

The Signal



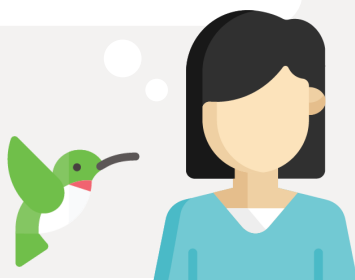
What Does Safety and Health Week Mean to You

A reflection on occupational health and safety of the past, present, and future.

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What Does Safety and Health Week Mean to You

Safety and Health Week (formerly known as the North American Occupational Safety and Health Week) is an annual, continent-wide event where all partners in occupational health and safety collaborate to promote injury and illness prevention in the workplace.

Founded in the 1980's by the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering (CSSE) it expanded beyond our borders following a 1997 agreement between Canada, the United States, and Mexico, dedicating the first week in May each year to focus on occupational health and safety. Over the years its built momentum and continues to be a network for encouraging safe work practices and a focus on health and safety in workplaces. This year's event takes place May 1-6.

What does Safety and Health Week mean to you? To me, I try to reflect on how far industry has come with respect to acknowledging hazards at work and mitigating risk. Given the working conditions in the past, and the struggled labour movements in the 17th century that led to the British Factory Act, I am thankful for the effort put

in by those who effected change in safety culture.

Staying healthy and safe is inherent to everything we do, not just at work. Again, this year as we successfully respond to current events, these initiatives are critical and must remain at the forefront of everyone's daily thoughts and activities. Everyone shares responsibility of health and safety at work.

[Continued >](#)



The most successful organizations collaborate with one another at all levels to ensure health and safety is prioritized, which has other benefits such as enhanced productivity and employee retention. Part of this collaboration is understanding what rights people have in workplaces. Employers have the right to determine and control risk and workers have the right to a safe work environment. An effective system is where employees know their rights and work with their employers to improve health and safety outcomes. Let's review the three fundamental rights for employees:

The right to know – Employees have a right to know about health and safety matters that could impact them or their coworkers. An example is being provided with information to ensure workers are taking proper precautions when using hazardous chemicals, such as personal protective equipment. Employees are also entitled to know about incidents that happen at work, including what corrective actions were taken to prevent future occurrences.

The right to participate – Employees have the right and should participate in decisions that affect their health and safety. This is a constructive exercise which has benefits for everyone. New and different perspectives are key to overcome challenges that ensure a safe environment for employees in the long term. Consider getting more involved.

The right to refuse – Employees have the right to refuse work that could impact them or their coworkers. The right to refuse dangerous work or serious and imminent risks is one of the most complex topics on occupational prevention and management. It's entirely circumstantial given a dynamic work environment. It's important for employers and employees to work together to set productive expectations, which hopefully lead to appropriate correction measures.

Safety and Health Week presents an excellent opportunity to focus, reinforce and strengthen our commitment to occupational safety, mental health and emergency preparedness through increased awareness, information sharing and training. Events will be taking place across the province within different levels of government, health and safety associations, academic institutions, organized labour, and more.

How is your workplace marking this week's events? Consider how you can get involved—its ultimately about raising awareness. It's also an excellent opportunity for employers and employees to get engaged with their Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees or Health and Safety Representatives. A Safety and Health Week webpage is available and will be updating with information on events. Check out <https://www.safetyandhealthweek.ca>.

– Don Hartt
Manager, Technical Services



Occupational Health and Safety Professionals Day

Annually on the Wednesday during Safety and Health Week, we take the day to recognize the efforts made by Occupational Health and Safety professionals who dedicate their careers to support and protect the health and safety of others.

Young Workers Initiative

The Occupational Health and Safety Division of the Safety Branch is undertaking a new initiative to help raise awareness and enhance safety for young workers entering the skilled trades or construction industry.

