



September 1 to December 27, 2019

Partner and Supporter Promotion Guide



Letter from our Chief Prevention Officer and Chief Physician

Welcome to Ontario's Healthy Workers in Healthy Workplaces initiative, focussing on musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and respiratory hazards. MSDs are the number one lost-time injury reported to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board, accounting for approximately one in three of all allowed lost-time claims. Cancer Care Ontario and the Occupational Cancer Research Centre estimate that exposure to respiratory hazards, such as asbestos, diesel engine exhaust, crystalline silica and welding fumes, cause approximately 1300 cancer cases each year.

From October 1st through December 27th, Ministry of Labour inspectors are visiting workplaces in all sectors to raise awareness and ensure compliance with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations regarding MSDs and exposures to respiratory hazards. To find out more about what they will be looking for in your sector, visit the [ministry's provincial health and safety initiatives website](#).

At the Ministry of Labour, one of the ways that we are working to prevent MSDs and exposures to respiratory hazards is by promoting an open dialogue about safer work practices and creating a positive change in workplace culture. This guide was created to help you start a dialogue in your workplace. Please use the materials in this guide and the links provided to hold a conversation about ways that you can help prevent MSDs and exposure to respiratory hazards at work.

Your participation is key to the success of the Healthy Workers in Healthy Workplaces initiative. Raising awareness in your workplace can result in fewer injuries and illnesses. A safe workplace also leads to improved productivity and other benefits.

Everyone – including employers, workers, government and others - has an important role to play in keeping workers safe on the job. Together we can help prevent injuries and illnesses and make Ontario one of the best places in the world to live, work and prosper.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ron Kelusky".

Ron Kelusky
Chief Prevention Officer
Ministry of Labour

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Leon Genesove".

Leon Genesove
Director and Chief Physician
Operations Division
Ministry of Labour

Using this Guide

Thank you for your interest in helping support the Healthy Workers in Healthy Workplaces (HWHW) initiative. This promotion guide has the tools you need to help us spread the word about workplace musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) and respiratory hazards.

Our goal is to help workplaces take steps to make Ontario's workplaces healthy for all workers. Raising awareness of the severity of MSDs and exposure to respiratory hazards at work is the first step towards making lasting changes. HWHW is an opportunity for workplaces across all sectors to start a conversation about these important topics. This guide will help you start conversations in your workplace by providing tools to help you:

- Know your hazards
- Plan your conversation
- Take action
- Keep the conversation going

Employers and workers in businesses of all sizes have responsibilities and roles to play to protect workers from health and safety hazards on the job. An important part of the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) is the [Internal Responsibility System](#) (IRS). It lays out the duties of employers, supervisors, workers, constructors and workplace owners.

Simply put, the IRS means that everyone has a role to play in keeping workplaces safe and healthy. Workers must report health and safety problems to the employer or supervisor. Employers and supervisors must address those situations and acquaint workers with any hazard in the work that they do.

When everyone plays their role, we can reach our goal to help prevent MSDs and illness from exposure to respiratory hazards. Everyone has the right to return home from work safely.

We are asking you to help spread the word about the Healthy Workers in Healthy Workplaces initiative. The more employers, workers, companies and associations that we reach and the more conversations that happen, the more impact that Healthy Workers in Healthy Workplaces can have.

MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDERS

Musculoskeletal disorders are painful disorders of muscles, tendons and nerves that develop over time from tasks that repeatedly cause stress and injury to tissues

According to WSIB statistics, MSDs account for approximately

1 in 3

of all allowed lost-time claims

1 in 10

Canadian adults had a repetitive strain injury (RSI) serious enough to limit normal activities

#1

MSDs are the top lost-time work injury reported to the WSIB

MSD-related hazards include:

- Force
- Fixed or awkward postures
- Repetition
- Contact stress
- Vibration
- Extreme temperatures



