

THE  
**safety mosaic**

Health & Safety for the Way You Work  
Official Publication of the Ontario Service Safety Alliance

[www.ossa.com](http://www.ossa.com)

Spring 2009  
Volume 12 No. 1



**Everyone's a winner  
in gaming *partnership***

*Health and safety is not  
a competition, casinos say*



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today!***



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- **Walk in honour of a loved one.**

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## THE safety mosaic

SPRING 2009

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The Conference Board of Canada's "Healthy People, Healthy Performance, Healthy Profits" report (December 2008) sends a lifeboat to businesses adrift in the turbulent waters of the economic recession.

The lifeboat comes in the form of this advice: "There is a great deal of room for cost savings by acting to prevent injury and illness before they occur." And this: "Employers that take action... can improve

both the health of employees and organizational performance and profits."

Indeed, for those businesses one injury, one MOL order, or one Workwell audit away from capsizing, paying attention to health and safety will be the means by which you will survive.

We address that reality with practical steps small businesses can take to be true to their entrepreneurial nature, while remaining profitable and meeting their moral and legal obligations (see story on page 15).

Navigating the recession also requires a willingness to do things differently. On page 14, you'll read how business leaders are collaborating with health and safety leader Rob Ellis, and reaching thousands through his community-driven simulcasts. We call that "safety in numbers"! Another group that embraces this approach is Ontario casinos. They broke the rules of competition by forming a partnership to jointly improve their health and safety outcomes (see story on page 9).

The gaming industry isn't alone in devising new ways to work, as you'll see on page 4. The Prevention System is also undergoing a transformation. When the challenges are more complex, we as leaders need to reinvest in our core values. For the Prevention System, that core is the Road to Zero. Who can comprehend the emotional and financial cost of 80 fatalities in 2008, and 1,600 lost-time injuries each week? Outcomes like these gave Ontario's entire health and safety system, including OSSA, the courage to see beyond their individual mandates and streamline the 12 sector-based health and safety associations into four.

The new model, which takes effect in 2010, will mean more frontline staff, more services, more conversations—all focused on making Ontario the healthiest and safest place to work in the world. (See [www.ossa.com](http://www.ossa.com) for more information.)

This October, we will celebrate the 30th anniversary of the *Ontario Health and Safety Act*—legislation that generated a sea change in the workplace. We expect that 30 years from now, we'll look back on today's bold, new plan as another significant milestone. It feels that big, that hopeful and that exciting.

Enjoy this issue of *The Safety Mosaic*, and have a healthy and safe spring.

President and CEO

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## Prevention System Restructuring—How Will it Affect You?

In the last issue of *The Safety Mosaic*, we told you about Ontario's 12 health and safety associations merging into four new associations. Here is an update:

On February 19, the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) Board of Directors approved a business case for the realignment of the Ontario health and safety system, with 12 health and safety associations distilled to four. One of the four new associations will combine OSHA with the Industrial Accident Prevention Association (IAPA) and Farm Safety Association (FSA).

Here are the changes and benefits you will start to see beginning next year.



### 1 Improved customer service

Today, Ontario's 12 health and safety associations each have their own human resources, operations, client services and product development business units.

#### Improvements you will see:

- New Boards of Directors established and CEOs hired for each of the four new health and safety associations in 2009;
- Visible synergies in the system: reducing overhead to free up resources for front-line field consultants;
- A critical assessment and restructuring of the Prevention System's programs and services, to promote more consistent delivery across the province.

### 2 More consistency in how you're measured and serviced

Today, an employer can be visited by the MOL, the WSIB and a health and safety association, and each time be exposed to different measures and approaches. In addition, the safety performance of some government sector employers is measured using different criteria than for private sector firms. Adding to the confusion is the presence of 12 different health and safety associations with 12 different sets of phone numbers, Web sites, products, services and price points.

#### Improvements you will see:

- Clear, transparent and consistent communication of the roles and responsibilities of Prevention System partners and business;
- "One door" with one phone number and one Web site, for employers to navigate one straight path to sector-specific solutions;
- The same access to services for workplaces in every region of Ontario.

### 3 Better support for small and micro business

To reach Zero, employers and workers need encouragement, and better products and services—less cost, clearly understandable, accessible, and relevant to their workplace.

#### Improvements you will see:

- Innovative and cost-effective health and safety solutions designed for new workers and small business;
- An infusion of front-line health and safety field consultants will help businesses leverage their health and safety investment;
- Better communication, which will help all businesses understand their obligation to set and achieve a goal of Zero.

### The Road to Zero

This is a bold plan, designed to support a future with Zero workplace fatalities, injuries and illnesses. The Prevention System believes its plan will provide the foundation for Ontario to emerge as a global leader in prevention, regardless of economic conditions and where all are inspired and enabled to eliminate the terrible burden of workplace fatalities, injuries and disease.

