



# Memorandum

<b>Subject:</b>	Ontario Safety Blitz - Ministry of Labour
<b>From:</b>	Karen Guy
<b>To:</b>	Ontario Regional Executive Directors, Ontario Managers (Operations), Ontario Managers (Corporate Services)
<b>CC:</b>	Sharon Goodwin, Wendy Steele
<b>Date:</b>	October 7, 2019

Hello everyone;

Each year Safe at Work Ontario, a division of the Ontario Ministry of Labour (MOL), sets out a plan with respect to health and safety “blitzes”. A Blitz is when the MOL visits employer’s places of business for a “pro-active visit”; usually to review pre-specified topics. Each of these blitzes is split into two sections: Phase 1 is education and awareness; Phase 2 is compliance. During Phase 1, inspectors go to various work places and ask to talk to managers and staff – particularly the co-chairs of the JHSC – about safety in their workplaces. Their goal in Phase 1 is to educate and raise awareness of particular topics in health and safety. In Phase 2 however, these visits focus more on compliance. If an employer has any gaps in compliance, orders are written.

This year, the Ministry Of Labor announced 3 Occupational Health & Safety Blitz topics that would effect our sector:

1. Slip Trip Fall (April to July 2019)
2. Violence Prevention (August to September 2019); and
3. Musculoskeletal Disorder/ Injury prevention (MSD) & Respiratory Hazards (current)

October 1 marked the beginning of Phase 2 of the MSD and Respiratory hazards blitz. As such, they are currently active in health care settings looking at the way employers are dealing with these issues.



So far, VON has had one such visit. The site (Simcoe) passed with flying colors due to the knowledge that the Director Ulla Rose her managers and staff had with respect to those issues.

## **This is what the Ministry of Labor Inspector had to say about Simcoe site:**

1. Community workers (PSW's & Kinesiologists) are employed by this site.

Workers visit client's homes and community sites to provide respite care and exercise services. It is reported that there have been no recent injuries/illnesses related to MSD or respiratory hazards

2. Client Handling

It is reported that at this time the tasks associated with clients supported is primarily companionship and social activities.

It is reported that at this time there are no mechanical lifts used by workers employed by this site.

The employer states that in the past physiotherapists have been utilized to provide educational programs for workers in lifts and transfers and plans to utilize their internal resources (ie Kinesiologists) for ongoing education as needed

3. Respiratory Hazards

All workers who handle hazardous chemicals (such as cleaning agents) have been trained on WHMIS. The primary chemical handling is reportedly the use of household chemicals.

All workers are fit tested and provided with N95s for respiratory hazards related to infection, prevention, and control

Way to go Ulla and Team!

## **How can you prepare**

MSD Prevention

- Review the training and resources available to staff on the X drive:  
**X:\occupational health and safety\Musculoskeletal Disorder (MSD) Prevention.**
  - Review with your staff so that are familiar and can speak to it if asked by an Inspector
- Ensure that the monthly site inspection forms done by your Joint Health and Safety Committee are handy (they should be posted on your Safety Board)



- Be sure your JHSC board is up to date. Look at all documents on this board and be sure that they are all up to date- particularly the OHS Policy statement recent signed by Jo-Anne Poirier (I have attached a copy in case you do not have it posted yet).
  - They may not ask to see it, but they are within their powers to inspect anything and write orders on any contraventions they see
- View this free course: [https://www.wsps.ca/Shop/Training/E-Courses/Musculoskeletal-Disorders-\(MSDs\)-Awareness.aspx](https://www.wsps.ca/Shop/Training/E-Courses/Musculoskeletal-Disorders-(MSDs)-Awareness.aspx)
- View this free course: [https://www.wsps.ca/Shop/Training/E-Courses/Musculoskeletal-Disorders-\(MSDs\)-Prevention-\(Engli.aspx](https://www.wsps.ca/Shop/Training/E-Courses/Musculoskeletal-Disorders-(MSDs)-Prevention-(Engli.aspx)

### **Respiratory Hazards:**

This part of the blitz really focuses on cleaning agents; at sites and /or that your home care staff might come into contact with. To prepare:

- Ensure that your mask fit testing documentation for your staff is up to date
- Ensure that you know what respiratory hazards your staff may come into contact with what training Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) you provide to them.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me or any member of the Ontario OHS team.

Work with Care

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