness. Unfortunately, for some it was one of tragedy.

So far this year, seven young workers have lost their lives at work. I, along with all Ontarians, am deeply disturbed by this needless loss of promising young lives.

Seven families had to be told that their son or daughter, brother or sister would not come home from work, from a job they took to earn a little extra money for themselves or to help put them through school.

All of these tragic incidents could have been avoided; none of the families of these victims should be mourning the loss of a child.

It is my intention to ensure that next summer all of Ontario's young workers return home and to school safely. The Ministry of Labour has already targeted young workers as a priority. I have already begun to meet with industry and labour groups to raise awareness and ensure we are all working together with the goal of eliminating death and injury in Ontario workplaces. The government cannot do this alone; everyone in our society plays an important role in health and safety.

Story on Page 2 →

Loosing Younglings

READ IT

GROUNDBREAKERS: Tim Hortons – Page 4

RETAIL AND WHOLESALE FOCUS: – Page 6

THE safety mosaic

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE
FALL 2002
Vol.5 No.3



Cover Story –
Dying Young

We Asked –
Road Warriors
page 3

Groundbreakers –
Tim Hortons
page 4

Focus on Retail and Wholesale –
Retail Burnout
page 6

Behind the Scenes
page 7

Calendar of Events
page 7

Beyond the Workplace –
Surfing a New World
page 8



Dying Young

Cont'd from page 1

Employers are the front line in preventing injury and death among their workers and most take their legal duty to protect young workers very seriously. They take all necessary steps to ensure their workers go home safe every day, but tragically, some workers do not go home uninjured, and sometimes do not go home at all.

Under the Occupational Health and Safety Act, as an employer in Ontario, you are required to take all reasonable precautions to protect the health and safety of your workers. Specifically, you are required to:

- Ensure all of your employees are properly trained. This is especially important for young workers who don't have the background and training of experienced workers.
- Ensure that workers have proper supervision at all times. Again, I emphasize how especially important this is for young workers.
- Ensure all equipment is in good condition, with all necessary guards and protection devices.
- Ensure workers have, and always use, all necessary protective equipment and are fully aware of potential dangers.

As Minister of Labour, I am committed to protecting Ontario's youth while at work. The Ministry of Labour will continue to ensure employers fulfil these obligations. It is my intention to continue to build strong partnerships with employers and workers. Together, we have made Ontario one of the safest places in Canada to work, but we clearly need to do more.

The Ministry of Labour will continue to enforce Ontario laws to protect young workers. We will continue to support WSIB campaigns such as the Young Worker Awareness Campaign. I intend to take action should employers fail in their duty to protect our young workers.

Young workers have the right to insist on a safe work environment, and to refuse to work if they feel there is a danger. We are encouraging all young Ontario workers to exercise those rights. The Occupational Health and Safety Act prohibits employers from taking action against an employee for refusing unsafe work, or asking questions about safety.

If you need further information about your rights or responsibilities, there are many resources available in Ontario. You should contact your safe workplace association, the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, or your local office of the Ministry of Labour. Numbers are listed in the blue pages, or look on the Ministry website at www.gov.on.ca/lab.

The safety of Ontario's youth is the responsibility of every one of us. We simply cannot allow these tragedies to continue. Just as you would want your son or daughter to work in a safe environment, ensure the young workers you employ are offered those same safe and healthy working conditions. We must look out for one another and keep our young people safe at work.