For further information, go to [www.ossa.com](http://www.ossa.com) and click "What's New," then "Changes to Prevention System."

## Can a Week Inspire Year-round Safety?

How do you instill a culture of workplace safety that runs throughout the year? It's simple. You start with a week.

May 3 to 9, 2009, is North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week. With this an annual initiative, health and safety advocates and organizations across North America increase awareness of workplace health and safety through local, provincial and national events. Employers and workers are also encouraged to review their workplace health and safety programs.

NAOSH Week is an ideal time for organizations to enhance their knowledge of workplace safety by sponsoring or participating in health and safety events. These events can range from training sessions to contests to community events—anything designed to raise awareness.

The Ontario NAOSH Network has developed a brief 10-question checklist to help workplaces review their health and safety programs. The checklist is intended to get people thinking about basic requirements and workplace injury and illness prevention. It also provides information on resources that are available to employers and workers.

### Steps for Life—Walking for Victims of Workplace Tragedy

On May 3, more than 10 communities will participate in the 6th Annual Steps for Life event across Canada. The event, coinciding with NAOSH Week, raises awareness about the importance of injury prevention and donations go directly to Threads of Life Family Support Programs and services to support families of workplace tragedy.

Visit [www.stepsforlife.ca](http://www.stepsforlife.ca) for more information.

# Let's Get Quizzical

Take this health and safety quiz to test your knowledge of safe work regulation and practices.

**Do MOL inspectors need a search warrant before they enter your premises?**

**Do staff need specific training on how to operate motorized equipment?**

**Do young, strong, keen workers need more than the usual protection?**

**If equipment doesn't come with guards, does it still need them?**

For more information, call OSSA at 1-888-478-6772.

No. MOL inspectors do not need a search warrant to enter your premises, observe your operations and search your company records. They can have more authority than police officers. They can impose tickets or fines, issue time-sensitive compliance orders, and—if the infraction is significant enough—shut you down on the spot. It is an offence to hinder, obstruct, molest or interfere with inspectors in the performance of their duty, under the Act. The best thing you can do in your own interest is fully co-operate.

Yes. Equipment with motors and wheels are instruments of injury and death without proper training. Untrained employees and temp agency employees should not be allowed near motorized equipment. Young workers require extra vigilance. Few employees need your protection more than young workers. They are often eager to please and prove themselves, oblivious to risks, and convinced they are invincible. They may not know it, but they depend on you to keep them injury-free and save their lives.

Yes. Equipment may not come with a guard or may not be installed with a guard, but that doesn't mean it doesn't need one. Section 7 of regulation 851 in the Act explains clearly that a qualified person—usually an engineer—must conduct a pre-start review to make sure new or modified equipment meets all safety standards.

**Answers**

## Sweeping Changes for WSIB's Incentive Program



In an attempt to close many loopholes that compromise accountability and fairness, the WSIB has been conducting a review to improve its experience rating program—the program that rewards employers with rebates, or penalizes them with surcharges, according to their health and safety performance based on their claims costs. If the recommendations of actuarial consulting company Morneau Sobeco are approved, they will result in sweeping changes for Ontario employers, in a way that will personally affect CEOs, CFOs and other senior executives.

The review addresses several issues that currently undermine the credibility of the WSIB's incentive programs. Here are just two:

- *Failure to report injuries makes some employers appear to have better performance.*
- *There is no link between an employer receiving a rebate or surcharge, and meeting its legislative obligations.*

Two areas of potential unfairness exist within the current practices:

**The Second Injury and Enhancement Fund (SIEF) policy**—intended to encourage employers to employ disabled workers—is in some cases having a negative impact on return to work. This is because under SIEF, disability costs are associated with the previous employer, which means the “current” employer has no incentive to bring the worker back on modified duties on a timely basis;

**The Employer Advances policy**—intended to reimburse all advances for Schedule 1 employers—has given some firms an option in choosing to continue to pay or not pay a worker, thereby influencing whether a claim is considered to be a lost time or no-lost-time injury.

Four of the recommendations in the report include:

- **The WSIB would pay refunds to employers only if they could confirm compliance with the *Workplace Safety and Insurance Act* and *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.**
  - **Mandatory disclosure of workplace practices, which would include an annual declaration of compliance by the CEO, CFO, or senior executive.**
- **If convicted of a health and safety transgression, the firm would be required to undertake corrective action and then achieve a minimum score on a follow-up audit before receiving a rebate. In addition, a portion or the entire rebate could be used to finance the costs of the corrective action.**
- **The SIEF policy would be amended to eliminate rebates to firms where there is:**
  - **A pre-existing condition but no pre-existing disability;**
  - **A pre-existing disability resulting from an injury with the same employer.**
- **The practice that allows employers to advance wages to injured workers would apply only when the worker is attending a medical appointment.**

As part of its research, Morneau Sobeco met with stakeholders representing employer and labour groups. Stakeholders will have an additional opportunity to comment on the report and recommendations to be led in the coming weeks by the Hon. Steven W. Mahoney, WSIB Chair.

