

LITIGATION UPDATE

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Health and Safety at Work – Prevention Starts Here New OHSa Requirement

By Carole McAfee Wallace

Employers across Ontario will soon be required to post in the workplace a new awareness poster released by the Ministry of Labour (MOL): “Health and Safety at Work – Prevention Starts Here”. The new requirement falls under the *Ontario Health and Safety Act (OHSa)* and MOL inspectors will begin enforcing this requirement as of October 1, 2012.

The poster:

- summarizes health and safety rights and responsibilities of workers, employers and supervisors;
- encourages workers to get involved in health and safety at the workplace;
- explains when and why to contact the Ministry; and,
- reminds employers that they must not take action against workers for following the OHSa or for raising health and safety concerns.

The development and creation of this poster resulted from a report released by an Expert Advisory Panel in December 2010 (“the Panel”). The Panel, appointed by the Minister of Labour in March 2010, consulted extensively with stakeholders across the province to review Ontario’s occupational health and safety system and identify structural

and operational improvements.

Their findings indicated that many workers had little or no understanding of the OHSa, including their rights and obligations as workers, and the responsibilities of their employers and supervisors. The creation of a mandatory health and safety poster was one of the Panel’s 46 recommendations.

Post the safety poster today

All employers will need to adhere to the OHSa’s new requirement and download, print and post the new health and safety poster in the workplace.

The OHSa can perform random workplace inspections, and they will look to see that your workplace health and safety posters are displayed. Don’t wait until October to post this new awareness poster at your workplace. It is free to download and will show the MOL and your employees that health and safety is important to you.

The poster is available in 17 different languages and can be downloaded for free on the MOL’s website.

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