

Construction Health and Safety Program 2011/2012

Low-rise Residential Construction (Homebuilding) Heightened Enforcement Campaign

Stakeholder Presentation

Safe At Work Ontario
Enforcement > Compliance > Partnership >

Ministry of Labour

Background: How big of a problem is safety on low-rise residential construction (homebuilding) sites?

- The homebuilding industry continues to be a key source of work-related injuries in the construction industry.
- In general, more critical injuries, fatalities and lost-time injuries occur in this sector than any other part of the construction industry.
- Between 2006 and 2010, 26 workers died at low-rise residential construction sites and 329 were critically injured*.
- Homebuilding is responsible for 96 per cent of all residential construction compensation claims for injuries involving lost time at work. The other 4% are related to high-rise residential projects such as apartments and condominiums

* Source: MOL PA&E Data at April 21, 2011

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- In 2009 alone, a total of 422 LTI claims cost the homebuilding industry \$3.4m – about 18 percent of the total cost of all construction industry LTI claims for that year.
- The five-year average (2005-2009) LTI rate (number of lost-time injuries per 100 workers) for the homebuilding sector is **2.23** while the Ontario construction industry average is 1.40
- In other words, the five-year average LTI rate for the homebuilding industry is approximately **59 per cent higher** than the entire construction industry 5-year average for that same period.

Background: How big of a problem is safety on low-rise residential construction (homebuilding) sites?

- In 2009, the five most costly injuries in descending order were:
 - fall to lower level (\$834,561).
 - struck by object (\$635,463)
 - bodily reaction and exertion (\$511,336)
 - overexertion (\$503,508), and
 - fall on the same level (\$336,724).
- Each year, exposures to hazardous chemicals and substances, noise and carbon monoxide in this sector lead to a significant number of occupational illnesses and diseases. **This presents a further burden to Ontario's worker's compensation and health care systems and the lives of families.**

What is the blitz involving the low-rise residential construction (homebuilding) industry all about?

- Stepped up enforcement from May 1 to 31, 2011 -- part of the province's *Safe At Work Ontario* strategy.
- Inspectors will blitz selected low-rise residential construction (homebuilding) sites across Ontario. This includes subdivisions, infill construction sites, and homes under restoration or renovation where the total cost of labour and materials for the project is expected to exceed \$50,000.
- The blitz will be held to:
 - Raise awareness of key health and safety hazards in this sector,
 - Ensure workplace parties are complying with the law, and
 - Prevent injuries and illnesses that could arise from unsafe work practices.

What will Ministry construction inspectors do during this enforcement campaign?

- Inspectors will take a “zero tolerance” approach to contraventions found under the [Occupational Health and Safety Act](#) and its regulations.
- Enforcement may range from orders being issued to the laying of charges. For each conviction, the court can impose a fine of up to \$500,000 against a corporation if convicted under the OHSA. Individuals face a fine of up to \$25,000 or imprisonment of up to 12 months, or both.
- During visits, Ministry inspectors will continue to refer workplace parties to the [MOL’s website](#) and the [Infrastructure Health and Safety Association](#) where blitz-related resource materials and tools are available.

What will ministry construction inspectors be focusing on during this enforcement campaign?

- 1. Fall Protection:** Inspectors will check that adequate fall protection systems are in place at all low-rise residential construction sites visited, especially by workers involved in framing and roofing operations. They will also check that workers are properly trained in the safe use of fall protection components and equipment.
- 2. Site Excavations and Trenching:** Inspectors will check that trenches and excavations are properly sloped, shored using engineered or hydraulic support systems or shielded with prefabricated support systems such as trench boxes.
- 3. Concrete Form-Setting Operations:** Inspectors will check that workers are properly trained in the design, set-up, building and inspection of foundation and basement construction.

What will ministry construction inspectors be focusing on during this enforcement campaign? (cont'd...)

- 4. Overexertion:** Inspectors will check that workers are trained in the proper lifting, pushing and pulling of materials and that written measures, procedures and supervision are in place. They will also check that workers are not engaging in activities that could lead to increased physical demand and awkward postures, resulting in a Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD).