To share your thoughts, contact the WSIB at 1-800-387-0750 or visit [www.wsib.on.ca](http://www.wsib.on.ca)



By Jason Hagerman

In warehouses, stacking storage units higher and closer together is a simple way to make the most of a confined space. Because of this, traditional counterbalanced forklifts are being replaced in many small-parts warehouses by order pickers. These machines are starkly different from forklifts, and bring many unique risks.

“An order picker basically looks like an elevator that drives, and they’re used for narrow aisle picking,” explains Sean McBurney, an Instructional Services Consultant with Liftow Training.

The operator, strapped to the platform with a harness and lanyard, raises himself and the platform to reach the desired shelf. He retrieves and places the object on a skid, which has been centered on the platform, and continues on to the next section of shelving without lowering the platform (unless lowering is necessary).

“When used according to training, these machines are a safe way to retrieve small amounts of stock from upper lev-

els,” says John Cunningham, an OSSA Corporate Account Manager.

Using the order picker, Cunningham says, contributes to a productive environment, allowing companies to stack shelves closer together. The order picker can save a company money when operated by a properly trained employee.

However, working with order pickers exposes operators to specific dangers not present with other types of lift trucks; for example:

- **Falls while operating at an elevated position:** “In 2007, fall protection accounted for 6,786 [*Occupational Health and Safety Act*] violations,” says McBurney. Most companies provide training, he says, since order pickers fall under forklift safety standards, but they neglect fall protection training, which is required for anybody working more than three metres from the ground.

- **Overloading:** This is one of the most significant dangers when operating an order picker, says Cunningham. Overloading can increase the risk of fall-

# Strap In

**Proper training and safety precautions will ensure employers and employees get the most out of order pickers**

ing by altering the stability of the order picker, and can also obstruct the view of the operator. Tragically, two operators died earlier this year: one when the platform struck a post, and the other when the load caused the machine to flip backward.

Employers can minimize risk by setting speed limits and purchasing the optional safety features available on order pickers. “There are things like lift-limit indicators and scales that you can get as an option,” says Mike Lucas, a Toyota Lift Sales Rep.

However, training, says McBurney, is the most important thing a company can do. “Proper training ensures that workers have the background, tools and knowledge of the risks involved in operating these machines.”

Organizations such as Liftow Training offer fall protection courses designed to teach workers how to wear a harness properly, how to attach different kinds of lanyards and, in the event of a fall, how to fall in a way that minimizes injuries.

Forklift regulations require employers to provide operators with training refreshers every 18 months, and a theoretical session every three years.

You can also access tip sheets on order picking, proper lifting techniques, training goals and possible workplace hazards at the OSSA. ⚠



For more information: [www.ossa.com](http://www.ossa.com)  
[www.liftow.com/training](http://www.liftow.com/training)  
[www.thsao.on.ca/training.html](http://www.thsao.on.ca/training.html)

# OSSA Online Program

## Helps Small Businesses Evaluate, Develop H&S Systems

By Talbot Boggs

Most organizations today are aware of the need to create a safe and healthy work environment for their employees. Many, however, may not know how to assess how well their programs are functioning and how to improve them.

A new online tool developed by the Ontario Service Safety Alliance is now available to help organizations measure their health and safety (H&S) programs and access resources to build better, more effective H&S systems.

“It’s really designed for people who are looking for information on how to assess their health and safety system and to get advice on how to close any gaps that might exist, all in an online format,” says Kim Grant, OSSA’s Manager of Research and Product Development.

“Although it can be used by anyone, it is geared more toward small- and medium-sized service businesses,” says Grant. “The requirements for larger organizations are there, but if a small business is using it, the program automatically focuses on solutions that are relevant to their needs.

The tool is divided into two parts: a health and safety report card, and a health and safety map.

The report card consists of a survey of more than 30 questions that helps organizations assess their H&S programs and system. Once the survey is completed, a report card is issued that shows how well the organization’s H&S system is functioning in key areas and identifies opportunities for improvement.





For example, the survey asks a series of questions relating to training and certification, whether members of the

organization’s H&S safety committee have required certification and training, whether monthly inspections are conducted and all risks and hazards required by the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* have been identified, and whether the company has a WHMIS program and employees undergo annual WHMIS training.

The survey also asks if employees are provided with and are trained to use personal protective equipment, and if the company is preparing for or responding to orders and letters from the Ministry of Labour and Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB).

