

# MOL ANNOUNCES MANDATORY SAFETY TRAINING DEADLINE FOR ONTARIO EMPLOYERS

## Workers and supervisors must provide proof of training by July 1, 2014

Effective July 1, 2014, Ontario employers will have to ensure that all workers and supervisors have completed a basic occupational health and safety awareness training program. The first of its kind in North America, the new regulation mandates basic safety awareness training for all Ontario workers and supervisors – with a specific focus on small business and vulnerable workers.

To help employers comply by July 1, the Ministry of Labour (MOL) is developing record-keeping tools, comparability checklist, and guides.

## Are you already providing awareness training?

Notable exceptions to the regulation include workers and supervisors who have previously completed a basic occupational health and safety awareness training program that covers the same content, either with their current or former employer, and can provide proof of completion; and supervisors who have completed a basic occupational health and safety training program for supervisors, prior to the regulation coming into force won't have to complete a basic occupational health and safety awareness training program for workers.

## Employer responsible for safety awareness training

Once the regulation takes effect, the employer is responsible for ensuring that all workers and supervisors have completed a basic occupational health and safety awareness training program. The Ministry has provided a training program suite (workbooks, employer guides, poster, and e-learning modules) to meet these requirements; however, it's not mandatory, particularly as many employers already have extensive health and safety training programs in place.

All the training products are available at no cost and in multiple formats and languages. The mandatory health and safety workplace poster, the worker and supervisor workbooks, and employer guides are currently available in [print and online through the Ministry of Labour](#) including e-learning modules. An 'on-the-go' resource for mobile users is also expected to be available shortly. By May 2014, worker and supervisor workbooks and e-learning modules will have been revised to a grade 4 comprehension level, and focus on images, graphics, audio, and video with minimal written text.

## Equivalency training programs and record-keeping

Many employers already offer training and awareness programs that meet or exceed the MOL mandatory training requirements. An equivalency checklist is being prepared by the ministry to help employers determine if their programs qualify. Either way, employers need to keep records to confirm worker participation in mandatory training or its equivalent.

"There is the provision that if they have training of their own or from an HSA [Health and Safety Association], that meets or exceeds the objectives of the MOL programs, they will be in compliance," says John Levesque, with program and product development at Workplace Safety North, and member of the working group that helped develop the new training material.

"So, it's mandatory in the sense that workers and supervisors will have to participate in either the MOL training or an equivalent version of it – and keep a record of it. If a Ministry of Labour inspector walks

into a workplace once this new regulation is in force, the employer will have to show some record of their workers and supervisors having taken that training or the equivalent.

“It’s basically legislative awareness, and the course acquaints workers and supervisors with the Act and the regulations. The free workbook is a really good information resource on top of being a training manual,” adds Levesque. “I believe the hope is that workers and supervisors will hang on to this booklet, and if they’re ever in doubt about something – they can refer to it.”

## How to get ready

Building awareness across all workplaces and specifically for all workers and supervisors is an important step in building a culture of health and safety, particularly among small businesses and vulnerable workers. The introduction of this regulation signals a significant turning point in health and safety history that will have a profound impact on future generations.

Employers should be prepared to raise the level of dialogue and encourage more conversations - as awareness increases, so too will questions, ideas and, perhaps most importantly, commitment.

The following steps will help your business meet its obligations and create a safer, healthier and more productive operation.

1. Make your organization aware of the new requirements, and why it's important for people and for business.
2. Assess your existing awareness program against the ministry's requirements.
3. If your program does not meet requirements, figure out what's needed and how to proceed.
4. Draft an implementation schedule for training and record keeping that ensures compliance before July 1, 2014.
5. Verify that new hires have had appropriate training.
6. Document, document, document.

## Ministry of Labour resources

To help you meet the compliance requirements, the ministry has produced free [e-learning modules and downloadable training guides and workbooks](#). The resources include a poster that must be displayed in all workplaces.