

### *Seasonal Hazards*

As the season moves from Spring to Summer and more work takes place outdoors there are some season specific hazards that workplaces parties will need to address.

For example:

*Heat Stress:* As temperatures and humidity soar the possibility of heat stress also increases, both for person working outdoors or indoors. The Division created a Hazard Alert in 2002 which offers information and suggested preventive measures [Heat Stress](#). Also the CCOHS web site has several articles on working in hot environments; for example, [Hot Environments-Health Effects](#); [Hazards of Summer Heat](#), and [Maximum Temperature Limit for Working](#).

*Ticks/Lyme Disease:* Persons working outdoors in tall grassy , brush or forested areas should be aware of the possibility of coming into contact with “Deer Ticks” and Lyme Disease. Division Hazard Alert—[Lyme Disease/Deer Tick](#) . Again from CCOHS: [Lyme Disease](#) and from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, USA): [Lyme](#).

*West Nile Virus:* This has been in Canada since 2001 and while risk of exposure is low it is still important to know the symptoms and how to reduce your exposure. Division Hazard Alert—[West Nile Virus](#) and NS Department of Health [West Nile Virus](#).

*Ground Maintenance—Mowing:* From now until the late Fall season lawn mowers, or ride on tractors, will be in near continuous use. While they are commonly used both in the workplace and at home it is important to remember they do have hazards associated with them. CCOHS: [Landscaping-Rotary Power Mowers](#); [Riding Lawn Mowers](#); [Landscaping](#) (follow links on their page)

### *OHS Records—What do you keep?*

There are various requirements for record keeping throughout the Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations. These range from maintenance and inspection records to assessments and testing. However, the Act also has a more general provision within Section 28 of the Act—Requirement for Program.

This section states that an employer establish and maintain a written health and safety program with 28(h) requiring maintenance of records and statistics, including reports of ohs inspections and safety investigations....

Aside from any regulatory reason for recording keeping; the maintenance of

good records will allow a business to be able to identify possible harmful trends and address issues before they become more serious in nature. Ultimately good records are needed when trying to prove ‘due diligence’ if charged with a safety offence. Some examples of records to keep include:

- Training records

- Written safe work procedures
- Hazard assessments and result
- Incident investigations
- Equipment logbooks, maintenance records
- PPE fit testing
- Inspection reports—internal or OHS Officer
- OHS disciplinary measures
- JOHS minutes

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## OHS cases and rulings from across Canada in 2012

A brief synopsis of selected Court Cases and rulings excerpted from Safety Compliance Insider (Vol. 9 Issue 1 2012 Year in Review, from Editors of [OHS Insider](#))

### Federal

#### Guardrail and Fall Arrest

A worksite with an elevated platform that had a fall arrest system but no guardrail, received a violation for the lack of guardrail. On appeal the Tribunal upheld the violation noting, a raised structure to which workers have access and serves as a work area allows for a fall of more than 1.2 meters is required to have a guardrail despite the provision of fall protection.

### Alberta

#### Workplace Parties Duties

A temporary worker fell from an opening unto a pile

of pipe, where a company was salvaging metal at an industrial plant, and was injured. The company was charged with several violations; but they argued the prime contractor was responsible for supervising all workers, including theirs, and complying with all safety requirements. Essentially saying it had no duty to ensure the safety of workers at that site. They were convicted on all counts; as there was no evidence they took any steps concerning the safety of its workers.

### Newfoundland

#### Knowledge of hazards and safe work practices

A worker suffered a partial amputation of the hand while cleaning a machine. The company pled guilty to failing to ensure workers

and supervisors are familiar with hazards and that equipment was used according to safe work practices.

### Nova Scotia

#### Work refusal not based on reasonable grounds

A worker, while delivering food and juice, was hit by a resident at a residential care facility. The employer/facility changed the work so that 2 workers always went with the cart. The worker asked to be excused from the task and when the facility said no, initiated a work refusal. On investigating the refusal an OHS Officer deemed the facility had taken reasonable precautions and advised the worker to return to work. On appeal the Labour Board upheld the Officers' decision and concluded the workers' per-

ception of the danger in manning the cart was not based on reasonable grounds.

### New Brunswick

#### Unsafe Equipment

A young worker was electrocuted while using a floor buffer/polisher on a wet floor. It was determined the polisher had been bought at a yard sale and brought into the workplace by a co-worker. Although the business had not authorized its use, a supervisor was aware it was being used. The young worker had not been trained in the use of the equipment and the equipment had not been inspected monthly as required. The company pled guilty to three OHS violations and the supervisor to two OHS violations.

## Young Workers

While young workers may have part-time jobs throughout the year, the summer months have traditionally been peak times for young workers seeking employment.

Young workers are eager and looking to make a good impression; they are not likely to ask questions and so are vulnerable to workplace injuries.

Young workers need to be made aware of hazards and trained in the use of equipment and job procedures the same as any regularly employed person.

They need to be made aware they have the ability to bring any concerns they have to the JOHS committee or Health and Safety Representative or ultimately exercise their right to refuse

work that puts their health or safety at risk.

