

**Ministry of Education**

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**MEMORANDUM TO:** Directors of Education

**FROM:** Kevin Costante  
Deputy Minister

**DATE:** September 19, 2011

**SUBJECT:** Follow up to my July 14, 2011 Memo on Student and Staff Safety

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As the new school year begins, I would like to urge school boards to ensure that there is a safe working and learning environment for teachers, non-teaching staff and students involved in technological education, science, art and other courses where hands-on learning takes place.

As employers under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA)*, school boards are required to take every precaution reasonable in the circumstances for the protection of workers.

Ministry of Labour occupational health and safety inspectors will proactively inspect schools in September to ensure that schools are complying with the minimum requirements of the OHSA and the regulations made under the OHSA. The visits will focus on the Internal Responsibility System including Duties of Supervisors and the function of the Joint Health and Safety Committee.

Inspectors will be checking to ensure all new ideas and concepts for courses are assessed of the risks associated with hands-on activities conducted by teachers, non-teaching staff and students in technological education, science and art departments.

MOL will also check on specific hazards within the workplace including chemical storage, welding, grinding, exposure to moving parts or pinch points, exposure to sharp objects, poorly maintained equipment, poor housekeeping, unsafe operation of vehicle hoists, a lack of appropriate personal protective equipment, etc.

In my memo of July 14, I referenced a webinar and resources that would be available to you from the Public Services Health and Safety Association (PSHSA). There is a webinar planned for Sept. 20 from 10 – 11:30 a.m. entitled “Personal Protective Equipment – Is Your Program Complete? Please see the attached brochure. As well, there are three publications recommended by PSHSA: “Physical Hazards”, “Lockout and Tagout of Energy Hazards” and “Machine Guarding”.

To register for the webcast or to access these print resources, please contact the PSHSA at 416-250-2131, or 887-250-7444 or visit <http://store.pshsa.ca/ProductInfo/WWPPE0EGTEI2011.aspx> The topic of health and safety in the Ontario Curriculum will also be on the agenda for the fall meetings planned by our Curriculum and Assessment Policy Branch for the Subject/Division Association and the Curriculum Advisory Committee.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to staff and student safety.

*Original signed*

Kevin Costante