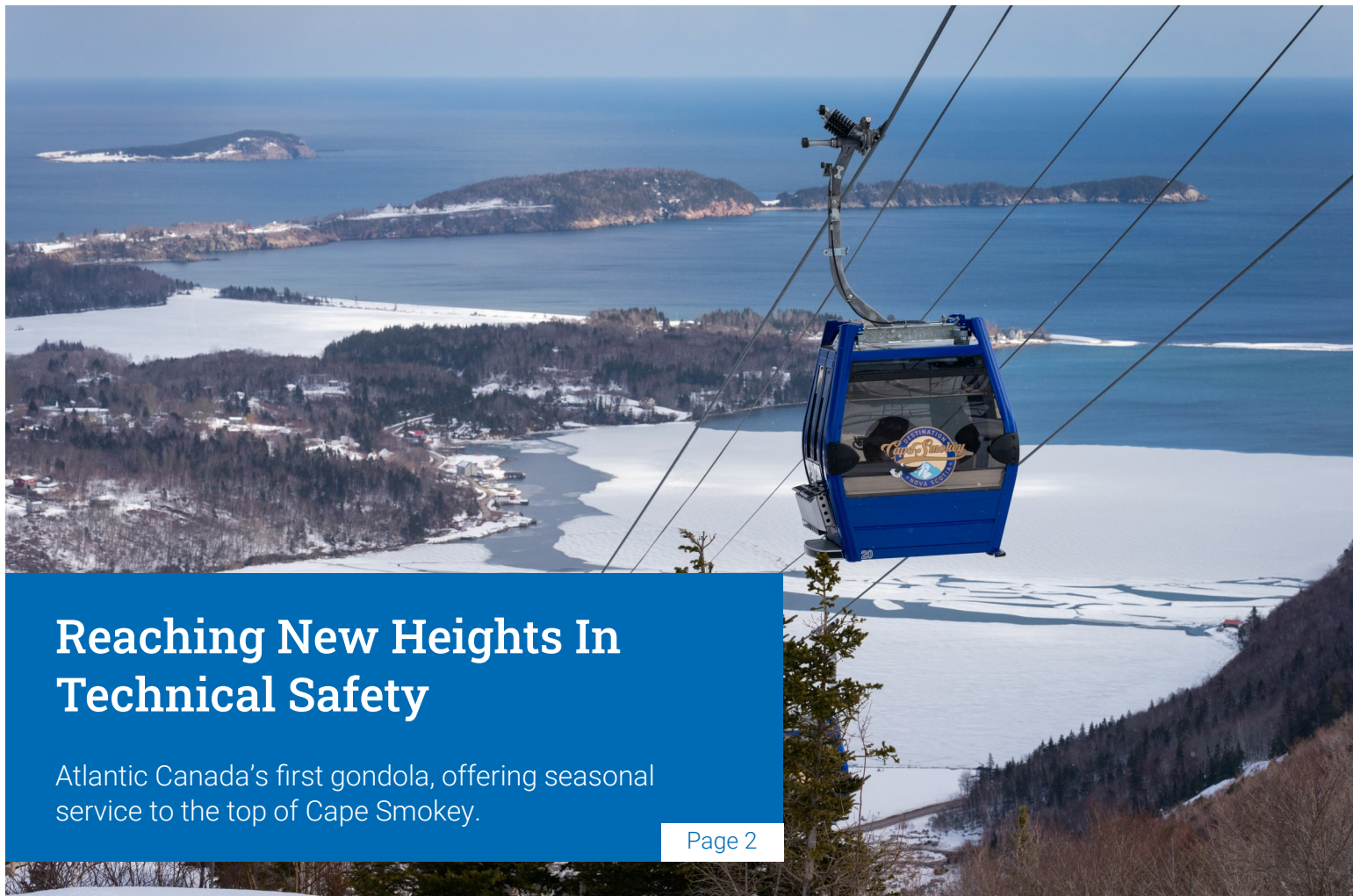


The Signal



Reaching New Heights In Technical Safety

Atlantic Canada's first gondola, offering seasonal service to the top of Cape Smokey.

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Stay informed about workplace and technical safety.

Join the [Safety Branch Contact List](#).



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Reaching New Heights In Technical Safety

Cape Smokey is home to the first ever gondola in Atlantic Canada, offering easy access to activities happening on the mountain all throughout the year. From skiing to hiking to sightseeing, the gondola has been a major draw for tourists from far and wide to visit this picturesque part of Nova Scotia's Cabot Trail.

