



On April 28

REMEMBER

National Day of Mourning for workers who have been killed, injured or made ill on the job.

Workers Health & Safety Centre

A STRATEGY of OUR MAKING

Tried, Tested, Proven, Priorities

TRAINING

▶ THE RIGHT THING. THE RIGHT WAY.

www.whsc.on.ca
1-888-869-7950

For more information



Acting on what we know

On April 28th we remember our ultimate goal — to ensure workers return home healthy and whole every day.

However, safer, healthier work doesn't just happen. It takes thoughtful planning and dedicated action.

Workers across the province have fought for and won important rights to help ensure their own health and safety and that of their co-workers. These rights though need to be exercised, improved upon and when necessary enforced.

Addressing our priorities

Years of experience and some research have shown us specifically what works and what doesn't work to prevent worker injuries, illnesses and death. There are those that would advocate more research is necessary before taking action. Workers, their representatives and other progressive health and safety

advocates, including the Workers Health & Safety Centre, disagree. While continuing research is important, there is much else that can be done today.

Using every effective tool available to us, we can build a strategy of our making. We can begin by addressing priorities as expressed by workers.

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Eastern Ontario Ottawa

Tel: (613) 232-7866 Fax: (613) 232-3823

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Workers Health & Safety Centre

Securing safer, healthier work

Tried

Despite proven approaches to worker health and safety, many have attempted approaches that we know to be **ineffective** when it comes to creating safer, healthier workplaces. Among these approaches are those that have tried to:

- **Rely solely on the cost of lost-time compensation claims** to guide their priorities, even though much research tells us claims are under-reported by as much as 69 per cent
- **Redefine the *Internal Responsibility System (IRS)***, underplaying the role of employers, who have the greatest control and legal responsibility for workplace occupational health and safety and overemphasizing the role of individual workers, who have little control over the workplace
- **Impose *Behaviour Based Safety (BBS)* programs** that blame workers for workplace incidents, encourage under-reporting of injuries and illnesses, and do nothing to eliminate the hazardous conditions that cause worker suffering
- **Prioritize vague notions of *health and safety culture*** that have no consistent evidence of success, while ignoring other leading indicators such as strong, workplace joint health and safety committees
- **Deny workers and their representatives the unique training**, information and clinical resources they need to secure safer, healthier work.

Tested

Many hazardous conditions at work go undetected simply because they haven't been investigated. For instance, of the tens of thousands of chemicals in use, less than 15 per cent have been tested to determine their toxicity to humans and their environment.

Through worker experiences and considerable research though, many hazards have been identified. Much of this has been determined as a result of worker exposures and their related diseases, disorders, injuries and deaths.

Identified hazards include:

- ★ Approximately 170 carcinogens affecting over seven million Canadian workers
- ★ Work requiring repetitive, fast-paced and/or forceful movements without adequate time to recover
- ★ Awkward and fixed postures such as prolonged sitting or standing
- ★ Occupational stress, including work-life conflict and work overload, identified by the European Agency for Safety and Health at Work as the second most common threat posed in the working environment (surpassed only by poor ergonomics)
- ★ Workplace violence, heightened by conditions such as working alone, working at night, handling money and including workplace bullying
- ★ Safety hazards, such as those posed by mobile equipment, working at heights, moving machine parts and confined space entry.

Added to these established hazards are several **emerging hazards** in need of precautions — hazards such as shift work, infectious diseases, nanotechnology and technologies involving radio-frequency radiation, electromagnetic fields and dirty electricity, to name a few.

Proven

Through worker experiences and research we also know how best to address these hazards. Based on this evidence, workers and their representatives have long advanced a strategy of their own making. Together, they have advanced an agenda that promotes:

- ✓ **Full employer responsibility**
- ✓ **Meaningful worker participation**
- ✓ **Highest quality training**
- ✓ **Hazard-based approach**
- ✓ **Hierarchy of controls**
- ✓ **Precautionary principle first**
- ✓ **Effective regulation**
- ✓ **Vigorous enforcement.**

Others are taking note, especially of the need for meaningful worker participation. For instance, the University of Alberta's Parkland Institute recently concluded direct worker participation through joint health and safety committees (particularly in unionized workplaces) makes a big difference in reducing worker injury rates. While a literature review by the Institute for Work and Health found, "JHSCs are a core component of any internal responsibility system, and should be a core component of any set of measures intended to capture leading indicators." Finally, another important study recently confirmed, knowledgeable, properly trained and properly supported worker health and safety representatives are attempting the greatest workplace change.

Priorities

The change workers and their representatives seek reflect their priorities. These priorities include prevention of work-related:

- ◆ Disease, including mandatory implementation of workplace toxic use reduction plans, plus testing of all new materials and technologies to ensure their safety before they enter our economy
- ◆ Musculoskeletal disorders, including ergonomic regulations
- ◆ Violence and harassment, including specific and enforceable standards for workplace prevention programs
- ◆ Mental injury, including adoption of Canada's mental health standard at work
- ◆ Falls from heights, including a training standard that ensures real learning takes place.

For our part, the **Workers Health & Safety Centre remains dedicated** to supporting these efforts on April 28 and every day of the year. We are Ontario's only government-designated, labour-endorsed health and safety training centre. We provide the highest quality training to workers and their representatives employed in workplaces of every size and sector. Together, we work to advance proven solutions and worker priorities.



Delivering quality health & safety training Ontario-wide.



What you need.
When you need it.
Where you need it.



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