Brad Clark
Minister

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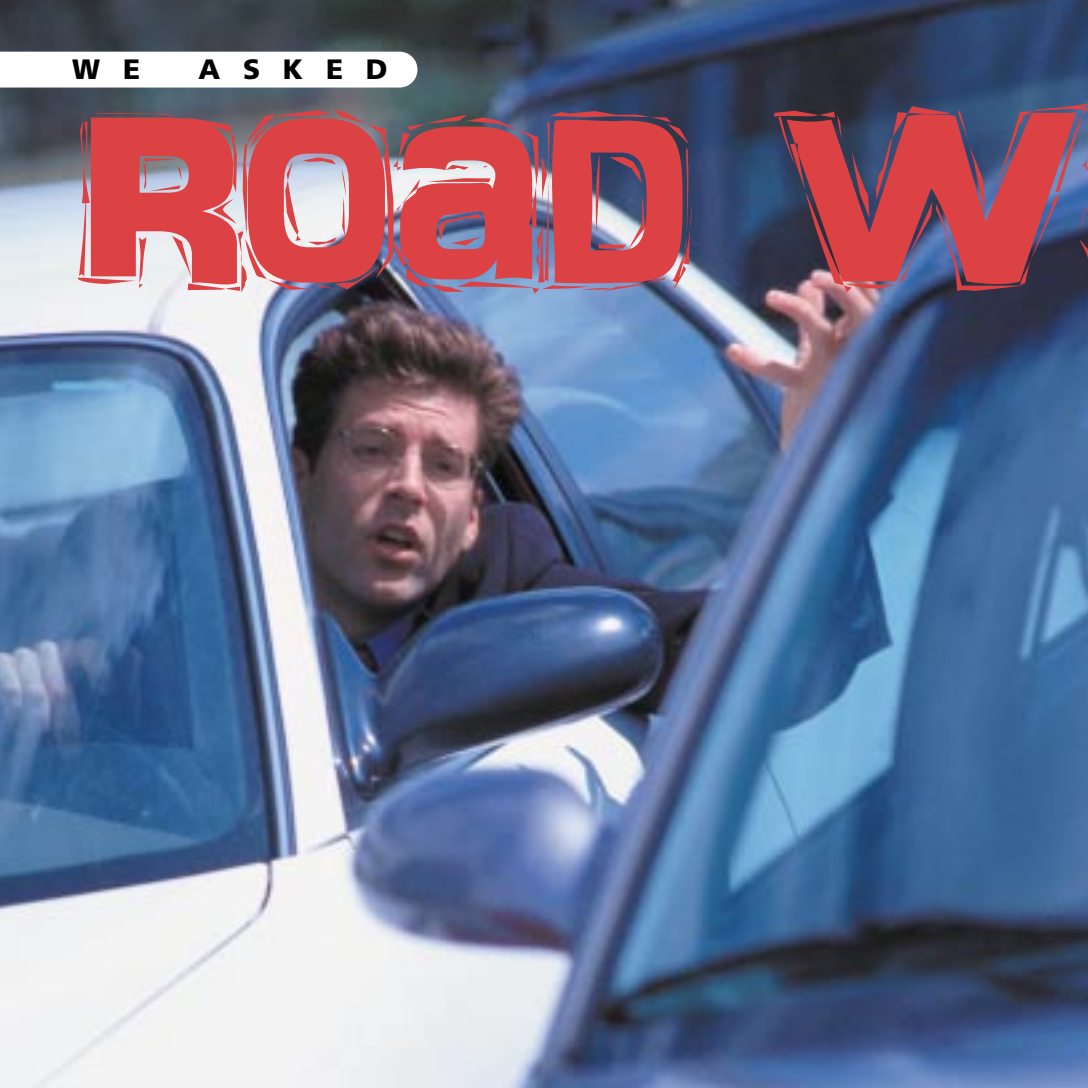
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People working safely in the safest and healthiest workplaces in the world.

We asked Mark Diacur, Vice President of the Transportation Health & Safety Association of Ontario about the responsibility of employers to ensure the safety of their employees behind the wheel.

Many employers may believe that work-related traffic injuries are primarily a problem for truckers and other professional drivers. What is the reality?

There were 849 fatalities on Ontario's roads in 2000. Many of those victims were simply people who regularly drive to and from work, and between various locations to perform their work duties. Tractors and semi trailers represented just 1.4 percent of all vehicles involved in fatal collisions.

