

Other Winter Hazards

Snow, ice and cold weather are clearly seasonal safety hazards for winter; but were you aware that combustible dust is more hazardous in the winter than at any other time of year?

The risk of a dust explosion increases when low humidity levels, like those seen in the winter, make dust easy to disperse and ignite.

WorkSafe BC recently published a [Hazard Alert](#) highlighting this increased risk. The Alert notes that industrial incident investigations by the [US Chemical Safety Board](#) found that seven out of eight fatal combustible dust explosions between 1995 and 2009 occurred during cold winter months.

Several preventive measures employers can undertake to eliminate or minimize the possibility of combustible dust: were noted in the Alert, including:

- Conduct a risk assessment
- Implement appropriate dust control measures
- Control measures and clean up practices that rely on the use of water may not be suitable or effective.
- Openings such as bay doors and wall dampers may be closed, increasing the degree of enclosure and reducing natural ventilation or make up air.
- Ventilation may be reduced or shut down to conserve heat.
- Re-circulation of air from exhaust systems may also increase.
- Portable heating units potentially introduce additional ignition sources into the workplace.
- Control ignition sources.

Plan Now for Working in Cold Weather

Fall is nearly over; Winter is around the corner and there is no question colder weather is on its way.

For businesses that have workers working outdoors in the winter, now is the time to prepare safe work procedures.

While there are no specific 'working in cold environment' regulations; an employer has the duty and

responsibility to consider workplace hazards and eliminate or control them.

As noted one way to do this is to develop written safe work procedures, in consultation with the JOHS committee or HS rep (if present) or with employees. The procedures should list the hazards and then list preventive measure to eliminate or control them.

If you have procedures in place then be sure everyone knows what they are and what is expected of them' also ensure they are trained in the use of any equipment noted in the procedure.

Note that if you have procedures in place you may need to review to ensure they are relevant. For additional information

and resources the CCOHS site; here are links to 3 of their pages dealing with cold environments:

[Working in the Cold](#)

[Cold Environments General](#)

[Health Effects and First Aid](#)

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Forklift—'Mousetrap Deaths'

from Mitsubishi forkliftbriefing.com

An interesting article regarding 'mousetrap deaths' and causes for forklifts tipping was posted at Mitsubishi forkliftbriefing.com.

This article has taken selected parts from the above; please follow the link for the full article..

Recent studies by the European Agency for Safety and Health at work confirmed that tipping accidents are one of the biggest causes of fatal accidents. In almost all cases the driver was 'mousetrapped' between the truck and ground.

What can be done to prevent this? Belt up! The OSGR re

quire an operator to belt up in any forklift (industrial lift truck equipped with a seatbelt.

Seatbelts in forklifts are designed to prevent drivers sliding from the seat in an upward and outward direction in a forklift tip over.

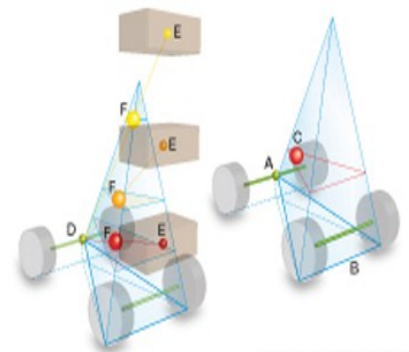
If not wearing a seatbelt, the driver natural tendency in a tip over is to try to jump clear; however, it is this natural reaction that often causes them to be caught between the overhead guard and the ground. No amount of training, experience or knowledge seems to stop people trying to beat the 'mousetrap'.

While there are many instances that can lead to a tipping incident, in all cases the truck's stability has been compromised.

The basis for the trucks' stability is known as the "Stability Pyramid".

The point that must be kept within the triangle/pyramid is the combined center of gravity. The truck has a center and the load has a center; these two forces combined form the combined center of gravity. It is this combined, moving point that has to remain in the "Stability Pyramid". If the point moves to far in front, the

truck will tip forward; to far to the left or right and it will tip sideways. Also. Moving the load further up cause the Stability Pyramid to be smaller and therefore easier for the combined center of gravity to



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Safety Services Nova Scotia 31st Annual Health and Safety Conference

Safety Services Nova Scotia announces a new format for it's [annual health and safety conference](#).

The 31st health and safety conference, March 20-21, will take place at the Westin Hotel in Halifax and have a broad appeal with:

- Focused 2 day program
- All star speakers
- Flexible 1 day, full conference, or supplier showcase-only options
- Expanded showcase and presentations with new and returning health and safety suppliers
- Results driven pre-

conference training program

- In-depth professional development workshops for experienced professionals
- Sessions appealing to joint committees, supervisors, those new to the workplace or new to health and safety—something for everyone
- Designation maintenance points from most professional associations for conference attendance
- Peer networking
- Onsite mentors

Now is the time to plan for

this event. Registration for exhibitors/booth and conference delegates is now open; go to:

[Exhibitor Registration](#)

[Delegate Registration](#)

Costs for the event are:

- ⇒ Before Dec 31—member \$440; non-member \$550
- ⇒ Up to Feb 19—member \$510; non-member \$ 630
- ⇒ After Feb 19—member \$580; non-member \$710

Also, new for this year, there are 1 day rates available to members and non-members

as well.