Before starting work on a construction site, all young workers must receive an orientation that makes them aware of:

- The type of work taking place
- The work they will be doing
- Hazards at the worksite
- Controls for the hazards
- Site rules
- Required personal protective equipment
- How and who to take safety concerns to
- How to refuse unsafe work

When working, everyone must:

- Make sure they are trained for their assigned work
- Know they have the right to refuse unsafe work and how to refuse that work
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment
- Be aware of their surroundings, watch for overhead loads, moving equipment, slip trip and fall hazards, etc.



- Never walk around heavy equipment or trucks unless they know the operator can see them and are aware they are in the area. If in doubt, stop and find a different route.
- Never use tools that have guards missing or bad electrical cords
- Don't go near an edge or opening in a floor where they may fall without fall protection
- Ask if unsure

Remember, everyone has the right to a safe workplace. Never do anything they believe to be unsafe just because they were told to do so. Safety is everyone's responsibility including your own.

– Ron Buchanan
Occupational Health & Safety Officer



Finding a New Identity After Workplace Injury

When pain dictates every day, it's hard to imagine that emotional support would make much of a difference. But for Aaron Kearley, it does.

Aaron worked in sheet metal for 25 years. He was one of those guys who could do everything; who everyone would call when they needed something built or needed a hand with a project. He loved his work and just ignored all the cuts to his hands, which were simply part of the job.

But over time he noticed his hands had flaky skin, small cuts and blisters. The more he worked, the sorer his hands became. Eventually they were covered in blisters, cuts and bleeding from finger tips to wrists. Aaron's doctor sent him for tests. He was diagnosed with severe Allergic Contact Dermatitis, and as the disease developed it spread beyond his hands to his entire body.

"Life for me today is so much different than I thought it might be," he adds. "Each morning when I wake up, I'm immediately in pain – sometimes

just my arms or just my legs, and sometimes head to toe. I have to let my pain dictate how much I can do in a day."

Unable to work, Aaron was no longer the provider and go-to guy he had been all his life. He had to figure out who this "new" Aaron was. He was invited to join Threads of Life – the Association for Workplace Tragedy Family Support. With funding and partnership from governments and organizations across the country, including Nova Scotia's Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration and the Workers' Compensation Board, [Threads of Life](#) provides programs and services for those affected by work-related injuries and illnesses as well as families coping with workplace fatalities.

[Continued >](#)

"I can't believe how much they have helped me in such a short time," Aaron says. "They helped with my mental state and showed me that I wasn't alone in this fight. The first time I attended a Family Forum, I found myself."

This spring Aaron will serve as the Halifax spokesperson for [Steps for Life](#), a national awareness and fundraising walk which supports Threads of Life and families like Aaron's.

"Being a spokesperson for Steps for Life is important to me and my family," he says. "Threads of Life has helped us heal along this long journey and enabled us to cope with my work injury and diagnosis. My goal now is to help others with their struggles and let them know we are not alone and someone is here to help."

By getting involved with Threads of Life, Aaron has found he can still be the helping, caring person he always has been. If you'd like to get involved too, register for [Steps for Life](#) today.

– Susan Haldan
Manager of Communications and Marketing,
Threads of Life



**STEPS
FOR LIFE**

WALKING FOR FAMILIES
OF WORKPLACE TRAGEDY

threads[®]
OF LIFE



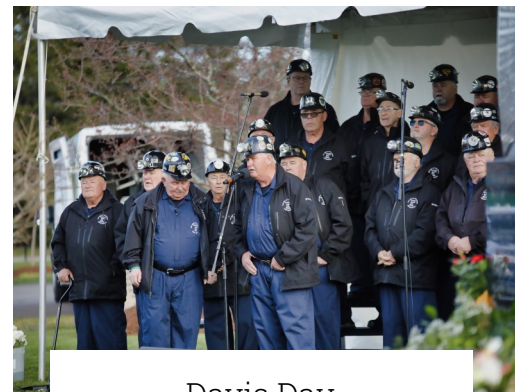
Day of Mourning

On April 28, we observe the Day of Mourning. A day of remembrance for those who have lost their lives or been injured at work.



