

Ministry of Labour
Ministère du Travail

Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs
Ministère de l'Agriculture, de l'Alimentation et des Affaires rurales

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MCGUINITY GOVERNMENT IMPROVING FARM SAFETY *Farm Workers Protected Starting Today*

QUEEN'S PARK — Effective today, the Ontario government is better protecting workers on farms by extending Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) coverage to farming operations for the first time, Minister of Labour Steve Peters, and Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Leona Dombrowsky announced.

“We are on the side of Ontario’s rural families,” said Peters. “We have listened to farmers, workers and other groups, and together developed a regulation that addresses the agricultural community’s concerns. Farm workers now have the same type of protection available to other workers.”

“Everyone knows that farming is a high-risk occupation,” said Dombrowsky. “Farmers recognize the importance of safe working conditions and support coverage that better protects farm workers.”

Ministry of Labour inspectors will investigate complaints, critical injuries and work-related fatalities, and refusals of unsafe work on farming operations with paid workers. Farm employers and workers will be required to fulfill their responsibilities under the OHSA, as laid out in the new regulation. In addition, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Farm Safety Association will continue the education and awareness campaign that began last year.

The change is a result of consultations that took place with farm industry organizations such as the Labour Issues Co-ordinating Committee (a coalition of about 20 commodity and producer groups), the Farm Safety Association, and farm workers. Ongoing discussions will continue to develop strategies for dealing with farm-specific hazards.

“We first approached the government because we knew that this is good for farming,” said Hector Delanghe, Chair of the Labour Issues Co-ordinating Committee. “We worked closely with the government to make sure that the regulation reflects the unique features of agriculture, and to ensure its success in improving occupational health and safety on farms.”

This is just one of a number of initiatives the government has taken to support working families. Other measures include:

- Hiring 200 new Ministry of Labour 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
- The High-Risk initiative, targeting enforcement efforts at Ontario workplaces with higher than average injury rates and higher than average costs in Workplace Safety and Insurance Board claims
- The Pains and Strains initiative, targeting musculoskeletal injuries, which make up a significant portion of all workplace injuries.

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