That said, why doesn't work-related driving get the same attention as other health and safety policies and security measures?

Driving is a complex skill and I think it's fair to say that many people don't take it seriously enough. At times, we tend to get complacent about the driving part of our job responsibilities. Safe driving requires knowledge, attention, awareness of hazards and practice to do it safely.

What are some of the 'costs' to employers of not paying attention to this issue?

Some of the costs of ignoring this issue are obvious—compensation costs, increased insurance premiums, property damage and potential litigation costs. The indirect costs are even more substantial—conservative estimates start at \$4 to every \$1 of direct costs. These include the cost of retraining or replacing the injured worker, decreased morale and productivity. If, on the other hand, employers are more proactive, they can work at eliminating all those indirect and direct costs. Most importantly, by providing driver training they'll be creating a 'cooperative driving community' that tells employees that the employer cares about them before and after work—not just while they're on the job. That sends a powerful, caring and motivational message—one that is certainly worth striving for.

Where should employers target their driver awareness training efforts?

Keeping employees safe must start with the awareness that driving is a high-risk activity. Employers need to commit to making driving safety a priority within the organization. Everything else flows from that. Policies and procedures must be developed around driving safely including things like pre-trip inspections, preventative maintenance, and accident and incident reporting.

Cell phones are another safety issue and workplaces need to have policies in place that outline when they can and can't be used. Those policies should be followed up with defensive driving training to make employees aware of how things like road rage and driving distractions can affect their safety. That training should be refreshed on a regular basis. All of these things are do-able and they don't take a lot of time and resources. Most importantly, the dividends they pay back are tremendous. ♣

In our consulting approach, OSSA seeks a long-term, wholly integrated commitment to health and safety from our members. Groundbreakers are member firms who have come to realize the value of this approach through working with OSSA. Groundbreakers strive to make health and safety part of the workplace culture. They recognize the link between healthy, safe employees and customer service excellence, and they're willing to do what it takes to create a genuinely caring environment.

by Suzan Butyn

Since the first Tim Hortons store opened in 1964 in Hamilton, Ontario, the love affair between consumers and their donuts has grown in leaps and bounds. Today, Tim Hortons has over 2,000 stores across Canada and 140 locations in key markets south of the border. Perhaps most famous for their coffee and bite-size TIMBITs, the chain's product line also includes donuts, cakes, pastries, muffins, cookies, lunch fare, and cappuccino.

TDL Group Ltd., the licensing company for Tim Hortons, doesn't hand out franchising opportunities with abandon. Aside from the significant capital start-up costs, the company looks for storeowners that possess the necessary entrepreneurial drive, management skills and dedication required in today's competitive market.

Doug and Susan Burr—a husband and wife team—have these qualities in spades. While the challenges of operating a single fast-food franchise would prove a daunting task for most people, the Burrs own and operate three Tim Hortons franchises in the Niagara region.

The Burrs opened their first franchise in 1988 with all the energy of new entrepreneurs. The first weeks and months were filled baking donuts, working 16-hour shifts and learning the ropes of the complex, often stressful business of quick service. "To be honest," recalls Doug, "we were so busy trying to get the business up and running that at first we didn't have much time to think about health and safety."

It was on the front lines, working side by side with employees, that the Burrs first saw the impact of injuries on workers and the workplace. Backed by three months of training in safe food handling practices and other operational procedures, the Burrs began the task of putting a solid health and safety program in place.

The Burrs noticed that most injuries in their franchise were the result of burns, cuts and scalds. After employees complained about the long reach into a hot oven, they supplied employees with longer oven mitts and posted warning signs on equipment. To prevent slips and falls, employees were required to wear non-slip shoes and rubber matted stools were provided for employees who found it difficult to stand for long periods of time at the mixing bowl and cake decorating stations.