MSDs **cost** Ontario workplaces hundreds of millions of dollars each year

**Work
shouldn't
hurt**

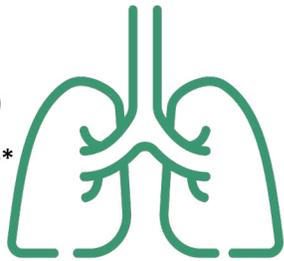
RESPIRATORY HAZARDS



Breathing is the most common way for hazardous substances to enter the body

70%

of allowed long-latency*
illness claims are
lung related



In Ontario, an estimated
142,000
workers are exposed
to crystalline silica annually,
which causes almost **200**
lung cancer cases per year

**Workplace
exposure to
diesel exhaust results in about
170 lung cancer and 45 bladder
cancer** cases each year



Approximately 15% of adult asthma
is due to workplace exposures.
Occupational asthma is the most
common work-related lung disease
in Canada



Over **55,000**

Ontarians are exposed to asbestos at work, leading to about
630 lung cancer and **140 mesothelioma cases** annually

43%

of workers don't know
if there is asbestos in
their workplace

***Latency** is the time it takes to develop
health effects after the first exposure
to a hazardous substance

Know your hazards

MSD and respiratory hazards are different across sectors and workplaces. Before you start your conversation it's important to understand the risks.

What are MSDs and respiratory hazards?

Musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs) are injuries of the muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage or spinal discs. MSD hazards, such as awkward postures, having to exert a high amount of force and using repetitive motions are commonly found when workers are required to lift, carry, push, pull or lower materials or even other people. Examples include back pain and carpal tunnel syndrome.

Respiratory hazards are gasses, fumes, vapours, particles and dusts that are present in the workplace air and can make a worker sick, or even die. Examples of respiratory hazards include asbestos, diesel exhaust, silica dust, and vapours from cleaning products, isocyanates, paints and solvents. Breathing in these substances at work can cause work-related lung diseases, such as asthma, silicosis, lung cancer or mesothelioma, a cancer caused by exposure to asbestos.

What hazards are in my workplace?

MSD and respiratory hazards will be different from one workplace to another, so it's important to understand the specific risks in your workplace.

RACE is a straightforward process that will help you to take steps to understand your risks and make your workplace healthier. The steps are: **recognize** the hazards in your workplace, **assess** the level of risk, **control** the risks, and **evaluate** how well the control measures work. MSDPrevention.com has a [resource on the RACE process](#) which can be applied to MSDs as well as other types of hazards in your workplace. The first two steps of this process will help you to understand the risks in your workplace, which can be used to help plan your conversation.

The first step is to **recognize** what the hazards are in your workplace. Do you or your workers work with any respiratory hazards, such as disinfectants, isocyanates, paints or solvents? Does your work produce dusts? Do you or your workers have to lift heavy materials or equipment? Does your work involve the lifting, transferring, or repositioning of people?

Once you recognize what the hazards are you can **assess** the level of risk that those hazards cause. This is done through a risk assessment, in which you analyze and evaluate how likely and severe the risk is for specific jobs and tasks in your workplace.

It is vital to be sure that your workplace is meeting all regulations, such as the [occupational exposure limits](#) for respiratory hazards. It is also important to use accepted guidelines, such as the [MSD prevention guideline](#). Some workplaces have their own risk assessment tools, and your Health and Safety Association will also have resources on risk assessment.

To learn more about the legal requirements under the OHS Act, the Ministry of Labour has developed a resource page on [understanding the law](#) for ergonomics in the workplace. For more information on the legal requirements on respiratory hazards and disease, and occupational disease more broadly, see the ministry's page on [workplace exposure and illnesses](#).

Sector-specific resources to help you understand hazards, risks and controls in your workplace can be found through your Health and Safety Association at:

[Infrastructure Health and Safety Association \(IHSA\)](#)

[Public Services Health and Safety Association \(PHSA\)](#)

[Workplace Safety and Prevention Services \(WSPS\)](#)

[Workplace Safety North \(WSN\)](#)

Plan your conversation

You can talk to your workers, talk to your supervisor, or bring the topic of respiratory hazards and MSD risks up at a joint health and safety committee meeting. There are many ways to start the conversation about the musculoskeletal disorder and respiratory hazards in your workplace. This can be a casual conversation or a structured talk.