This project, since its inception, has been a big deal for the Safety Branch's Technical Safety Division as well. Technical Safety is responsible for seven distinct units within the division, including the Elevators and Lifts unit which the Cape Smokey gondola falls under.

This unit administers the [Elevators and Lifts Act](#) and [general regulations](#), in addition to certifying work equipment and systems (this includes all types of amusement devices, elevators, escalators, etc.), performing routine inspections, licensing, and permitting.

Gondolas are classified as a passenger ropeway,

which is further defined as an elevating device that is designed and constructed to move persons along a horizontal or inclined pathway by means of a hauling rope that is driven by a non-portable power unit.

Each year, our Elevators and Lifts inspectors visit Cape Smokey for their routine inspections, while the owners keep up with regular maintenance and safety programs. We recently had an opportunity to speak with their maintenance team to hear their perspective about operating the gondola, challenges they've faced, and future plans.

[Continued >](#)

What has been the biggest challenge with maintaining the gondola now that it has been in operation for several years now?

The biggest challenges we've faced have been with electrical. The lift has an extensive low voltage electrical system of sensors and switches which can be temperamental in the east coast environment. We also face regular supply chain issues and recruiting and training qualified staff can be a barrier.

Has working with the Elevators and Lifts unit benefited your team in any way?

Working with the Elevators and Lifts inspectors is always informative and their combined background experience is a great resource. We also enjoy the fact that our gondola can be a

training ground for Elevators and Lifts staff.

What tasks do you enjoy the most in taking care of the gondola?

Spring and summer maintenance on the towers is the most enjoyable part of the job.

Future plans that involve Elevators and Lifts?

Cape Smokey is looking forward to expanding our line of lifts to access new areas of the mountain, as well as adding a magic carpet lift for beginners. I'm sure the Elevators and Lifts team will have great input if and when these plans go forward.

– Special thanks to Gwen Jarabek and the maintenance team at Cape Smokey for providing their insight.



Snow Shovelling

Just like your other tasks at work, shovelling snow has its own set of occupational hazards and risks. There are steps you can take to protect yourself from cold exposure, fatigue, muscular strains, and other serious injuries. Learn more: [Ergonomics – Snow Shovelling](#)

Public Engagements: Workers' Compensation System Review & Preventing Workplace Harassment

The workers' compensation injury insurance system in Nova Scotia has not been reviewed since 2002, and currently Nova Scotia lags behind other jurisdictions as we have the highest rates for employers and the lowest benefits for workers in the country.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of psychological safety in the workplace and Nova Scotia currently has no guidance for workplaces that supports the prevention of harassment in the workplace. In the spring of 2023, Government determined that now was an opportune time to conduct a review of the workers' compensation system and to seek input on what is needed to address workplace harassment.

As part of the review of the workers' compensation system in Nova Scotia, a review

committee of employee and employer representatives was established to validate and prioritize issues with the existing workers' compensation system and to provide advice to the Minister.

On the 24th of October 2023, the Minister of Labour, Skills and Immigration (LSI) announced public engagements scheduled across the province to help gather input from Nova Scotians on improvements to the workers' compensation system and options to address harassment in the workplace. LSI has held both in-person and virtual consultation sessions across the province to hear what feedback Nova Scotians have to share on the challenges with the workers' compensation system and their thoughts on how harassment in the workplace could be addressed. In addition to in-person and virtual consultation sessions, Nova Scotians also have the opportunity to participate through written submissions, survey, and feedback to LSI/Review Committee.

The in-person consultation sessions were held in Sydney, New Glasgow, Bridgewater, Yarmouth, Digby, New Minas (Kentville), Truro, Halifax, Dartmouth, and Port Hawkesbury. Total attendance for the workers' compensation system review in-person & virtual sessions was 176 participants. We have received 474 completed surveys, 383 written submissions and have had 36 presentations made to the review committee. Total attendance for the harassment in the workplace sessions was 178 and 366 surveys were submitted.



Safety Branch's Technical Services Section Rebrands to Engineering & Science

Are you aware that for many years, the Occupational Health and Safety Division had a section called Technical Services that houses a large group of Occupational Hygienists and Engineers? Often this team is misidentified as our Technical Safety Division and as a result, Technical Services is rebranding to the Engineering and Science Section.

The new name is more descriptive of our core competencies and will help us communicate more effectively with Nova Scotians. The Engineering and Science Section will have two subgroups: Occupational Health Sciences and Engineering.

This strategic rebranding will position us with pinpoint accuracy in the market and build trust with our clients. It will also attract top talent looking for meaningful work in these fields.

The subgroups provide room for expansion in related areas and align with our values. The

language of Engineering and Science is universally understood, making it globally appealing.



