

**OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY (OHS)
ANNUAL REPORT - HIGHLIGHTS
Fiscal Year 2002-2003**

Helping employers and employees to reduce occupational injury and illness

The objective of the Occupational Health and Safety division is to:

- reduce the incidence of accidents and illness with employees
- improve health and safety conditions in the workplace through partnerships, education, promotion, and enforcement of legislation.

Legislation

Environment and Labour is in the business of maintaining and improving, when appropriate, the regulatory systems that protect our environment and the health and safety of individuals. Meeting our regulatory responsibilities must be balanced against supporting opportunities for small businesses to create wealth and in simplifying procedures and not creating an onerous burden for business.

Legislation reviewed during 2001/02 includes:

- Fall Protection and Scaffolding Regulations
- General Blasting Regulations
- Occupational Health Regulations
- Temporary Workplace Traffic Control Regulations

Occupational Injury Rate 2001/02	
Actual workforce	423,300
Total claims registered with the WCB	34,701
Average claims per 100 employees	8.20
Total time loss claims	11,918
Time loss claims per 100 employees	2.17
Fatalities	27

Enforcement Activities 2001/02	
Prosecutions success rate	71 %
Fatalities investigated	18
Incidents investigated	325
Complaints investigated	860
Work refusals investigated	13

Education Initiatives

Education is a critical element to ensuring compliance with health and safety regulations for the workplace. This year we updated and/or created the following publications ourselves or in partnership with others.

- Atlantic Provinces Occupational Health and Safety Consultants List
- Guide for Invigilators and Candidates for the Blasters Exams
- Crime Prevention Brochure

Partnerships

Effective and efficient use of existing resources requires innovation. As a department, we are open to new ways of delivering programming. For example, to raise the level of compliance, we are using partnerships with industry associations and not-for profits to deliver programming to industry. Here are some examples of active partnerships in 2001/02.

- Accidents among younger workers are more common than with any other age group. With the support of Human Resources Development Canada and Environment and Labour, Education has developed a core health and safety curriculum for high school students. The course was piloted with great success in 2001 in 14 schools, and will be offered province-wide beginning in September 2002.

- Joint Occupational Health and Safety Committees: A Practical Guide for Single Employer Workplaces
- Regulatory Development and Review Process
- The Forest Professional - Guidelines for the Stewards of Tomorrow's Forests (3rd Edition)
- Working in the Private Residential Homes of Clients
- Industry-specific training has proven to be an effective way to reduce accident rates in both the construction and forestry industries. The Department regularly partners with safety associations in the construction, retail gasoline, trucking and forestry industries to deliver training.
- Research shows that people trained in first aid generally experience a lower accident rate than people without training.
- To increase the number of people trained in Nova Scotia, the Departments of Environment and Labour and Education partnered with St. John Ambulance to make courses available to high school students. To

date, 983 students from 55 high schools have received training.

2001/02 Statistics			
	Inspections conducted (% targeted)	Orders Issued* (%)	Time-Loss Claims (% of WCB)
Accommodation, Food & Beverage	31.0	13.6	7.3
Health and Social Services	8.1	22.9	15.9
Manufacturing	32.2	25.0	22.9
Retail Trade	5.7	14.5	10.3

*** The majority of order issued in 2001/02 addressed the following issues:**

- Premises and building safety, construction and demolition
- Mechanical safety
- Ventilation, lighting, sanitation, accommodation
- First aid certificates
- Internal Responsibility System
- Mechanical safety

Staffing Highlights

Environment and Labour has more than 60 percent of its work force committed to conducting and supporting inspection services. In OHS there are 30 front line inspection staff in the field, compared to 18 in 1993/94. In addition, we have five other inspectors who specialize in occupational hygiene. In 2001/02 our division grew. We hired a Communications Officer, who supported our prevention and education activities. We also hired a full-time statistician and a full-time ergonomist. Pending a permanent appointment next fiscal year, an interim Coordinator of Regulatory Reform was appointed to oversee our regulation review process. And the Province's Radiation Officer was transferred into our division on July 1, 2001.

National Initiatives

The Ministers of Labour from across Canada have made reducing injuries among young workers a national priority. The Occupational Health and Safety division is working on a number of initiatives to accomplish this goal. We have established a young worker page on the department's web site, trained public school teachers in Workplace Hazard Materials Information System (WHMIS), and worked with the Department of Education to deliver an occupational health and safety course for Grade 11 students in the province.