Once all the questions are answered, a report card is produced with an action

## Health and Safety Report

Priority V - Violation PV - Potential Violation E - Enhancement	Issue	Action	Products, Service or Training Available	Action Assigned To:	Action Completed
	MOL orders for specific OHSA violations.	Comply with all MOL orders within the assigned timeframe.	<b>Consulting Service</b> Contact your OSSA consultant who can provide guidance on how best to go about making the required changes.		
	Employees exposed to designated substances.	Train employees on proper use of designated substances.	<b>Training</b> Designated substances		
	Organization has received a Workwell Audit letter.	Prepare for a Workwell Audit.	<b>Consulting Service</b> Health and Safety Manual		
	Looking to achieve accreditation.	Begin evaluating H&S program against accreditation criteria.	<b>Consulting Service</b> <b>Consulting Service</b> Accreditation		

Sample Survey

plan that enables a company to prioritize and address concerns about its health and safety program.

For example, if the company is in violation of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and/or regulations, a “V” for violation appears in the priority column. Potential violations are marked with a “PV” and require investigation to determine if a violation exists. The last recommendation, flagged with an “E” suggests ways the health and safety system might be improved.

Ten areas are rated: monthly workplace inspections; identification of risks and hazards; employee awareness of workplace hazards and controls; receipt of a Workwell audit letter; emergency response plans; WHMIS training; review of injury or First Aid statistics; celebration of safety achievements; management and supervisory compensation to reinforce health and safety goals; and evaluation of health and safety activities for potential improvement.

The report card lists priorities, issues and actions that need to be taken as well as products, services and training that are available, and gives companies an area to assign action items and record their completion.

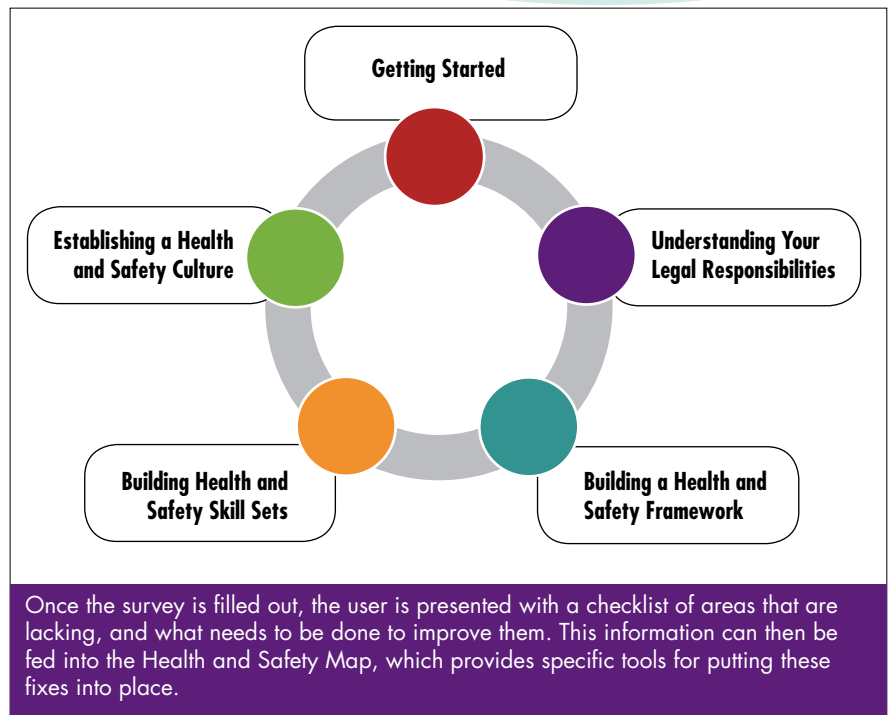
### Five phases of an H&S system

The second part of the tool is a map that guides participants through the five phases of a health and safety system. The first phase includes **identifying gaps** in their current program. Organizations that have been audited by the WSIB or inspected by the Ministry of Labour probably already know where their gaps are. Others, however, may not.

Under the “Getting Started” section, the map lists a number of products and services available, such as the health and safety report card, a Workwell mock audit, a manager’s guide to safe work practices, and accreditations.

The next phase identifies the fundamental **legal requirements** for any health and safety program. This includes a description of what occupational health

## Health and Safety Map



and safety is, what is expected from the organization, how to establish a joint health and safety committee, and the specific duties and responsibilities of employers, workers and supervisors.

The third phase involves **developing health and safety policies and procedures**. These documents provide the foundation for a sustainable program—health assessment, safe work guidelines, policies and procedures, a health and safety manual and implementation of a health and safety system.