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TheSignal

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](#)

Cold Stress

Cold is a physical hazard and can impact workers who are not adequately protected against the conditions. When the body is unable to sufficiently warm itself, cold-related illnesses and injuries such as frostbite and hypothermia can occur. Learn more: [Safety Bulletin — Cold Stress](#)



Preventing Musculoskeletal Disorders: Occupational Exposure Limits

Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs) are a range of conditions that affect the musculoskeletal system, which includes the muscles, bones, tendons, ligaments, and other connective tissues. MSDs can impact a person's ability to move and perform daily activities.

Repetitive or forceful movements, awkward postures, and other ergonomic factors in the workplace are commonly associated with MSDs. Other terms that mean the same include musculoskeletal injury, repetitive strain injury, cumulative trauma disorder, musculoskeletal strain injuries, and repetitive motion injury.

In 2022, the Workers Compensation Board of Nova Scotia reported that 58.8% of all types of workplace injuries were associated with sprains and strains, by far the most common. Second on the list was fractures and dislocations, which accounted for 10.4%. A significant portion of these

injuries occurred in the healthcare industry, and to a lesser extent in manufacturing, construction, retail, and accommodation, to name a few.

When was the last time you thought about ergonomics at work? Whether it's poorly designed workstations, repetitive motion tasks, heavy lifting, awkward postures/positioning, patient handling, manual handling of goods, vibration, repetitive tool use, or prolonged standing, there are many risk factors out there that can create issues.

[Continued >](#)

Occupational health and safety measures play a crucial role in preventing MSDs. Here's what you need to know about requirements in Nova Scotia:

- Part 2 of the Workplace Health and Safety Regulations adopt the American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) guidelines and recommendations for occupational health and safety, including threshold limit values (TLVs) for ergonomics.
- ACGIH states that MSDs can be managed using an integrated ergonomics health and safety program.
- TLVs (occupational exposure limits) are limits where workers can be repeatedly exposed without adverse effects.

The Occupational Health and Safety division recently published a [Safety Bulletin for Patient and Resident Lifting Equipment](#), which outlines several additional requirements tailored for the healthcare industry.

Stay safe and healthy at work!

Free webinar series

Throughout the month of February, OHCOW will be hosting free webinars focused on recognizing and preventing repetitive strain injuries at work.

Learn more: [OHCOW RSI Day 2024](#)

Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Awareness Day

Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Awareness Day is February 29th (or February 28th in non-leap years). As the only "non-repetitive" day of the year, it's the ideal date to devote to raising awareness of repetitive strain injuries. Learn more: [International Repetitive Strain Injury \(RSI\) Awareness Day](#)

Repetitive Strain Injury Awareness Day

Pace your work
with regular,
short breaks.

#PreventRSI



**FEB
28**

 **CCOHS.ca**

Occupational Health & Safety Advisory Council (OHSAC)

Nova SAFE: [Boards & Councils](#)

Agencies, Boards, and Commissions (ABC) are government-created entities with members selected through a formal application process. Each ABC has specific mandates outlined by their enabling legislation, providing advice and services across sectors such as health and safety, policing, agriculture, education, culture, environment, transportation, and professional regulation.

In the world of health and safety, the Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Council (OSHAC) plays a critical role as an ABC, ensuring a safe work environment across the province. OSHAC offers strategic advice to our Minister on occupational health and safety issues in Nova Scotia. OSHAC comprises of 10 members: 4 employer representatives, 4 employee representatives as well as 1 Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Division and 1 Workers' Compensation Board member.

OSHAC operates under our OHS Act where members must have specific experience related to OHS. The selection process prioritizes diversity and inclusivity, encouraging applicants from equity-deserving communities to ensure representation that accurately reflects our workforce.

Over the years, OSHAC has played a crucial role in advancing occupational health and safety in Nova

Scotia. Within the past 3 years, OSHAC in collaboration with industry partners, identified 3 priorities for policy consideration. These include:

- **Impact of COVID-19 on OHS** — infectious diseases as an occupational health hazard and the impact of working from home on physical and psychological health.
- **Leadership & Innovation** — establishing Nova Scotia as a national leader in OHS.
- **System Collaboration, Engagement, and Inclusion** — accessibility, diversity, equity and inclusion, needs of special populations (e.g. youth, migrant workers)

[Continued >](#)



In addition to these successes, the OHS Education Trust Fund, a sub-committee of OHSAC, was created to review funding requests from organizations that contribute to education, training, and awareness activities that promote safety culture in the province. 10 applications were received in 2022-23 and 6 of those applications were funded; applications are still being received to date!