The compact design of Tim Hortons franchises compounded the ergonomic issues faced by staff. Says Susan, "We noticed our employees twisting their necks to look at the monitor while reaching for coffee to pass to the customers." Recognizing that a solution couldn't compromise the quality of Tim Hortons' products or customer service, the Burrs decided to

provide another monitor at a lower level and continually rotate staff to avoid repetitive strain injuries.

In 1999, a six member Joint Health and Safety Committee that would meet quarterly was established, the same year that Doug, the store managers and one supervisor completed Basic Certification Part One training. By December 2001, they had also completed Certification Part Two training.

The Burrs' reliance on young seasonal workers presented its own issues: inexperience, limited health and safety knowledge, and high turnover. With 60 young workers on the payroll, Susan observes, "Hiring, training and maintaining a good work force is a challenge all fast food operators deal with and we were no exception. Not only are young workers faced with many aspects of learning a new job, they must also learn that doing a job right is doing it safe."

While the Burrs had taken the initiative to develop a customized health and safety program, the processes had never really formalized on paper. This would prove to be a significant hurdle when they were advised of a WSIB Workwell Audit slated for July 2000. Susan explains, "As owners we had always been 'hands-on' and proactive in the workplace but we did not have a formalized program. In a matter of two months all that we had practiced and preached for so long needed to be put into print."

As it turned out, the Audit was timely. With three stores on the go, the Burrs had been finding it increasingly difficult to maintain a 'hands-on' philosophy. For their business to thrive, the health and safety program needed to be properly documented to allow for the efficient implementation by store managers. With the help of two other Tim Hortons franchises that had already experienced a Workwell Audit, the Burrs formalized their program for the benefit of their employees and to the satisfaction of the government. In July 2000, the Burrs' franchises passed the Workwell audit with flying colours.

By 2001 Tim Hortons head office had developed a franchise-wide health and safety program called "Always Safe". This comprehensive program includes safety checklists, start-up tests and safety manuals. The Burrs modified some of this material to make it more site-specific.

Even with a solid health and safety program in place, the Burrs are anything but complacent. Their latest innovation has been to create a health and safety coordinator position. "Staying on top of things is extremely important and with the many demands of operating a fast-paced business, all too often things may get missed or overlooked," says Susan.

The Burrs determined the best way to ensure that the components of their health and safety pro-

gram were consistently applied in all three locations was to offer this new role to one of their store managers, Robin Schroeder. In addition to her regular responsibilities as a store manager, Robin works closely with the other store managers, the Joint Health and Safety Committee and the employees to implement and assess the program.

Now as a matter of course, employees have an orientation safety training sheet, tasks lists, a signed copy of the OH&S Policy, mandatory safe footwear acknowledgement, and an annual WHMIS training workshop. Each store uses safe equipment, has chemical storage areas, and uses a Rules, Regulations and Policies booklet that spells out their safety policies. Safety Observation Forms, safety training checklists, warning sign displays and MSDS information sheets are also used.

Today, customers are greeted at the door with a statement about Tim Hortons' commitment to safety. Visitors and suppliers entering the back production area are required to read the Occupational Health and Safety Policy book.

Over the years, the Burrs' commitment and insistence on operating safely has instilled a culture where health and safety has become a day-to-day initiative. Young workers soon came to understand their occupational health and safety rights and responsibilities. "They are accountable and work as a member of the team to make safety a priority," confirms Susan.

When asked how they compare themselves to the competition, Susan replies, "I have to believe that we have the best health and safety system. If health and safety is important to the owners, it becomes important to the managers and in turn it becomes important to its employees."

Susan credits the store managers for the success of their health and safety program. "Managers play a huge role in the success of our programs. Health and safety has become second nature to them—just like monitoring the freshness of our product, the cleanliness of the store and the quality of customer service. They train, monitor, evaluate and document health and safety practices. Their dedication to health and safety makes it all work."