- 5. Safe Use of Access Equipment:** Inspectors will check that workers are adequately trained in the use and maintenance of vehicles, machinery, tools and equipment (such as ramps, stairs, ladders, scaffolds, work platforms and powered elevating work platforms). They will also check that manufacturers' operating manuals and instructions are available when required by regulation, as well as adequate written measures and procedures.

- 6. Noisy Environments:** Inspectors will ensure adequate hearing protection is worn as needed to protect workers from exposure to excess noise.

What will ministry construction inspectors be focusing on during this enforcement campaign? (cont'd...)

- 7. Hazardous Chemicals:** Inspectors will ensure workers are trained in the safe use of chemicals and other toxic substances that could lead to occupational illness and disease. They will also ensure supplier material safety data sheets are up to date. They will further check that adequate measures and procedures are in place to control worker exposures and adequate personal protective equipment is being used.
- 8. New and Young Workers:** Inspectors will ensure compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and regulations, particularly requirements that address: worker training; the provision and maintenance of personal protective equipment; written measures and procedures; minimum age requirements (age 16 years); and adequate supervision. For the compulsory construction trades, strict compliance with O. Reg. 572/99 Training Requirements for Certain Skills Sets and Trades will be checked.

What are some key messages for the workplace parties?

Workers:

- Know and follow health and safety requirements affecting your job.
- Ask for training **BEFORE** you begin doing work that could be unsafe.
- Raise any concerns about falls and other hazards with your supervisor.
- Wear CSA-approved personal protective equipment (PPE) as needed.
- Ensure all vehicles, tools and equipment are operated in accordance with manufacturers' instructions.
- Reduce your risk of back injury by using suitable lifting devices and equipment to move materials safely.

What are some key messages for the workplace parties? (cont'd...)

Constructors/employers:

- Comply with all other duties under *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and applicable regulations.
- Establish and maintain a comprehensive occupational health and safety program.
- Provide **ALL** workers with appropriate training, information, instruction and supervision.
- Take immediate action when informed of a potentially hazardous situation.
- Ensure equipment, materials and protective devices are safely used and well maintained.
- Ensure garbage and debris is removed from work areas as needed.
- Ensure everyone onsite is at least 16 years of age.

What resource materials and information are available on homebuilding?

Four Ministry of Labour fact sheets will be posted at the ministry's website

1. "Trenching and Excavation"
2. "Low-rise Concrete Forming"
3. "Framing and Roofing"
4. "Prevent Falls on Construction Projects"

http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pdf/fs_construction.pdf

- A Ministry of Labour 'Construction Safety' poster will also be posted at the ministry's website

What resource materials and information are available on homebuilding? (cont'd...)

Industry Best Practices and Guides

1. Homebuilding Health and Safety Manual published by IHSA/CSAO
http://www.csao.org/images/pfiles/327_M063.pdf
2. Residential Roof Truss Installation Procedures
http://www.csao.org/images/pfiles/367_W210.pdf
3. Residential Framing Contractors Association (RFCA) – Best Practice Safety Guidelines (Available to RFCA members only upon request)
4. Safe Practices for Residential Basement Construction
http://www.csao.org/images/pfiles/231_BO25.pdf

What resource materials and information are available on homebuilding? (cont'd...)

Musculoskeletal hazards and controls for the homebuilding industry:

1. Homebuilding: Concrete Floors and Drains
http://www.csao.org/images/pfiles/382_W303.pdf
2. Homebuilding: Drywall http://www.csao.org/images/pfiles/381_W302.pdf
3. Homebuilding: Flooring http://www.csao.org/images/pfiles/383_W305.pdf
4. Homebuilding: Framing http://www.csao.org/images/pfiles/384_W306.pdf
5. Homebuilding: Plumbing http://www.csao.org/images/pfiles/385_W308.pdf
6. Homebuilding: Sloped Roofing
http://www.csao.org/images/pfiles/386_W309.pdf

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- Questions?