As OHSAC priorities adapt to evolving OHS issues, maintaining a forward-thinking approach to use resources, such as Nova SAFE, remains crucial for workplaces, employees, and industry to understand and comply with requirements that promote a culture of safety. OSHAC stands as an example of a proactive and collaborative ABC. It supports the department in its commitment to

workforce health and safety by actively supporting a safety culture where workers can return home safely each day.

Did you know?

Of the 139 ABCs the Government of Nova Scotia oversees, 11 are under the Department of Labour, Skills and Immigration, and 5 of which the Safety Branch supports.

For more information related to ABCs such as current members, profiles, and requirements, please visit: [Agencies, Boards and Commissions](#).

Escalator Safety

Accidents on escalators are the most frequently reported accidents on elevating equipment in Nova Scotia and often require emergency medical assistance. Injuries are highest with the elderly and youth.

Contributing factors for escalator incidents are:

- Navigating mobility devices (e.g. canes, crutches, walkers, etc.) and strollers
- Using escalators as stairs
- Distraction (e.g. using and looking at mobile devices, etc.)
- Disregarding signage (awareness of yellow lines, user signs)

Learn more: [Safety Bulletin — Escalator Safety](#)



Automotive Sector Council of Nova Scotia (ASC) Aims to Bridge Gaps in EV Service Expertise Ahead of Federal Initiative

In a groundbreaking collaboration, the Automotive Sector Council of Nova Scotia (ASC) has joined forces with an Electric Vehicle Specialist and 30-year veteran of the Automotive Industry. Together, they are set to address a critical need within the Maritime Automotive Industry—safety training for the service and repair of electric vehicles.

Training Overview — The safety training program spans a comprehensive two-day intensive. Day 1 will feature an in-classroom introduction, delving into the intricacies of EV service and repair. Day 2 will transition to a hands-on application, allowing participants to immediately apply the knowledge acquired.

Federal Initiative Prompts Proactive Measures — With the recent Federal Government announcement outlining plans to phase out the sale of gasoline-powered vehicles by 2035, the ASC recognizes the urgent need for enhanced training in the safe service and repair of EVs in Nova Scotia. The initiative aims to proactively position the Nova Scotian Automotive Industry to meet the upcoming shift in vehicular technology.

Upcoming Training Sessions — ASC has already scheduled several training sessions in collaboration with industry leaders for the early months of 2024. To facilitate broader access, an online training platform will subsequently be launched by the ASC.

Another initiative to support safety in the industry will see the EV Specialist serve on the committee for the new Safety Division with ASC. Rob Ward, who heads up the Safety Division for the Steele Auto Group, will serve as the Committee Chair.

As the automotive landscape undergoes a transformative shift towards sustainable mobility, ASC's pioneering efforts in EV safety training



Rob Ward — Head of Safety Division for the Steele Auto Group

underscore its commitment to ensuring the preparedness and expertise of Nova Scotia's automotive workforce.

— Shannon Trites
Executive Director, Automotive Sector Council of Nova Scotia

Website: [Automotive Sector Council of Nova Scotia](https://www.asc-nova-scotia.ca/)

Safety Branch by the Numbers

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

3811

Total Inquiries

2657 Occupational Health and Safety

1154 Technical Safety

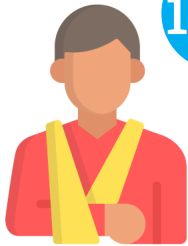
3124

Workplace Inspections

35

Opened OHS Investigations

1154



Serious Injuries

110



Serious Incidents

18



Workplace Fatalities

7 Acute / 11 Chronic

1964

Orders Issued

104

Administrative Penalties

2

Summary Offence Tickets

15

Charges Laid

MAKE THE RIGHT CALL.

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


NOVA SCOTIA

Safety Branch Call Tracking: A Year In Review (2023)