Ensure you provide them with an orientation not just to the workplace and what their work will be but also to health and safety practices and procedure you may have.

Instruct them in the use of any required PPE and provide proper supervi-

sion. Encourage co-workers to advise and correct them if they're observed working unsafely.

Additional Resources:

CCOHS:  
[Young Worker Zone](#)

NS WCB:  
[Health & Safety 101](#)  
(interactive tool)  
[Young Workers](#)

## *FYI—Recent Incidents*

A short and non-exhaustive recap of workplace incidents investigated by OHS Officers. They are presented so as to raise awareness of potentially similar issues at your workplace.

### *Electrical Contacts*

A worker was injured in an electrical contact while checking cable routing. The worker had applied their lock to the lock box and proceeded to follow the cables through the front side (load side) of the panel which had been de-energized. One of the cables went around to the back side and to locate it, the worker removed a cover and came into contact with an energized (4160v) bus bar. On

investigation it was determined lockout did not apply to the back (line side) of the panel.

At another workplace a worker received an electrical shock while removing a cord from a temporary electrical service installation. On investigation it was noted there had been some damage to the plug covers, from improper unplugging of extension cords. It was alleged workers were pulling on the cords to remove them from the plugs, rather than going to the actual plug to remove the cords. All the plug covers being spring loaded, they automatically closed over on the plugged in extension cord, so when cords

were pulled on, the actual plugs were hooking/wearing on the doors. Causing some covers to break and possible damage to the installation/insulation enclosed around the wiring in the cord.

### *Guarding*

A worker received injuries to their thumb while operating a press brake. The worker had placed a small piece (9"X6") between the shear and the die to determine if the bend on the metal was 90 degrees. While holding the piece the worker activated the shear and ended up catching their thumb between the shear and the die. On investigation it was determined the machine was

manufactured in 1941 and did not have guarding. The employer had a safety program in place with numerous job procedures and safe work practices, but not one for dealing with positioning of small pieces of material.

### *Trip/Fall*

A worker fell while stepping off a step (8 inches high) from an elevated area to the main floor. The worker sustained a sprained ankle. On investigation the step was found to be in good condition and was not hazardous to it being slippery. In order to highlight the edge of the step the employer added a yellow highlight strip to the edge.

## *Materials Handling and Lifting*

Manual handling of materials and lifting is a very common practice in workplaces. So common, that often we don't even stop to think how we lift an object off the ground, or off a shelf etc. Yet this activity is one of the most common causes of fatigue and back pain.

According to NS WCB statistics more than 2,000 Nova Scotians suffered serious back injuries in 2011. In May of 2012 a social marketing campaign was launched to recruit "Back Protection Agents".

Back injuries can be prevented in many ways: through better design or redesign of the workplace; safer lifting practices; using carts, lifts or dollies; or simply asking someone to help. Follow these links to learn more about: the [campaign](#) or to become an [agent](#).

Fatigue is a common effect of manual material handling. Not surprisingly as one gets more fatigued the possibility of accidental injuries from slipping, tripping and falling increases.

Also, as one is fatigued the possibility of pulling and straining muscles, the back in particular, increases.

A worker may experience back pain as a result of a one-time acute event, i.e.—lifting too heavy a load, slipping and falling, twisting, an impact to the back, or it may occur over a long period of repetitive activity.

Some factors to consider that contribute to back injuries are: weight, size and shape of the load, range of the lift, how far is the load being carried, frequency of lifts.

Be aware of the hazards of manual material handling and of back injuries and determine what is the best way to either eliminate the hazard or reduce it.

Additional resources: from CCOHS

[General Practice](#)  
[Health Hazards, Manual Material Handling](#)  
[Work Space Layout](#)

**LABOUR AND ADVANCED  
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the Web at:

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

or our OHS Knowledgebase  
[Knowledgebase](#)

*Workplace Health and Safety Regulations—take effect June 12, 2013*

A reminder that the Workplace Health and Safety Regulations will take effect June 12, 2013.

These regulations replace the current *Fall Protection and Scaffolding Regulations; Temporary Workplace Traffic Control Regulations, and Occupational Health Regulations.*

In addition the *Occupational Safety General Regulations* have been amended to make them consistent with the *WHSR*

- The new and updated regulations take advantage of the body of expert knowledge within Standard issuing bodies such as CSA and ANSI. These organizations are comprised of employer, employee, manufacturer, and regulator and regularly review and update their standards, including a public review process. The regulations will cite the most recent published version; however, equipment

that met the standard in force at the time of manufacture will still be acceptable.

The main changes within Fall Protection requirements are: a fall protection plan, prepared by the employer, is needed when working above 7.5 meters; at heights between 3 and 7.5 meters written safe work procedures will be required; there will now be formal training requirements; and the requirement to keep records.

WHSR will also contain new requirements covering Rope Access Work

The Scaffolding and Other Platforms section will reference CSA standards and require inspection and tagging.

To view a presentation on these and other highlighted changes go to Workplace Health and Safety Regulations

*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](#)