Remembering Westray

May 9 marks the 31st anniversary of the Westray Mine Disaster. We remember the 26 miners who tragically lost their lives.



Davis Day

June 11 is William Davis Miners' Memorial Day, a day to remember and honor those who lost their lives in Nova Scotia coal mines.

Collaboratively Opening Doors in the Hotel Industry

The Safety Branch of the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration (LSI), in collaboration with the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia (WCB) and the Immigration Services Association of Nova Scotia (ISANS) held an information session for hotel operators on January 25th.

The session centred around newcomer workers in the hospitality sector in the context of provincial workplace health and safety, as well as the workplace insurance system in Nova Scotia. The Safety Branch provided an overview of health and safety issues, such as things to consider about newcomer workers, common hazards newcomer workers face, understanding the newcomer perspective and tips for integrating newcomers into the workplace.

The attendees were made aware of available resources for their workplaces, as well as information on accessing free health and safety training through the Safety Branch. The Safety Branch provided an Internal Responsibility System (IRS) self-audit checklist and an occupational health and safety (OHS) perception survey to help hotel operators better understand the current state of their health and safety management systems.

Following presentations, attendees were divided into groups with LSI, WCB and ISANS representatives for further discussions about their employee safety needs, important topics to cover during employee safety orientations and various tips and methods for optimizing delivery of health and safety information to newcomer employees.

The Safety Division received very positive feedback from the hotel operators and a request to renew this collaboration in May to review and discuss their experiences implementing the tools provided, and to identify any areas that may require or benefit from additional supports.

– Sterling Kendall & Blaise MacNeil
Safety Advisors



Access Includes Everyone

Website: [Accessibility in Nova Scotia](https://accessible.novascotia.ca)

Nova Scotia has the highest rate of disability in the country. With about one in three aged 15 years and older having a disability, Nova Scotians with disabilities are your family, friends, colleagues – or yourself.

Nova Scotia passed the Accessibility Act in 2017, to recognize accessibility as a human right and set a goal to be accessible by 2030. One of the key ways Nova Scotia will meet this goal is by developing accessibility standards in six areas, including built environment, employment, and goods and services, that businesses and organizations will need to follow.

Creating an accessible Nova Scotia is more than building ramps and accessible washrooms. It also requires a change in attitudes, where everyone is included in all aspects of society. *Access includes everyone* is an awareness campaign launched by the Accessibility Directorate last year to profile Nova Scotians with disabilities at work, at home and in the community.

Although the standards are not enacted yet, your workplace can take action now to prevent and

remove barriers. May 28 – June 3, 2023 is Access Awareness Week (AAW) in Nova Scotia and across Canada. Your organization can be part of the change to improve accessibility – conduct an accessibility audit, review your hiring practices, assess your signage or website for accessibility, or ensure your policies allow service and guide dogs.

You can also watch a panel presentation on disability in the workplace hosted during AAW last year by Deputy Minister of Justice, Candace Thomas. This presentation and other information is available at the *Access includes Everyone* website: accessible.novascotia.ca. More resources are also available at novascotia.ca/accessibility.

– Terri Lynn Almeda
Manager, Accessibility Directorate



Occupational Exposure Limit Changes (2023)

Occupational Exposure Limits are established under Part 2 of the Workplace Health and Safety Regulations, which adopt the latest version of the [American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists](#) (ACGIH) of Threshold Limit Values (TLV) and Biological Exposure Indices (BEI).



There are more than 700 chemical substances and physical agents represented as TLVs. If workers are exposed above these limits, they may suffer negative health effects. TLVs are used to assess workplace exposure by providing a comparison point for testing and help to inform control strategies that reduce the risk of overexposure, such as respiratory protection and ventilation.