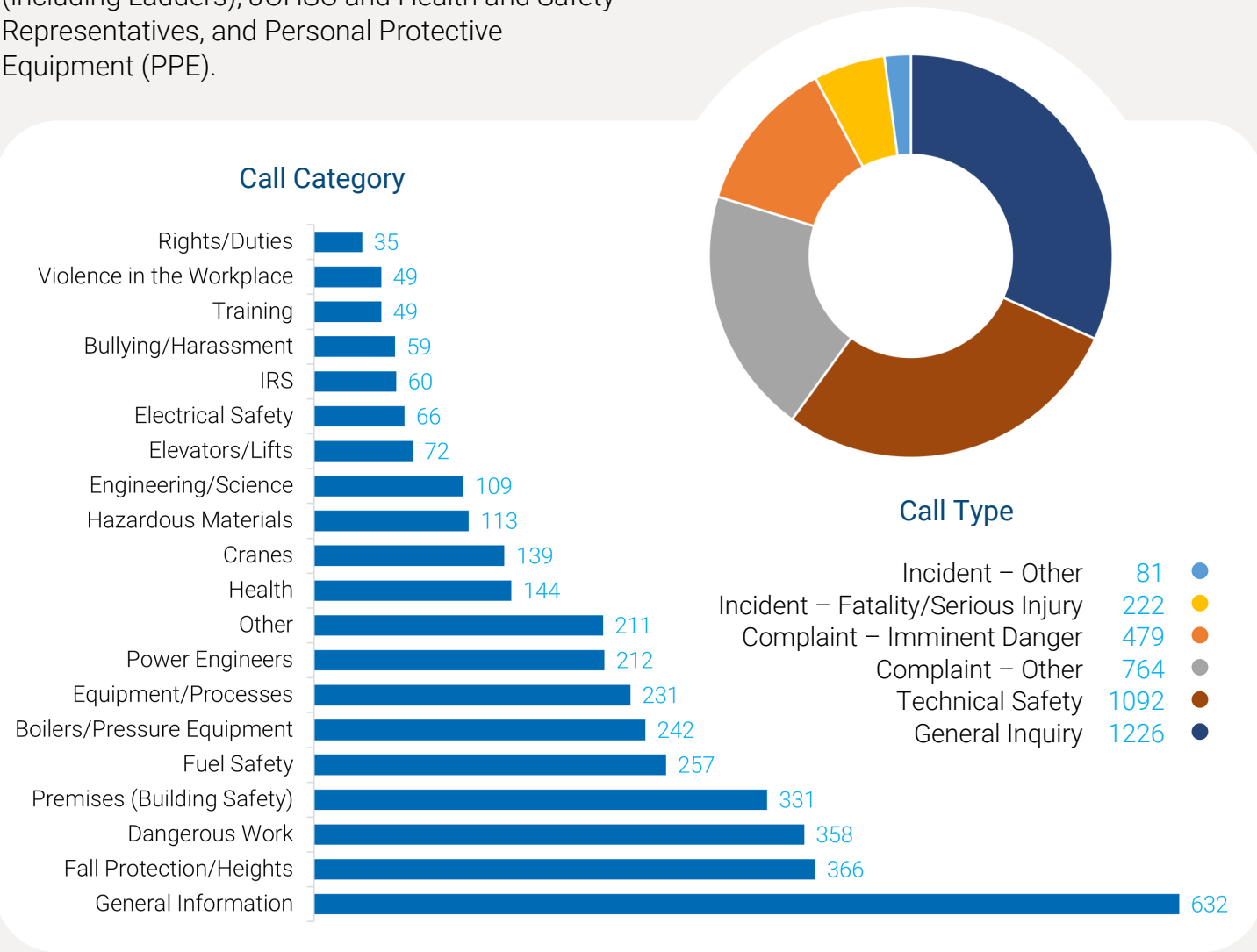
1-800-9LABOUR is an information line you can call to get safety information or to report a safety concern you see at work. You can also report safety concerns you see in public if they relate to technical equipment (such as elevators and lifts, fuel equipment, and cranes). Our Information Specialists help to ensure that you are provided with the right information in a timely manner.

In May 2023, the Safety Branch launched the mobile-friendly site, [Nova SAFE](#), making it easier for Nova Scotians to access important workplace and technical safety information for a variety of in-demand topics.

There has been a direct correlation between the types of inquiries we have received through our information line and the topics being accessed on Nova SAFE. The top three being: Fall Protection (including Ladders), JOHSC and Health and Safety Representatives, and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

When comparing the 2023 call tracking data with previous years, a few insights have been observed:

Increase in inquiries about Fall Protection, Premises (Building Safety), Violence in the Workplace, and General Information (including JOHSC and Health and Safety Representatives, Health and Safety Policy and Program). Decrease in inquiries regarding First Aid (including Training).



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Slips, Trips, and Falls

Don't let your guard down when it comes to slips, trips, and falls. They can affect every workplace, every industry, at any time of year. They can be a major contributor to injuries and time away from work. Learn more: [Slips, Trips, and Falls](#)

Today's forecast calls for an increased risk of slips and falls.



Get tips to keep your workplace safe at worksafeforlife.ca

Safety Information Made Simple

- ✓ Plain language summaries
- ✓ Helpful definitions
- ✓ Direct links to legislation
- ✓ Additional resources

Scan the QR code or visit

NovaScotia.ca/NovaSAFE



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