

Workplace Safety Group

June 2010

Monthly News e-Letter

Bill 168 Compliance

On June 15, 2010 the Ontario Ministry of Labour will begin to enforce Bill 168. By that time, Ontario employers must have implemented a Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy. Bill 168 also requires a risk assessment to be carried out in every workplace, to determine if Workplace Violence is an ongoing concern. Every employer will need to develop a program to implement the Workplace Harassment Policy and if the risk assessment indicates a potential for Workplace Violence, a program will have to be developed to implement the Workplace Violence Policy.



[Workplace Violence Prevention](#)

HOT, HOT, HOT

May was one of the hottest in Ontario's recent history. If it is an indicator for the summer ahead, vacationers everywhere can rejoice.

Those less fortunate and who work in hot, non-air conditioned environments must be wary of the hazards.



Control measures to reduce the effects of heat:

- engineering controls to provide a cooler workplace
- safe work practices to reduce worker exposure
- training employees to recognize and prevent heat illnesses

Engineering Controls

Engineering controls are the most effective means of reducing excessive heat exposure.

- **Reducing heat produced by the body:** Automated and mechanized tasks minimize the need for heavy physical work resulting in build-up of body heat.
- **Insulating hot surfaces:** Insulation reduces the heat exchange between the source of heat and the work environment.
- **Shielding:** Two types of shields can be used: 1) stainless steel, aluminum or other bright metal surfaces that reflect heat back toward the source; 2) absorbent shields, such as water-cooled jackets made of black-surfaced aluminum that effectively absorb and carry away heat.
- **Ventilation and air conditioning:** Ventilation, localized air conditioning, and cooled observation booths allow workers to cool down after brief periods of intense heat exposure.
- **Reducing the humidity:** Air conditioning, dehumidification, and elimination of open hot water baths, drains, and leaky steam valves help reduce humidity.

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Young Workers At Risk!



According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the food services industry is the top employer of teenagers. In an industry relying so heavily on young workers it would seem logical to have solid safety programs in place; however, that is not the case. An Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA) survey found that 56 percent of young workers polled said they had received no safety training whatsoever before being assigned a new task.



Burn injuries are one of the most painful injuries anyone can suffer.

Personal Protection

Ordinary clothing provides some protection from heat radiated by surrounding hot surfaces. Specially designed heat-protective clothing is available for working in extremely hot conditions. In hot and humid workplaces, light clothing allows maximum skin exposure and efficient body cooling by sweat evaporation.

Can we become acclimatized to hot environments?

The body's adaptation to new thermal conditions is called acclimatization. Complete acclimatization generally takes six to seven days; some individuals may need longer. A decrease in heat tolerance can occur even after a long weekend. As a result of reduced heat tolerance, it is advisable for workers to avoid work under very hot conditions on the first day of the week. New employees should acclimatize before assuming a full workload. It is advisable to assign about half the normal workload to a new employee on the first day of work, gradually increasing on subsequent days.

Some medications interfere with acclimatization. Hypotensives (blood pressure lowering drugs), diuretics, antispasmodics, sedatives, tranquilizers, antidepressants and amphetamines decrease the body's ability to cope with heat. Workers should seek a doctor's advice on the effects of their medication in hot work environments. Alcohol also interferes with acclimatization.

How can I prevent heat related illnesses?

If practical, workers in hot environments should be allowed to set their own work and rest schedules. Infrequent or irregular tasks such as emergency repairs of hot process equipment often result in heat exposure. Experienced workers can better judge heat stress and modify their exposure accordingly. Inexperienced workers may need monitoring as they may continue to work beyond the point at which heat stress symptoms appear. People are generally unable to notice their own heat stress related symptoms. Their survival depends on their coworkers' ability to recognize these symptoms and seek timely medical help.

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VIOLENCE IN THE WORKPLACE ONLINE TRAINING COURSE NOW AVAILABLE

The online training course includes:

Introduction

- Brief overview of Bill 168
- Bill 168 definitions of workplace violence and harassment
- Understanding the importance of preventing workplace violence and harassment
- Statistics Canada Study
- Explanation of “Domestic Violence”
- Explanation of “Right to Refuse Work”
- Quiz

Duties of:

- The employer
- The supervisor
- The employee
- Quiz

Who's at Risk

- Brief summary of occupations that have a greater risk of workplace violence
- Quiz

Warning Signs of Workplace Violence

- Learn early recognition of escalating behaviour including warning signs or situations that may lead to violence
- Quiz

Preventing Workplace Violence

- Learn how to prevent or diffuse volatile situations or aggressive behaviour
- Learn different ways to protect oneself and co-workers, including use of the “buddy system”
- Learn different ways to deal with hostile people such as co-workers, customers, patients and/or clients, relatives of patients and visitors
- Quiz

Understanding your Company's “Action Plan”

- Understanding of company's violence and harassment policies
- Understanding of company's policies and procedures for reporting, investigating and recordkeeping
- Understanding of company's “Disciplining Workers Policy”

Salt and Fluid Supplements: A person working in a very hot environment loses water and salt through sweat. This loss must be replenished by water and salt intake to equal fluid loss. On average, about one litre of water each hour is required. Plenty of cool (10-15°C) drinking water should be available on the job site and workers should be encouraged to drink water every 15 to 20 minutes even if they do not feel thirsty.

Sport drinks, fruit juice, etc: Drinks designed to replace body fluids and electrolytes should be used in moderation. They may benefit workers who have very physically active occupations but they also add unnecessary sugar or salt to the diet. Diluting fruit juices, sport and electrolyte drinks with water, may be advisable. Drinks with alcohol or caffeine dehydrate the body and should NEVER be consumed. Water is the most efficient fluid for re-hydration.

Emergency Action Plan: In extreme environments, an emergency plan is needed. The plan should include procedures for providing affected workers with first aid and medical care.



Questions, Concerns, Comments?
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