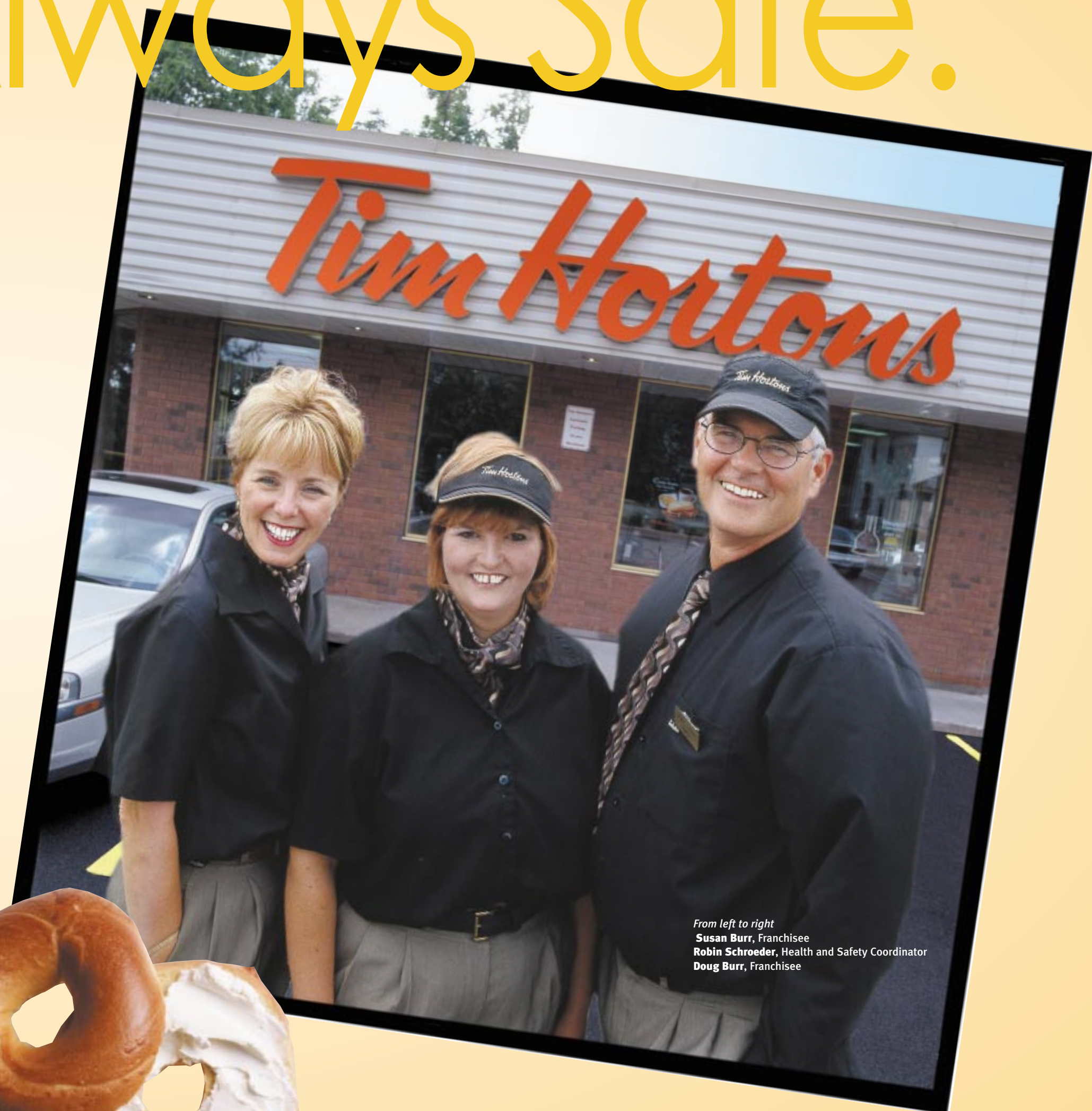
Is there a direct payoff from strong health and safety practices in the workplace? Susan is convinced. "Employees are happier because they know that management cares about them which hopefully equates into lower injuries, turnover and an experienced work force. Franchisees are pleased because they have healthier and happier employees and reduced WSIB costs from fewer injuries."