31st Annual Health, Safety and Environment Conference and Safety Showcase
March 20-21, 2013
THE WESTIN NOVA SCOTIA HOTEL
HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

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workers' compensation board of nova scotia

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SUCCESS THROUGHOUT**

OH&S Administrative Penalty Review

On Wednesday, November 21st, the Hon. Marilyn More, Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, addressed the House with regards to the OH&S Administrative Penalties being reviewed in the coming months.

Government introduced the administrative penalties in 2010, with the fines acting as a deterrent for employers and employees who break safety laws.

To ensure the penalties are having the intended impact it is now time to take a step back and evaluate what is working well and what can be improved.

The review will focus on ensuring that our current penalties are applied consistently, fairly, and appropriately, so that they

are the most effective tool for achieving workplace safety.

Earlier this year the province partnered with the Workers' Compensation Board to develop a new five-year workplace safety strategy. More than 400 people participated in 26 consultations across the province; with another 1,000 Nova Scotians sharing their views online.

A strategy framework has been developed and consultations will continue over the next couple of months to ensure all the information is collected and that the strategy can be finalized later this winter.

As part of this process, Nova Scotians also addressed the issue of Administrative Penalties and told us that they would

like to see the money used in a way that would directly improve safety in workplaces. Employers told us they support the penalties and would like them to be assigned in a more consistent way.

In listening to our partners, including labour, we are taking a look at how the administrative penalties could be improved to better meet the goal of increased workplace safety for Nova Scotians.

Nova Scotians agree that penalties have a place in the overall approach to support workplace safety. Many of our partners in the safety community, including the Federation of Labour and the Construction Association of Nova Scotia, have shared their support of the

penalties but they also would like to see them better utilized.

The review of the penalties has begun with conversations with internal staff already taking place. As the review continues in the coming months our safety partners will have a say in the process.

As details of the review and input process are developed they will be communicated to our safety partners and posted to our web page.

For complete notes and comments [Hansard, Nov 21](#)

Recent Incidents and OHS Orders

Before noting the recent incidents; we, at the OH&S Division, would like to wish everyone a Safe Holiday Season, both at work and at home.

Tree Cutting

A worker was injured when cutting trees. A tree the worker had felled got caught up against another tree; the worker proceeded to go to another nearby tree and began cutting it, when the 'caught up' tree dislodged and struck him. While there are no specific regulations regarding tree cutting, a hazard assessment and safe work procedure should have been developed and workers informed and trained in the procedures. Also the following [Forest Professional guideline](#) may be useful.

Ladders

Two separate incidents of falling off ladders were reported. The Occupational Safety General Regulations requires that 3 points of contact be used (or a positioning belt) be used when working from ladders. Also ladders must be of appropriate CSA grades and properly secured to ensure they do not slip or tip.

Fall Protection

The Division responded to a reported 'falling' incident. In this case the worker was wearing the appropriate fall protection and potential serious injury averted.

Recent OHS Orders

Are you in compliance?

First Aid kits not resupplied; First Aid Certificate expired or not available to show Officer.

WHMIS training; MSDS sheets more than 3 years old; decanted product in unlabeled containers; eye wash stations with 15 minutes continuous flow

Fire extinguishers available but without yearly inspection tag

Electrical panels with open slots—ensure the slots are covered with a properly approved cover plate

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For further information come see us on
the Web at:

<http://gov.ns.ca/lae/healthandsafety/>

or our OHS Knowledgebase
[Knowledgebase](#)

Reminder—Construction Industry Consultation

If you are a builder, architect, engineer, municipal building official, or have some other interest in construction the Province is looking for your input on 24 recommendations prepared by the Building Advisory Committee.

The recommendations address 3 major areas:

- Improving the Letters of Undertaking process
- Improving compliance with the Letters of Undertaking process
- Improving building quality (a shared responsibility)

Documents of interest (all are pdf format)

are available on the Department's Homepage and are comprised of:

- [Review of Obligations under Letters of Undertaking Final Report](#)

Related Documents

- [Discussion Paper—Review of Obligations under Letters of Undertaking](#)
- [Document de travail—Examen des obligations en vertu des lettres d'engagement](#)

Comments may be submitted for consideration up to December 20, 2012 by email to Ted G Ross at:

Rosstg@gov.ns.ca

Or if you wish to provide written submissions please send them to:

C/O
NS Building Advisory Committee
Labour and Advanced Education
Attn: Executive Secretary
P.O. Box 697
Halifax, NS, B3J 2T8
Fax (902) 428-3239

Links to related agencies:

- [Nova Scotia WCB](#)
- [Workers Compensation Appeals Tribunal \(WCAT\)](#)
- [Workers' Advisers Program \(WAP\)](#)
- [Workplace Safety and Insurance System \(WSIS\)](#)
- [Office of the Employer Advisor Nova Scotia](#)
- [Service Canada / Français](#)
- [Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety \(CCOHS\) / Français](#)
- [CanOSH \(Canada's National Workplace Health and Safety Website\) / Français](#)