

## OUTSTANDING RESULTS PRODUCED BY ONTARIO'S WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY STRATEGY

### **The workplace health and safety strategy**

In July 2004, the McGuinty government announced its plans to reduce workplace injuries by 20 per cent through a comprehensive, integrated health and safety strategy using education, training, legislation/regulation and enforcement. The strategy's goal is that, by 2008, there will be 20,000 fewer lost-time injuries than would have otherwise occurred and that this level will be maintained. Lost-time injuries are claims by workers who have lost wages by missing work as a result of a temporary or permanent work injury.

The strategy is being carried out through the high-risk workplace initiative and the targeted inspection of priority firms.

### **The high-risk workplace initiative**

The high-risk workplace initiative is focusing on workplaces with the highest injury rates and costs. When the initiative was launched, just two per cent of all firms insured by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) accounted for 10 per cent of all lost-time injuries and 21 per cent of injury cost in Ontario.

By assisting and educating these workplaces with high injury rates on healthier and safer work practices – while continuing to give priority to investigating workplace fatalities, critical injuries, work refusals, work stoppages and immediate hazards to worker health and safety – lost-time injuries can be reduced by 20 per cent. This will have significant benefit for Ontario's health and safety system and the quality of life for the people of Ontario.

Through its high-risk workplace initiative, the ministry is targeting its inspections on up to 6,000 firms with the highest injury rate and highest WSIB costs. Inspectors are visiting these sites up to four times a year, focusing on workplace hazards to help firms reduce on-the-job injuries.

### **Results**

After two years of implementation, results show the workplace health and safety strategy is working and the government is on track to achieve its four-year commitment to reduce injuries by 20 per cent, with 20,000 fewer lost-time injuries.

Due to the overall workplace health and safety strategy, there have been 14,649 fewer lost-time injuries than would have otherwise occurred. In 2004, there were 5,549 fewer lost-time injuries, and 9,100 in 2005. Since each incident cost a business an estimated \$57,424 in 2004

and \$71,384 in 2005 according to the WSIB, about \$960 million in costs were avoided by Ontario businesses over a two-year period.

Ontario's lost-time injury rate has been reduced from 2.2 per 100 workers in 2003 to 2.1 in 2004. It was further reduced to 2.0 in 2005, as targeted. This represents half of the government's proposed 20 per cent reduction. A lost-time injury occurs when a worker loses wages by missing work as a result of a temporary or permanent work-related injury.

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