

## SAFETY BLITZ TARGETS INDUSTRIAL WORKPLACES

*McGuinty Government Committed To Eliminating Workplace Injuries*

### NEWS

January 28, 2009

The Ontario government will continue its efforts to reduce workplace injuries by cracking down on hazards involving forklifts and lifting devices at industrial workplaces in February 2009, Labour Minister Peter Fonseca announced today.

Inspectors will focus on ensuring employers are inspecting and maintaining lifting devices in good condition, using competent persons to operate the equipment and ensuring that the equipment is being used in a safe work environment.

For each conviction, the court can impose a fine of up to \$500,000 against a corporation convicted under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#). Individuals face a fine of up to \$25,000 or imprisonment of up to 12 months, or both.

This initiative is part of the province's new *Safe At Work Ontario* [blitz strategy](#), announced on July 23, 2008. Keeping more workers safe means increased productivity for Ontario's economy and less strain on the health care system.

### QUOTES

"Forklifts and other lifting devices are a significant cause of serious worker injury and deaths," said Labour Minister [Peter Fonseca](#). "The Government of Ontario and its workplace partners are committed to eliminating all workplace injuries, including those related to these lifting devices. Workers have a right to come home each day to their families, safe and sound."

### QUICK FACTS

- The Ministry of Labour compliance program that ran from April 1, 2004 to March 31, 2008 reduced the workplace injury rate by 20 per cent, or more than 50,000 incidents.
- Thirteen workers died between 2003 and 2007 as a result of industrial incidents involving lift trucks, reach trucks, forklifts and tow motors, according to ministry statistics.
- In total, there were 10,308 forklift-related incidents where there was a lost time injury between 1996 and 2008, an average of 793 incidents a year, according to the data compiled by the Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario (OHSCO).
- Because of the drop in the annual rate of lost-time injuries, employers have avoided about \$5 billion in direct and indirect costs during the four years ending March 31, 2008. Reduced injuries also result in less strain on the health care system, and fewer workers off the job means increased productivity for Ontario's economy.
- Ontario employs 430 full-time occupational health and safety inspectors.

## LEARN MORE

Read more about Ontario's new four year plan, [Safe at Work Ontario](#), that will help strengthen workplace safety.

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