

06-13

For Immediate Release
January 26, 2006

MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT TACKLES ERGONOMIC-RELATED INJURIES IN THE WORKPLACE

Pains And Strains Campaign Focuses On Education And Inspection

WATERLOO — The McGuinty government is increasing awareness about ergonomic-related injuries in the workplace by launching a campaign that will focus on education and inspection, Labour Minister Steve Peters said today.

“Injuries like back pains and joint strains are a major concern in Ontario workplaces – they account for 42 per cent of all lost-time injuries,” said Peters, speaking at the University of Waterloo’s Centre of Research Expertise for the Prevention of Musculoskeletal Disorders. “These injuries are unnecessary and we are committed to preventing them.”

Peters said the government and its partners are implementing the recommendations of the Minister of Labour’s Ergonomics Advisory Panel, which has representation from business and labour.

Through the Pains and Strains Campaign, the government will move ahead on six specific recommendations dealing with areas such as awareness, education and prevention as well as improved training, more resource materials, increased expertise and better tracking of ergonomic-related inspections.

The Pains and Strains Campaign will focus on musculoskeletal disorders, a significant, but often overlooked, workplace hazard. Ergonomic-related injuries include back pain, muscle strain and tendonitis. Having a program to prevent these injuries has been shown to have many positive outcomes, including:

- Improved worker satisfaction, morale and well-being
- Reduced Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) lost-time injury claims and the associated direct and indirect costs
- Improved ability to retain experienced, knowledgeable and skilled workers
- Reduced administrative costs related to claims management and investigation
- Increased quality, productivity and profits.

Starting April 1, ministry inspectors will focus on risk factors during inspections of high-risk workplaces in industrial and health sectors to raise awareness of pains and strains. Each organization’s experience with these types of injuries will be reviewed along with the preventive steps they have taken.

To raise awareness, an information sheet has been developed jointly by the ministry and the WSIB. It outlines ways to identify and prevent ergonomic-related injuries and can be found at www.labour.gov.on.ca.

“By targeting workplace pains and strains, we are protecting Ontario’s workers and strengthening our economy,” said Peters.

-30-

Contacts:
Susan McConnell
Minister’s Office
416-326-7710

Belinda Sutton
Ministry of Labour
416-326-7405

Disponible en français

www.labour.gov.on.ca