In Nova Scotia an employer must ensure no worker is exposed to a substance exceeding the limits established by ACGIH. The new or revised TLVs for 2023 include the following:

- Acetamiprid (Reduction)
- Benzoquinone (New)
- Divinylbenzene-ethyl styrene mixtures, as total divinylbenzene isomers (New)
- 2-ethyl-1-hexanol (New)
- Ethylene glycol dinitrite (Reintroduced)
- Glycidyl methacrylate (New)
- Glyphosate (New)
- Iodine and Iodides

- Iodines, as I (New)
- Iodides, as I (New)
- Methylnaphthalene, all isomers (Reduction)
- Phenothiazine (Reduction)
- n-Propyl nitrate (Reduction)
- Propylene glycol dinitrate (Reintroduced & Reduced)
- Silicone carbide (Phrase “containing no asbestos” removed)
 - Nonfibrous (inhalable and respirable fractions)
 - Fibrous (including whiskers)
- Tetrachlorvinphos (New)
- Vinyltoluene (Reduction)

How to know if these changes affect you?

Employers need to review chemical and physical hazards in the workplace. Sources like Safety Data Sheets and information gathered from chemical suppliers are good resources to identify hazards. Employers can also engage with experts like Occupational Hygienists to help with assessments. Ultimately, the goal is to reduce exposures below acceptable levels to maintain a healthy and safe work environment, which can be done through a variety of methods like elimination, engineering controls, administrative controls, and personal protective equipment.

Please contact the OHS Division 1-800-9LABOUR to know more about occupational exposure limits.

– Don Hartt
[Manager, Technical Services](#)

Creating Safe and Healthy Workplaces in Nova Scotia's Agricultural Industry

[Farm Safety Nova Scotia](#) is a not-for-profit, industry-driven organization that focuses on keeping farmers, their families, and their employees safe. Farm safety is not just about being aware of hazards, but engaging your family, employees, and community in conversations about staying safe. Here are some things to consider when thinking about safety on the farm:

Farm Machinery

With farm machinery, injuries can occur in an instant. Incidents like rollovers and runovers often cause lifechanging injuries or worse. It is essential to remain vigilant about safety when using farm machinery by never allowing extra riders, ensuring bystanders aren't nearby, following manufacturer guidelines on towing restrictions, and using rollover protection structures and seatbelts.

Youth on Farm

When assigning work to youth, in addition to looking at the task, it is important to assess a youth's personality and abilities. Children and teens are not simply "miniature adults". Youth may be more willing to take risks and less likely to ask questions. They may have a limited sense of their vulnerability to injury or behave impulsively. Be aware of these things when youth are living or working on your farm.

Physical and Mental Well-Being

Farmers face constant challenges. Coping with climate change, disease, supply chain delays – the list goes on. Those challenges, combined with long hours and physical labour, can lead to farmers ignoring their well-being. Reduce risk of injury or illness by getting enough sleep and always seek help if you feel overwhelmed or stressed.

For more information on Farm Safety and much more, visit [Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture](#).



– Caitlyn Creelman
Farm and Workforce Development Manager,
Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture



Technical Safety Codes Get Standardized

March 3rd, 2023 wrapped the first ever, rigorous Safety Branch collaboration, to update and adopt Technical Safety (TS) Codes. This intense process started in the summer of 2022, with a *Call for Comment* survey asking our clients in various sectors to identify any concerns.



The process finished with Chief approved Bulletins, by Ministerial order, communicating the specific industries' ([Boilers & Power Equipment](#), [Crane Operators](#), [Fuel Safety](#) and [Power Engineers](#)) adopted changes. The Bulletins can be viewed and accessed on the linked webpages above.

The process is going to be a standard tool moving forward in the TS Division, to ensure Nova Scotia is aligning with other jurisdictions when it comes to codes being adopted.

