

To Industry Stakeholders, Associations, Individuals and Other Interested Participants:

Government, industry groups, employers and employees recognize that the time has come for change to the regulations that govern occupational health and safety in this province. The present *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* came into force in 1979 with significant amendments to these regulations made over the past 28 years. If amendments are not made at this time, the regulations will become dated and may not provide the best protection for workers through the next decade.

Recognizing the need for modernized legislation, the Occupational Health and Safety Branch under the Department of Government Services drafted the attached proposed OHS Regulations with the objective that they are comprehensive, easily understood, offer clear direction and are not overly prescriptive. The intent of this draft is to provide clear direction to employers and workers to assist in further reducing workplace injuries and illnesses and to help ensure greater consistency in enforcement by health and safety officers.

Effective regulations flow from practical, well-accepted health and safety practices. Careful effort has been taken to ensure these draft regulations are practical and consistent with other jurisdictions. This will aid in the development of a unified approach to occupational health and safety in workplaces throughout this country.

The focuses of change identified in this draft are ones of: enhanced provisions, major restructuring for an easily understood and user-friendly piece of legislation and the deletion of obsolete/outdated/contradictory provisions. Some of the major amendments to the draft regulations include:

- Complete restructuring which sees the regulations broken down into 28 parts that are grouped according to topic.
- Definitions at the beginning of each part with general definitions outlined up front in the regulations.
- Requirement to comply with the most recent version of a named code or standard as opposed to a previous version of that code or standard.

More specific changes include:

- Confined Space Entry – Procedures identified when entering an enclosed or partially enclosed space having restricted access and egress.
- Fall Protection – General requirements as well as identification of fall arrest systems, construction of guardrails, etc.
- De-energization and lockout – Proper procedures identified for de-energizing and locking out equipment prior to performing work on that equipment.
- Noise Hazards – Requirements to establish and maintain a hearing conservation program where noise exposures exceed permissible levels.
- Blasting - Clarifies blaster responsibilities and reflects industry accepted safe blasting practices.

- Ergonomic Requirements – Requirements to identify and assess risks and provide education and training to workers who may be exposed to musculoskeletal injuries
- Working Alone – Requirements to develop a written procedure for checking the well-being of employees who work alone.
- Crane Operators - New certification requirement where an operator must have the appropriate trade qualification as determined by the Department of Education.

Through this consultation process you have a chance to provide feedback on the proposed regulation which, in turn, will help carve the direction of occupational health and safety in this province. Over the next three months (to July 31, 2007), I encourage you to forward comments to the e-mail address OHSregconsultation@gov.nl.ca or you can send your comments in writing to:

Occupational Health and Safety Branch
Department of Government Services
15 Dundee Ave.
Donovan's Industrial Park
Mount Pearl, NL A1N 4R6

To ease the task of printing and viewing the document, the proposed draft regulations are available on the Department of Government Services web site at www.gs.gov.nl.ca/consultation.

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