The fourth phase involves **building health and safety skill sets**. If this area is highlighted as a result of completing the health and safety report card, organizations can contact OSSA customer service to find out about the required compliance training programs.

As well, they can access information that provides staff with additional training in areas such as working alone, safe lifting, and musculoskeletal disorders to prevent accidents and injuries.

Although these areas are not legislated, employers are responsible for taking every reasonable precaution to protect their employees from harm.

The final phase is **establishing a health and safety culture** within the organization. It provides the tools and guidance companies need to help them create a “health and safety mindset.”

Communication, coaching, mentoring and motivation are key elements in building a health and safety culture. This final phase includes a culture survey, evaluation and integration needs assessment.

Organizations and people change. To ensure a health and safety program is evolving effectively to deal with change, organizations need to continuously evaluate and improve all aspects of their health and safety programs. ▲

@ For more information, [www.ossa.com/ossasitemap/00\\_LandingPage.aspx](http://www.ossa.com/ossasitemap/00_LandingPage.aspx)

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 Colette Nenez-Grover,  
 Manager Health & Safety,  
 Labour Relations & HR  
 Risk Management, OLG;  
 Barbara Cowan, Health &  
 Safety Specialist, Great Blue  
 Heron Charity Casino.

Front Row (left to right):  
 Dave Turpin, Manager  
 Health, Safety &  
 Environment, Caesars  
 Windsor; Kim Litchfield,  
 Corporate Account Manager,  
 OSSA; Angela Kelly, Health  
 Services Manager, Niagara  
 Casinos.



## Casinos Set Competition Aside: All the Players Win at This Table

By Heidi Croot

**T**en people who know their way around a casino, sit at a table with winning on their minds—but it’s about as different from a Blackjack or Roulette table as you will find. At this table, everyone’s a winner, the players make a point of revealing their cards to everyone else, and the pot only gets bigger the more they play.

Who are these people, who seem to be breaking every rule of competition?

They are health and safety professionals representing Niagara Casinos, Casino Rama, Caesars Windsor, Great Blue Heron Charity Casino, and the government agency responsible for casino gaming in Ontario, the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG).



Challenged by the same issues, they came together to form a gaming partnership whose purpose is to win what they believe is the most important prize: the health and safety of their employees.

“We all bring a wealth of health and safety experience, resources and knowledge to the table,” says Dave Turpin, Manager, Health, Safety and Environment, Caesars Windsor. “When I first came to gaming and found out we didn’t talk within the industry, I felt I had nowhere to turn. The partnership is so necessary. It only makes sense to share what we know. Why wouldn’t we?”

Turpin’s colleague, Angela Kelly, R.N., Health Services Manager, Niagara Casinos, agrees. “We provide a world-class service to people from all over the world. We’re forming a connection around doing the right thing to engage our employees and keep them safe. There’s no reason why we can’t all have similar programs and preventative measures. Working smart and controlling your injuries is good business.”

## How the partnership got started

In 2007, OSSA noticed a recurring theme during its one-on-one meetings with casino health and safety managers. Everyone wanted to know: “What are other casinos doing?” To answer that question, OSSA invited all the players to a discovery meeting in 2008. The energy at that kickoff meeting quickly led to a commitment to meet quarterly.

Kim Litchfield, Corporate Account Manager, OSSA, serves as coach and facilitator at the meetings. She uses innovation tools to help members identify common goals, and rejoices in the progress she’s seen. “We started by looking at what members believed could and could not be done,” she says. “It turns out they could do a lot more than they thought they could.”

## Five signs the partnership is working

As Kelly and Turpin point out, the most meaningful success indicator is the improvement in each organization’s health and safety outcomes. “Since 2006, we’ve all seen reductions,” says Kelly. “At our location, incidents have gone down 50 per cent.”

While the numbers are critically important, they are by no means the only measure of success. Take a look:

**Alignment with the Road to Zero:** Ontario businesses must achieve seven per cent reductions in injury rates every year, just to maintain current premium levels. Given these tough new goals, members can collaborate to identify common performance measures that align with the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) Road to Zero.

**Senior management involvement:** Last fall, the gaming partners invited their executive vice presidents and executives from the WSIB to a summit to talk about their industry’s goals and challenges. “Having our senior leaders take time out to be in the room was pivotal,” says Kelly. “That’s when we all said, this partnership is the right thing to do and we need to move forward.”



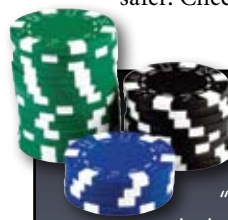
**Online resources:** Gaming partnership members are particularly excited about their new Internet portal. “I’ve always wanted a Web-based resource where we can share best practices,” says Turpin. “I’m on it at least twice a week.”

