

PSHSA/Ministry of Labour Ergonomics Initiative in Municipalities

Frequently Asked Questions

Initiative Overview and Focus

Why focus on municipalities? Ontario municipalities have above average lost time injury rates and musculoskeletal disorder (MSD) rates when compared provincially. Public Works departments are a particular concern as statistics show a higher percentage of lost-time injuries (LTIs) due to MSD compared to all of Rate Group 845 (Local Government Services). Municipalities have not been a focus of previous ergonomics initiatives.

What are the phases of this 2 year initiative? This initiative is taking place from April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2020.

- Year one of the initiative runs from April 1, 2018 until March 31, 2019. During this time, outreach and compliance support will take place. Municipalities with greater than 50 full time equivalent employees were sent a letter notifying them of the initiative, invited to participate in an information webinar, and invited to engage with their local PSHSA consultant who is able to provide support on the initiative.
- Year two runs from April 2019 to March 2020. During this time municipalities will receive a visit from a Ministry of Labour ergonomist.

Am I required to work with PSHSA? There is an offer of support to work with PSHSA health and safety consultants who have expertise in municipal operations. Municipalities are not required to engage with PSHSA and can rely on support from other resources that are available to the municipality.

Where a municipality has Ergonomists in house will you be involving them or communicating with them? Each municipality is invited to contact Brian McInnes, Provincial Ergonomist, and notify of their preferred contact for additional communication regarding the initiative. This would include the preferred contact for the inspections from April 2019 to March 2020.

Resources

Where can I find prevention resources that relate to this initiative?

- PSHSA's MSD prevention resources can be found at www.pshsa.ca/ergonomics
- [MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario](#)
- [MSD Inspection Checklist from Inspection Guideline – pg. 18 and 19](#)
- [Ladder Ergonomics Documents - Industrial](#)
- [Ladder Use in Construction Guideline](#)
- [Vehicle/Mobile Equipment and Visibility Hazards at Industrial Workplaces](#)
- [European Commission Good Practice Guide on Hand-Arm Vibration and Whole Body Vibration](#)
- [Illuminating Engineering Society – The Lighting Handbook](#)

Is there a cost for PSHSA consulting services? Advice and guidance is always free from PSHSA as they are partially funded by employer's WSIB premiums. In the event that you transition from free to fee-for-service support, your PSHSA consultant would bring that to your attention; you will never receive a surprise bill from PSHSA.

When will the 5 Steps to MSD Prevention Program Webinar be held? The 5 Steps to MSD Prevention Program development resource will be released in the summer of 2018. A one hour webinar is scheduled for Friday, July 27, 2018. To register for the webinar, visit pshsa.ca → Training → Webinar

What are the primary assessment tools that the MOL would like to see used? E.g. NIOSH Lifting Equation, Snook Tables? In the event that risk assessment tools are used, the Ministry would review the analyses to ensure they were appropriate in the circumstances. There are some tools that are quite technical and should be used by competent individuals, such as a professional ergonomist.

When will the lunch & learn program be available? The Lunch and Learn program is currently available. Please contact your local PSHSA consultant to schedule a session if desired.

Many municipalities meet the threshold of 50 fulltime equivalent workers, but when you speak to ergonomics tools, most rural municipalities do not have the resources or skill sets. How will you better support them? PSHSA is committed to providing support to municipalities that are interested in partnering to develop a sustainable MSD prevention program for their organization. We recognize that municipalities have different resources, and constraints based on size, services offered, rural vs urban, northern vs southern. PSHSA will provide appropriate support and solutions to meet the needs of our clients.

Ministry of Labour Inspections, April 2019-March 2020

What is the Ministry of Labour going to focus on? The Ministry of Labour inspection will consist of an administrative review and at least one physical inspection. The administration review will focus on the Internal Responsibility System (IRS) with respect to ergonomics for the whole municipality. The physical inspection(s) will focus on Public Works activities. The primary focus of the initiative is on MSD prevention. Secondary focuses are contact with/struck by that are due to visibility issues and falls that are due to a worker not being able to maintain their balance while working (e.g. from a ladder).

Will all municipalities be inspected by the Ministry of Labour? Not all municipalities will be inspected. The goal is to inspect approximately 100 municipalities.

How will the Ministry of Labour select which municipalities to inspect? Municipalities will be selected from a risk-based selection criteria. The criteria includes looking at municipalities' MSDs and non-lost time injury data.

When will we find out if we are selected to receive an inspection from the Ministry of Labour? The municipality will find out if they will be inspected when a Ministry of Labour ergonomist contacts them to arrange a date for the administrative review. Both the administrative review and the first physical inspection will be planned inspections with the municipality (i.e. the Ministry ergonomist will arrange a date with the municipality for the inspection to take place).

This will ensure that the correct people will be present for the inspection and any requested information will be readily available. A management and worker representative will be requested to accompany the ergonomist during the inspection. If your municipality would like a specific person for the Ministry Ergonomist to contact, please send that person's contact information to Brian McInnes (contact information below)

Will the municipality be notified if an MOL inspector will accompany the ergonomist? No, the municipality will not be notified in advance if a Ministry of Labour Health and Safety Inspector will accompany the Ministry of Labour Ergonomist.

Who determines which areas in the Public Works department the Ministry of Labour Ergonomist will physically inspect? We have a lot of sub-departments that fall under the umbrella of Public Works. It is recognized that the services offered vary substantially between municipalities. There is also significant variation among municipalities with what is included under the scope of "Public Works". If your municipality gets a visit from the Ministry of Labour in 2019/2020, there will be a conversation about the services offered, and tasks completed by workers in your Public Works department. The Public Works activities that will be physically inspected will be determined by the Ministry of Labour Ergonomist through a conversation with the municipality.

Are you expecting risk assessments for all operations/jobs? That could be hundreds of tasks! The purpose of this initiative is to:

- raise awareness of ergonomics and MSD hazards within municipalities,
- facilitate the internal responsibility system
- promote increased compliance with health and safety legislation with respect to ergonomics, and
- help foster health and safety culture.

It is not the intention of the initiative to require municipalities to incur extensive expenditures to do ergonomics assessments of every job, task or activity. Identifying jobs, tasks or activities that present an elevated exposure to MSD hazards and doing ergonomics risk assessments on those jobs, tasks or activities may be part of an effective MSD prevention program.

Additional Questions

If you have additional questions about this initiative, please contact

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