With all this hard work underway, they're entitled to a coffee break. TIMBIT anyone? ☺

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From left to right
Susan Burr, Franchisee
Robin Schroeder, Health and Safety Coordinator
Doug Burr, Franchisee





Retail Burnout

The retail industry represents a rewarding opportunity for its employees—especially those who thrive in a competitive, people-oriented environment. Ironically, it is often these same qualities that cause an employee to burn out from stress.

Retail workers face a variety of psychosocial stress on the job. Evening and weekend work is common, particularly during sale and holiday periods. Competing for sales commissions, dealing with irate or difficult customers, and working long hours can also take their toll on the health and well-being of staff.

Is it any wonder that employee stress is climbing to the top of the ‘lost time’ list? Statistics show that each year, stress costs North American companies more than that spent on back injuries, heart disease or cancer. In the U.S., stress related workers compensation claims are twice the cost of an average physical injury claim, resulting in more lost time workdays and taking twice as long to repair as physical injury claims.

The signs of retail burnout range from the mild to the extreme. The symptoms, however, are both definite and recognizable. At work, employees may seem irritable—treating customers and co-workers rudely or abruptly. A stressed employee may lack energy and enthusiasm, or feel tired, disillusioned and unmotivated. Outside of work, employees may have difficulty sleeping—or getting out of bed in the morning. They may feel unable to unwind and recover from work.

There is no “one size fits all” solution to relieving retail burnout. To determine the reasons for the stress, it’s important to look beyond the job itself—and examine how the employee is handling stressors.

Dr. Howard Book is a Toronto-based psychiatrist and organizational consultant who studies the issue of work-related stress. He believes that one of the main reasons for stress is that employers spend too much time focusing on the technical elements of a job and not enough time determining whether the person performing the job has the style and personality to handle it. “What ends up happening,” he notes, “is the person in the job becomes stressed. And when they get stressed, they work less effectively and efficiently. Then everyone suffers—all because the organization hasn’t paid enough attention to it up front.”

Ensuring a proper fit between an individual, the job and the organization is paramount. “If an employer is hiring for a high pressure sales job, open-ended questions should be asked during the interview to help him determine whether the individual can handle the stress associated with that job,” notes Book. Detailed questions such as ‘Tell me about a situation where you were under a lot of stress at work, and how you reacted’ will often reveal more about a candidate than simply asking ‘Can you handle stress?’. Employers should also look at body language

and reactions to best gauge a candidate’s suitability for a particular job.

Book also notes that employers often neglect to recognize that a job is stressful and to celebrate the achievements of their employees in dealing with stress. “Often, we’re afraid to acknowledge that a job is stressful for fear that employees will ask for more money, or seek more time off,” he notes. “In reality, ‘soft rewards’—that is, affiliation and a feeling of belonging—are what employees welcome most. If an employer takes the time to acknowledge the strengths and contribution of staff, and recognizes that the job is stressful, it can be a much more powerful motivator than money ever could be.”

Wal-Mart Canada Corp. has a healthy perspective on the issue of stress. “For us, it’s not about whether stress exists,” says the company’s Senior Claims Manager, Sandra Jordan. “It’s about how you deal with it that is important.”

Jordan believes that a strong team-oriented atmosphere helps Wal-Mart employees deal with the natural stresses of the job. “An important part of our culture is to ensure that our employees have fun at work,” says Jordan. “We are extremely team-oriented and we all know that we’re here to work together. Our managers spend most of their days on the sales floor with our employees and understanding the issues they deal with. We think that’s important.”

Allowing employees to have input into decisions that affect their jobs and performance of tasks can give them more control over their work lives—and reduce stress. “Don’t hesitate to brainstorm with staff about ways to improve a particular job,” notes Book. “No one can give you the perspective that a person doing the job can provide. Make sure it’s clear that you value and encourage their opinion.”