If you're a worker, think about any specific health and safety concerns or questions you may have. Are you having problems with any equipment or work processes? Do you have suggestions for making your job or workplace healthier and safer? Talk to your coworkers about their concerns as well.

For structured conversations or workshops, think about asking others in your workplace to help you plan or, if you can, bring in a professional from outside your workplace to present. **As an employer or supervisor**, it can help to start by reviewing risk assessments and incident reports involving MSDs and respiratory hazards. The meeting can provide information to workers about hazards, protective methods, and the company's safety policies, goals and expectations. This can be a good time to talk about any new equipment or review work processes.

Think about the hazards and risks in your workplace to help you decide what the specific topics will be for the conversation. More information on MSDs is available at msdprevention.com and resources on respiratory hazards and occupational diseases are available at preventoccdisease.ca. There is also sector-specific information available through your Health and Safety Association. Resources from these sites can help you to tailor the conversation to the needs of your workplace.

Things to think about when planning your talk:

- Hands-on exercises (such as a workplace walk-around or equipment checks) can increase interest
- Make it positive and interactive
- Encourage participants to talk about their experiences and make suggestions
- Provide enough time and schedule the talk for when you will reach the most workers
- Use the graphics we've provided at the end of this guide to help you create posters or use them in a newsletter

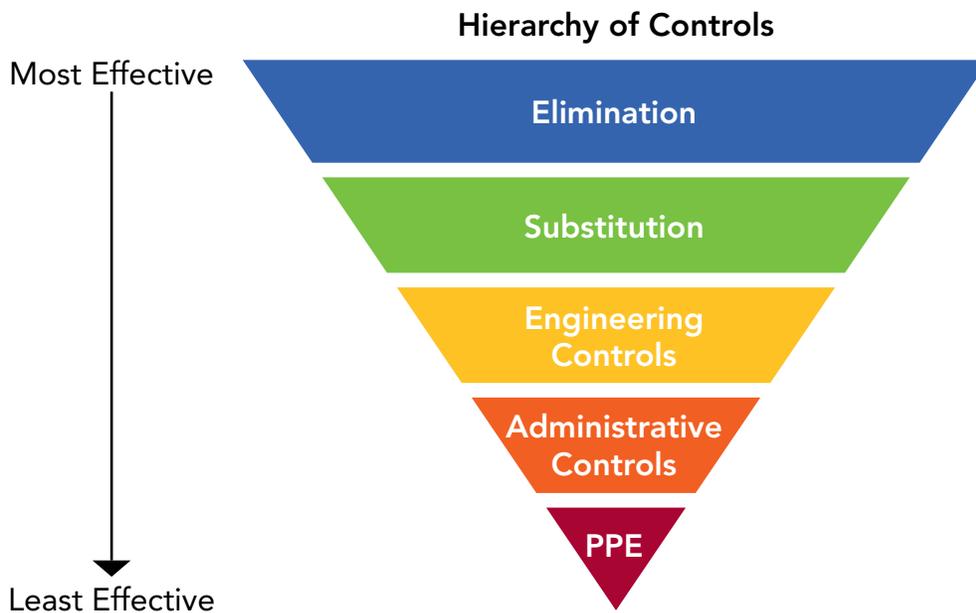
Take action

Once you've raised the awareness of the MSD and respiratory hazards in your workplace it's important to begin to take action on the issues you've identified.

It may be helpful to go back to the [RACE](#) process and do a more in-depth risk assessment.

Understanding the level of risk from specific hazards in your workplace is the start to making a plan to **control** those risks. When possible, it's best to eliminate the hazard entirely. When that isn't possible, choose the most effective control strategy you can.