**Momentum:** While the team may not have the framework of a “Safety Group” (see [ossa.com](http://ossa.com) for more) to lean on, it has nevertheless found the courage, motivation and energy to shape its own partnership model and be self-sustaining. “We are moving forward with even more sophisticated initiatives in 2009,” says Kelly, “and making our partnership even more collaborative.”

**The buzz in the room:** “At the last few meetings, there’s been a lot of excitement and encouragement in the room,” says Turpin. “What’s really positive is that when one of us has an issue, we’ll send an e-mail to the group and a few of us will provide a response. We’re reaching out to one another and sharing ideas.”

## Is an industry partnership in your future?

Partnerships offer a viable alternative to Safety Groups, and result in rich rewards to businesses in any industry wishing to leverage relationships to make their workplaces healthier and safer. Check out these benefits:



### Zeroing in on MSDs at the Gaming Table

“We had some complaints around musculoskeletal disorders from our dealers. Caesars Windsor assessed the postures of dealers at different games and created a visual tool so dealers could assess good versus poor posture. That helped. Since then, we’ve all been looking at our equipment and different ways for the cards to come out of the shoes; the layout of the tables; how we can reduce the reach; and training our dealers to manage their game a bit differently. It came down to quite simple solutions. It’s about listening to your people.”

Angela Kelly, Health Services Manager,  
Niagara Casinos

## A Snapshot of Ontario's Gaming Industry (and you thought your industry was complex)



- First casino launched in 1994
- Currently four large resort casinos, five smaller community-based casinos, one aboriginal casino, and 17 slot operations at racetracks in Ontario
- Employ 20,000 employees collectively, with shifts running 24/7
- Resort casinos operate:
  - Hotels, usually with 100% occupancy;
  - More than one restaurant, some with large buffets and all with large volumes of customers;
  - Entertainment venues;
  - Meeting and convention areas.

"I've been a health and safety professional for 16 years in various industries, such as automotive and chemical," says Dave Turpin, Manager, Health, Safety and Environment, Caesars Windsor, "but nothing prepared me for the sheer complexity and volume of the issues that come with casinos and their sub-industries."

- **Prevent injuries:** Forming a partnership promotes a focus on shared priority hazards; for example, the gaming partnership has a laser focus on the top three hazards in its industry.
- **Be more efficient:** By sharing resources, and running assessments and program development in parallel, the casino partners have dramatically shortened their idea-to-implementation timeframe.
- **Save money:** "We're all impacted by the economic downturn," says Turpin, "and you definitely want to avoid adding lost time to that."
- **Boost your image:** Word gets out, and customers prefer companies and industries with a reputation for caring about health and safety.
- **Stay off MOL and WSIB lists:** Working together improves your ability to catch minor issues before they escalate, which can keep Ministry of Labour and Workwell inspectors from your door.
- **Innovate:** It's well-known that teams often outperform individuals.
- **Impact your industry:** Businesses that share a single rate group can achieve significant savings on premiums based on performance.
- **Influence:** Similarly, businesses that partner are more likely to be heard by industry and government decision-makers.

### Five myths about forming a partnership

What, us? Collaborate with the competition? "We're not talking about our latest new game or incentives," says Turpin. "This

is not about competition. It's about health and safety for our workers, and that's not a competition."

**But I'd have to get my house in order first!** That would defeat the purpose. As Kelly puts it, nobody's perfect. A partnership helps you reduce time spent on learning curves, assessments, and implementation, by sharing the load with eager, willing colleagues.

**It's too costly:** Not according to the gaming partners, who are now taking turns meeting quarterly at each property to rotate the travel burden. They also meet for half an hour via conference call every month to keep things moving.

**The firms in my industry are too different:** Nobody could be more different than casino properties, with some unionized, others not, some operated and managed by OLG, and others are run by private operators under contract to OLG. The gaming partners easily transcend these differences, most of which are irrelevant to workplace health and safety discussions.

**We wouldn't be able to attract everyone to the table:** That's OK. You don't need everyone at the table to get started. Build it and they will come.

### It's about getting back to basics

The gaming partnership members stand united around one irresistible truth: that laying their cards on the table and investing in people's health and safety translates into a win-win where employees are happy and productive, and customers feel valued and satisfied. It's a back-to-basics philosophy and the best game in town—one that, according to Turpin and Kelly, is already making people's lives better in the gaming industry. ▲