At Wal-Mart, employees are strongly encouraged to come forward with any concern they have about their job and their work environment. “Our employees know that we have an open-door policy,” says Jordan. “We let them know that they can come to us with any issue—and we will deal with it in a non-judgmental manner.”

Finally, employers should educate themselves and their employees on different ways to reduce stress. Book encourages organizations to “Organize an after-work baseball or soccer team to get employees out in a social setting where they can burn off some of the stress. Provide education on relaxation techniques, positive thinking and proper nutrition. It can result in a healthier life style and improve an individual’s ability to cope with stress.” ✦

OSSA BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Lead. Innovate. Learn.

The Ontario Service Safety Alliance Board of Directors is responsible for governing the OSSA, promoting its Vision and guiding its future. A position on the Board represents the opportunity to make a difference in the health and safety of Ontario's service sector by sharing skills and gaining strategic insight while networking with senior decision makers within the industry. The OSSA Board is made up of a broad base of skills and experience from within the service industry.

The OSSA values the contribution made by its Board members, and those of its Advisory Committees. We actively encourage industry representatives who are interested in participating in this exciting endeavor to get involved. For more information, go to www.ossa.com.

CHAIR ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mary D'Alton is stepping down as Chair of the OSSA Board of Directors. In the year that Mary served as Chair, she demonstrated leadership and a tireless commitment to improving health and safety in the service sector. OSSA thanks her for her outstanding efforts, and looks forward to her continuing contribution as a member of the Board of Directors.

OSSA welcomes **Bob Meehan** as its incoming Chair, OSSA Board of Directors. As the owner of two Jumbo Video Stores, Bob brings almost 25 years of grocery and retail business experience to the position. Bob is a board member of the Niagara Child Development Centre, and is a past board member of the St. Catherine's YWCA and the Port Dover Lighthouse Theatre. Bob is a founding member of the OSSA Board.

OUTGOING BOARD MEMBERS

OSSA thanks its four departing Board members for the invaluable contribution they have made as members of the OSSA Board of Directors.

Denise Coombs, *Hotel Employees Restaurant Employees Union, Local 75*
Harry McCron, *Corporate Health and Safety, The Beer Store*
David Phillips, *President, Mills and Hadwin Ltd.*
Juan J. Aragón-Franssen, *Customer Service, Mountain Equipment Co-op, Toronto*

INCOMING BOARD MEMBERS

John Heffner Jr., *President, Heffner Lexus Toyota*

Together with his brother, Willy Heffner is responsible for all operations of Heffner Lexus Toyota, a company originally founded by Mr. John Heffner Sr. in 1960.

John is a member of the Ontario Toyota Dealers Advertising Committee and other industry-related organizations, as well as being a member of the KW Sales and Ad Club. John is a two-time president of the Kitchener-Waterloo Auto Dealers Association.

Maurizio Lobalsamo, *Health & Safety Coordinator, Sobeys Ontario*

Maurizio Lobalsamo has worked in a health and safety capacity at various companies including Tim Donut Limited (TDL Group, a.k.a. Tim Hortons), and Dylex/Biway. Presently with Sobeys Ontario, his primary function as Health and Safety Co-ordinator is accident prevention through the development, implementation, training, and co-ordination of Health and Safety policies and programs in the Sobeys stores. Maurizio also brings experience in WSIB accident reporting, administration and employee return to work programs.

Sandy Robinson, *Director of Operations, Hummingbird Centre*

Sandy Robinson has worked in professional theatre since 1975 in the not-for-profit and commercial sectors in stage and production management and theatre administration. She is currently Director of Operations at the Hummingbird Centre, a 3,200 seat multi use theatre situated in the Toronto theatre district.

Prior to joining the Centre, Sandy was the production stage manager for Mirvish Production's "Crazy for You" at the Royal Alexandra Theatre. Previous positions include Director of Production and Operations at the Elgin and Winter Garden Theatre Centre, and production supervisor for the Canadian production of CATS.

