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MAKE HEALTH AND SAFETY A SUMMER JOB PRIORITY

Workplace Health And Safety Is A Shared Responsibility

QUEEN'S PARK – The McGuinty government is urging students, their parents and their employers to make sure that summer jobs are safe and healthy, Labour Minister Steve Peters said today.

“We are committed to Ontario families, and that is why we want their sons and daughters to come home from work safe and sound,” said Peters.

“For many students, it will be their first venture into the working world. These young workers, their parents, and especially their employers, should take extra time to ensure that students are aware of their rights and responsibilities and that they know how to work safely, including not doing work they feel is unsafe,” he added. “We must always remember that no job is worth an injury; no job is worth a death.”

The Ministry of Labour (MOL) is providing a young worker portal on its website with links regarding employment standards and occupational health and safety. The link can be found at www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/site/youngworkers.html.

As well, MOL inspectors have been directed to focus on sections of the Occupational Health and Safety Act that oblige employers to provide orientation, training and supervision to ensure young and new workers work safely.

The government has set a goal of reducing workplace injuries by 20 per cent by 2008. In addition to providing information to young workers, the government and its health and safety partners are:

- Hiring 200 new health and safety inspectors. Of these, 131 are already working across Ontario. All 200 will be carrying out inspections of high-risk workplaces early next year
- Focusing ministry inspections on firms with the highest injury rate and highest WSIB costs – up to 6,000 annually – and inspecting them up to four times a year
- Giving more than 5,000 other workplaces per year a “last chance” to voluntarily improve their health and safety records with the help of the WSIB and 12 health and safety associations
- Launching the Pains and Strains Campaign to help reduce ergonomic-related injuries, which account for 42 per cent of all lost-time injuries in Ontario.

“For young people, a summer job is exciting, a chance to earn some money and to get a taste of the world outside of school,” said Peters. “By providing information and enhanced enforcement to young workers, our government is strengthening its commitment to Ontario families and their safety.”

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