## Lightening the Load for Housekeepers

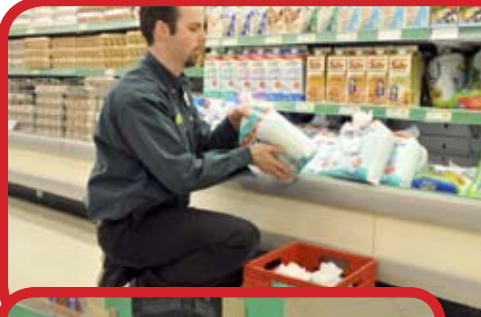
"All the casino hotels are at 100 per cent occupancy. We were having lost-time injuries in housekeeping, while Niagara Casinos was not. We asked them why. Sure enough, they were doing things differently. We implemented their methods and got huge positive impact. For example, attendants normally put soiled linen in carts, which increased the weight of the cart. Now, we place bins outside the rooms and janitors share the physical load by collecting them. Also, we've assigned ownership of a block of rooms to each housekeeper. This has not only improved the quality of the cleaning through pride in work, but it's reduced aches and pains. That in turn led to a huge ergo training initiative geared to guest room activities like making beds and cleaning techniques. We've seen a reduction in injuries in that job classification, and recently shared our methods with other properties. And it all started as a result of visiting Niagara through our partnership."

Dave Turpin, Manager, Health, Safety and Environment, Caesars Windsor



**With the Ministry of Labour (MOL) focusing its second blitz of the year on musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), businesses can expect surprise visits from MOL inspectors looking for hazards that put employees at risk for sprains and strains. Here are a few tips retail grocery stores might find helpful in preventing MSDs:**

## STOCKING SHELVES



- Get down on one knee instead of bending your back while replenishing stock at lower levels.
- Keep stock close at hand to avoid reaching for it.



- Use a step stool or price change cart to stock shelves above shoulder height.



- Use a hand jack to pull out heavily laden carts.

## WORKING WITH CARTS

- Don't overload carts to the extent transport becomes difficult.
- Ensure material is stacked between waist and shoulder levels.
- Bend knees while lifting material off the floor.



- Push the cart, don't pull it.
- Keep your body close to the cart so your back is upright.

## SCANNING AND BAGGING

- Pick up cans and bottles to be scanned by grasping the sides.



- Drag heavy items across the scanner; don't lift them.
- Use the conveyer belt to bring products to you.



- Ensure bag is at waist level while bagging groceries.

## TRANSPORTING CARTS

- Move no more than five carts at one time.
- Ensure ramps and access areas are free of obstacles.



# Bridging Champion Employers and Young Workers

By Heidi Croot

In 1999, Rob Ellis's 18-year-old son David died in a preventable workplace tragedy on his second day on the job. Since then, David's dad has become a tireless advocate for the well-being of other people's children.

His goal is to build a bridge between present and future leaders by asking presidents and CEOs to get out of their corner offices, be a visible leader in their communities, and engage with Canada's youth in a potentially life-saving conversation about health and safety.

*The Safety Mosaic* spoke with Ellis, President of Our Youth at Work, and former president of a business servicing the food and restaurant industry, to learn more about what he calls "champion employers."

## **SM: Is it possible to make health and safety a national habit?**

**Ellis:** Look at the environmental movement: it created a grassroots message that has me separating my garbage daily. Yet when I talk about 47,000 people between the ages of 15 and 24 being injured at work every single year, I hear silence. We need champion employers to help fix that.

## **SM: What does a champion employer look like?**

**Ellis:** I tell students that if the company doesn't offer "OT"—orientation and training—I don't want them working there. Companies that haven't invested in OT have high turnover. Service sector firms tell me, "We can't attract enough young people." My response: look at the companies that are succeeding. They keep their employees happy by offering OT! We need to address the basics.

## **SM: Do young workers get it?**

**Ellis:** The first thing I ask kids is, 'Raise your hand if you've been burned or cut on the job recently.' About 400 out of 1,000 hands go up. They'll look around and say, 'Aw come on, can't believe it, no way.' That's when the lights go on. Then I ask, 'How many students here have had

a mom, dad, aunt or uncle injured on the job?' Another 400 hands go up. It's the same every place I go, and I speak 150 times a year.

## **SM: What can parents do?**

**Ellis:** Most parents train their kids to write tremendous resumes. But when the hiring manager asks, 'Do you have any questions about this company?'—bang. That's where we miss it. Parents need to coach their kids that this is the time to ask, 'Will I get orientation and training? Do you have a buddy system in place? What's your staff turnover like?' If the answers aren't right, kids don't want a job there. The company has shown they won't respect them. I want moms and dads to lean across the kitchen table and talk to their kids about health and safety, including the close calls they've had.

## **SM: What can kids do to protect themselves?**

**Ellis:** First, they need to know they don't have to work in an environment of fear. They can say, 'I'm feeling uncomfortable in my job. I need some help so I don't get hurt and can be productive.' If the help isn't forthcoming, or if the boss says, 'Listen, I have 1,000 people who can fill that job,' then it's time to get out of there. ▲



Rob Ellis (right), President of Our Youth at Work, talks health and safety with high school students.