Conrad D. Turner, *Vice President, Human Resources, Tannis Food Distributors*

As a fluently bilingual human resource specialist in a variety of industries and a crown corporation since 1974, and a business owner since 1987, Conrad brings an extensive background to his role as a Board member. He has served on the Retail and Wholesale Advisory Committee since 1999 (most recently as Chairperson) and also sits on the WSIB Service Sector Advisory Committee.

Upcoming Events

The following is a listing of upcoming trade shows, conferences and events of interest to Ontario's service sector.

VENUE	DATE	LOCATION
OCTOBER		
HostEx 2002 Canadian Restaurant & Foodservice Association	October 20 – 22	International Centre Mississauga, Ontario
2002 Grocery Innovations Canada Canadian Federation of Independent Grocers	October 27 – 29	Metro Toronto Convention Centre Toronto, Ontario
The Eastern Ontario Health and Safety Conference & Trade Show Industrial Accident Prevention Association	October 30	Centurion Center Ottawa, Ontario
NOVEMBER		
2002 Professional Development Conference Canadian Society of Safety Engineers	November 3 – 6	Regal Constellation Hotel Toronto, Ontario

More and more computers are making their ways into classrooms, libraries and living rooms. For children, computers represent an attractive and fun way to learn and be entertained. With access to educational programs, research information for school projects and the ability to communicate with people around the world, computers can be useful and beneficial tools for children and teenagers.

It's up to parents to monitor and control their children's computer habits.

One of the realities of life in the computer age is that there is a lot of unsuitable material on the Internet—and no regulations or controls on the content. This means it is up to parents to monitor and control their children's computer habits.

As a parent, blocking software can help you prevent objectionable material from reaching your children. You can also make sure that computers with online access are kept in a family area, rather than behind a closed bedroom door. Children should be taught to never give out their name or fill out questionnaires, or send images of themselves over the Internet.

Talk to your child so that they can learn to understand and talk about what they view and what it means. Encourage them to use only monitored chat lines designed for their specific age group. Let them know that information on the Internet comes from all different sources and may not always be reliable. Most importantly, pay attention to what your children are doing by checking bookmarks, favorites and history menus and icons for a list of recently visited sites.

It's not surprising that long hours spent at a keyboard can overtax children.

A recent survey showed that children are spending approximately one to three hours every day at a computer. When you consider that computers were developed with adult bodies in mind, it's not surprising that long hours spent at a keyboard can overtax children's hands, wrists, arms, and neck and put stress on developing muscles, bones, tendons, and nerves.

The same recommendations that apply to adults who work at computers should apply to your children. Look for adjustable office furniture, and encourage changes in posture, regular stretches and frequent breaks.

Grade-school children need even more frequent breaks from close computer work than adults do.

Like adults, children who spend extended time working on the computer can suffer from fatigue, eyestrain, blurred vision, and headaches. Take the time to make sure the screen is neither too bright nor too dim compared to the ambient light. Visual fatigue can also be avoided by ensuring that children do not spend extended time on the computer, and take regular breaks.

Childhood obesity has increased because children spend more time sitting in front of electronic media.

Across the country, obesity and other health problems related to children's increasing physical inactivity is on the rise. Many health professionals believe childhood obesity has increased because children spend more time sitting in front of electronic media and less time actively playing, at home and school.

Children who grow up obese also are at higher risk for other chronic health problems as adults, such as diabetes high blood pressure and heart disease. To keep your child safe, ensure they take part in exercise-related activities every day, and monitor the amount of time spent at the computer.

With care and attention to use, home computers can be an opportunity to advance children's learning, while opening them up to life beyond their backyard. Take care with your child's experience—their health and safety depends on it. ☺

Surfing a New World

The computer is making its way into homes across the country. How can you protect your children from some of its inherent dangers?



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