– David Pottle
Manager, Pressure Equipment & Fuel Safety

Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Creates Resources to Aid in Application of its Standards

The CSA have introduced several new support tools to address specific occupational health and safety (OHS) standards.

Resource: [Standards Support Tools](#)

These tools encompass six OHS standards, with some standards being accompanied by multiple support tools. Refer to the table for more details.

– Colleen Rodgerson
Occupational Health & Safety Engineer

Topic	Tools
Respiratory Protection	1
OHS Management Systems	6
First Aid Kits	3
Ergonomics	6
Management of Extreme Conditions	4
Management of Impairment in the Workplace	7

Employer Awareness: Section 63 – Notice of Accident at the Workplace

Under Section 63 of the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#), employers are required to notify the Safety Branch whenever a serious injury, serious incident, or fatality occurs at the workplace. This is in addition to WCB Nova Scotia reporting requirements, and within the following timeframes:

Fatalities—immediately:

- When a person is killed from any cause, or is injured from any cause in a manner likely to prove fatal, at the workplace

Serious injury—as soon as possible, but in no case later than 24 hours after:

- Unconsciousness
- Fracture of the skull, spine, pelvis, arm, leg, ankle, wrist, or a major part of the hand or foot
- Loss or amputation of a leg, arm hand, foot, finger or toe
- Third degree burn to any part of the body
- Loss of sight in one or both eyes
- Asphyxiation or poisoning
- Any injury that requires admission to the hospital

- Any injury that endangers the life of an employee unless the injury can be treated by immediate first aid or medical treatment and the person can return to work the following day

Serious incident—as soon as possible, but in no case later than 24 hours after:

- Accidental explosion
- Major structural failure or collapse of a building or other structure
- Major release of a hazardous substance
- A fall from a work area in circumstances where fall protection is required by the regulations, at the workplace, whether any person is injured or not

– Kim MacKenzie
[Occupational Health & Safety Officer](#)



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We'd love to hear from you.

Providing your feedback will help us continually improve our newsletter and include more of the content you'd like to see.

[Feedback Survey](#)

Safety Branch by the Numbers

Reporting period: Jan 1, 2023 to Mar 31, 2023

927

Total Inquiries

640 Occupational Health and Safety

287 Technical Safety

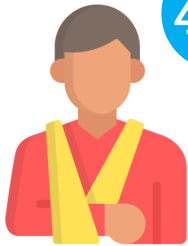
806

Workplace Inspections

11

Opened OHS Investigations

436



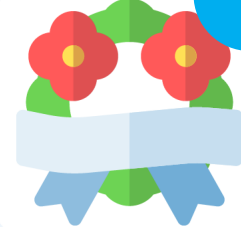
Serious Injuries

9



Serious Incidents

1



Workplace Fatalities

1 Acute / 0 Chronic

502

Orders Issued

30

Administrative Penalties

2

Summary Offence Tickets

10

Charges Laid

MAKE THE RIGHT CALL.

Call **1-800-9LABOUR**
for workplace and public
space safety issues,
concerns and regulations.



Upcoming Events & Dates to Remember

Click on the event for more information. External websites are not affiliated with the Safety Branch.

April

24-30: National Immunization Awareness Week

28: Day of Mourning

28: Skills NS – Workplace Safety Competition ☆

29: Steps for Life ☆

June

1-30: Canadian Men's Health Month

1-30: National Indigenous History Month

3: National Health and Fitness Day

11: William Davis Miners' Memorial Day

16: Michelin Health & Safety Fair ☆

May

1-6: Safety and Health Week

1-7: Emergency Preparedness Week

1-7: Mental Health Week

3: Occupational Health and Safety Professionals Day

9: Canadian Immigrant Fair ☆

24: Safety First Symposium ☆

9: Westray Mine Disaster Anniversary

20-26: National Safe Boating Week

28-3: Access Awareness Week

☆ – Safety Branch attending this event.

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Safety Branch
Labour, Skills and Immigration