## Our Youth at Work Simulcasts

### Presidents and CEOs engage with future leaders at local high schools

#### Here's how it works:

- Through his own network, and with help from participating presidents, CEOs and small business owners who tap their own Rolodexes, Rob Ellis works with school boards across Canada to fill a high school venue with hundreds of students, business and union leaders, and government officials.
- Ellis's 30-minute presentation is followed by a 30-minute Q&A.
- The Q&A allows students to ask questions, and business leaders to share their companies' values, as well as speak directly to local media (training provided).

Visit [www.mysafework.com](http://www.mysafework.com) to find out more or become a workplace champion.

## HEADS UP!

### MOL blitz on young worker safety slated for June 2009

"This blitz tells us that the Ministry of Labour is protecting the health and safety of Ontario's future leaders. It knows that the way to achieve The Road to Zero target [of zero injuries, illnesses and fatalities] is by transferring knowledge to young workers, and making sure they understand that the government cares about and respects them."

~ Rob Ellis, President,  
Our Youth at Work

For more information, call OSSA at 1-800-525-2458.

# How Small Business Can Be Both Nimble and Safe

Where would Ontario be without small businesses? Barely on the map, when you consider that about 90 per cent of Ontario firms employ 20 or fewer employees, representing one-third of the province's workforce.

No wonder the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) is reaching out to small employers in its five-year prevention strategy, the Road to Zero. Because of their size, says the WSIB, small businesses face unique challenges (few staff, long hours and multi-tasking) in keeping their employees healthy and safe.

Small business strives to be a model of efficiency: embrace what's vital, discard what's not. But with many owners unaware that the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* applies as much to them as it does to large corporations, they run the risk of tossing compliance into the wrong bin.

Fortunately, small businesses also have several advantages over large firms: they're entrepreneurial, nimble and flexible. What many small employers have discovered is that health and safety can be simple and informal, allowing them to remain true to their nature while meeting their legal and moral obligations. Here's what you need to know.

## Small doesn't mean invisible

Some small business owners believe they fly under the radar because Ministry of Labour (MOL) inspectors surely have bigger fish to fry. The truth is that the MOL has more boots on the ground than ever, and small business is a focus. No matter how small you are, you are accountable for making health and safety part of your everyday operations, and for meeting these legislative requirements:

- ✓ Policies and procedures
- ✓ Health and safety representatives
- ✓ Joint health and safety committees
- ✓ Accident reporting and investigations
- ✓ Hazard assessments and solutions

## Know your legal obligations

Some small business owners believe health and safety legislation does not apply to them. They think that because they can opt out of WSIB coverage, they can also opt out of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*. It's not true: these are two separate pieces of legislation. Also, owners may have read in the Act that a workplace with five or fewer regular employees does not need to prepare a written health and safety policy. What they may have overlooked is the fine print, which indicates that if there's a critical injury or fatality, or even a visit from an MOL inspector, the business owner would still be required to demonstrate (i.e. document) that people are working safely and that there's a disciplinary process ready to implement if they aren't.

## Keep it simple

Be true to what you are. As a small business, it makes sense for you to keep your health and safety processes simple and informal. Management walkabouts,

quick staff meetings, a handwritten memo to file, notes in a log book—these strategies count when inspectors ask if you've been meeting your legal obligations. Here are more uncomplicated shortcuts for communicating with staff:

- Conduct regular five-minute "quick talks" on health and safety. Use your safe operating procedures, checklists or Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) as topic guides.
- Perform regular "safety observation checks": watch an employee work for two minutes, reinforce what was done well, and coach on improvements.
- Send staff—who often see what supervisors don't—on hazard hunts.
- Ask a staff member to volunteer as a health and safety champion.

## Slide health and safety into everyday operations

Give prevention equal status with other topics. Merge health and safety seamlessly into your meetings, job descriptions, budget planning, pre-shift checklists, award programs, hiring processes and training.

## Tap the wisdom of your staff

Take two steps to reduce the risk of injuries and illnesses—in particular, pains and strains. First, inquire what it feels like to perform different tasks. Then ask a powerful question: "What do you think will help?" Staff likely know the answer, but need to be asked. Often workers know more about their reality than the supervisor does. ▲

## WHERE TO FIND HELP

- Visit [www.ossa.com](http://www.ossa.com) for free downloads, checklists, newsletters and more.
- Take advantage of the WSIB's special services for small business: go to [www.wsib.on.ca](http://www.wsib.on.ca), click on "Employers" and find "Services."
- Check out an easy-to-use tool that allows you to calculate the costs of an injury not covered by your WSIB claim: [www.ossa.com/safetycalculator](http://www.ossa.com/safetycalculator)

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