The system used to choose the most effective method of control is called the [hierarchy of controls](#). The top of the hierarchy of controls is the most effective type of control, elimination of the hazard, and the methods are less effective as you work down the hierarchy. Where the risk cannot be eliminated completely, the risk can be minimized by using a combination of controls from the other levels of the hierarchy.



After you've set up controls, it's important to **evaluate** how well those controls are working. Has the hazard been eliminated or has the risk caused by that hazard been minimized? Is there a better way to control the risk? Monitor your improvement over time by tracking injury and illness records from one period or year to the next. Reach out to your Health and Safety Association if you need help with any of the steps of the RACE process.

Keep the conversation going

The most important thing to remember is that preventing MSDs and exposure to respiratory hazards is a continuous process, not a one-time activity. There are always opportunities to improve on the health and safety in your workplace. This guide is created to help you start the discussion in your workplace, but to make a real change the conversation can't end with one presentation at a Joint Health and Safety meeting or a safety talk. You need to keep the conversations going to continue to raise awareness and reduce risks.

To help spread the word about the campaign, we encourage everyone to follow us on our social media platforms listed below. We hope that you will create, comment, share, like and re-post content that may be of interest to your networks.

[Twitter.com/ONlabour](https://twitter.com/ONlabour)

[Facebook.com/OntarioMinistryofLabour](https://facebook.com/OntarioMinistryofLabour)

[LinkedIn.com/Ontario-Ministry-of-Labour](https://linkedin.com/Ontario-Ministry-of-Labour)

To help you show your support for Healthy Workers in Healthy Workplaces we have created a variety of messages and graphics for you to share with your networks on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn. Please feel free to use these or write your own. Share photos of your talks or tell others what your workplace is doing to address MSD and respiratory hazards.

Social media posts

We're starting a conversation on MSDs and respiratory hazards in our workplace. Learn more about the Healthy Workers in Healthy Workplaces initiative at <http://bit.ly/2omdSu8>

MSDs cost Ontario's workplaces hundreds of millions of dollars each year. Start the conversation. Learn how to prevent MSDs at <http://bit.ly/2p74xac>

MSDs are the top lost-time work injury reported to the WSIB. Start the conversation. Find prevention resources for employers and workers at <http://bit.ly/2p74xac>

October is global ergonomics month! Start the conversation. Learn how to prevent MSDs at <http://bit.ly/2p74xac>

Occupational asthma is the most common work-related lung disease in Canada. Start the conversation. Learn more about preventing respiratory hazards at <http://bit.ly/2mIt7gN>

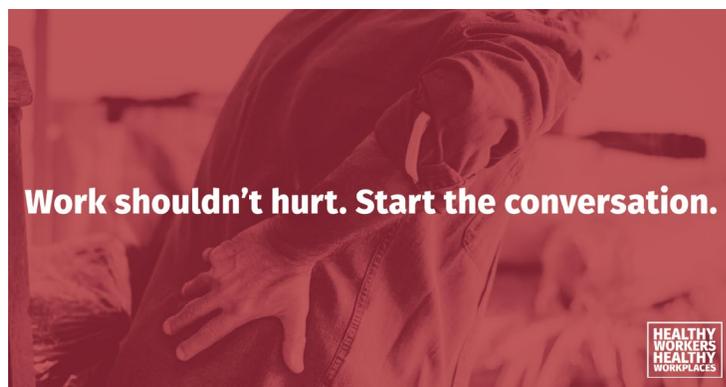
Breathing is the most common way for hazardous substances to enter the body. Start the conversation. Learn more about preventing respiratory hazards in the workplace at <http://bit.ly/2mlt7gN>

November is Lung Cancer Awareness month. Start the conversation. Learn more about workplace respiratory hazards at <http://bit.ly/2mlt7gN>

Graphics

Select the graphic you want and you can either right click, save as or even copy and paste directly into your social media post.

Facebook: 1200x628 pixels



Instagram: 1080x1080 pixels



HEALTHY
WORKERS
HEALTHY
WORKPLACES

**Be prepared:
focussed
inspections**
October 1 –
December 27

Twitter: 1024x512 pixels

