

NEWS RELEASE

Ontario Adding New Resources to Protect Workers

Safety plan builder and 100 new health and safety inspectors will be crucial in educating businesses and keeping people safe from COVID-19

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[Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development](#)

TORONTO – The Ontario government is continuing to protect workers and people from COVID-19 by providing businesses with new tools and educational resources, including a new safety plan builder and additional inspectors. More than 100 new health and safety inspectors are graduating today and will be visiting workplaces in construction, industrial and health care settings. With the support of provincial offences officers, the inspectors will be deployed to help educate workers and businesses about the newly-launched vaccine certificate.

“As we fight the fourth wave of COVID-19, we need all hands on deck,” said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. “With 100 more inspectors, these boots on the ground across our province will help keep workers safe and support businesses to remain open. Our government’s inspectors will be patient, lead with education, and be reasonable to business owners and frontline workers implementing the vaccine certificate.”

The addition of these graduates means Ontario now has a total of 507 labour inspectors, the largest ever number in provincial history. Over the coming weeks, in consultation with local public health units, Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development inspectors and other provincial offences officers will continue conducting inspection and education campaigns to ensure businesses are following COVID-19 safety requirements.

To help businesses stay on top of health and safety guidance, the province has also launched the new [Workplace Safety Plan Builder](#), a free interactive tool making it easier for workplaces to create and update their COVID-19 safety plans. The tool was developed specifically to support small businesses and was designed with their input.

The safety plan builder will lead employers through an easy process to create and update an online safety plan that is right for their workplace. It also allows for easy customization and employers who sign up for updates will be notified when information is changed, allowing them to stay up to date with current guidance and requirements.

“Running a small business during COVID-19 is a challenge unlike any other,” continued Minister McNaughton. “Our safety plan builder is here to help our local merchants and shopkeepers create and adjust their plans with the click of a button, having confidence they’re following the latest health and safety measures for their employees and customers.”

Having a written safety plan is mandatory for businesses permitted to be open under the *Reopening Ontario Act*.

Since March 2020, provincial inspectors have conducted more than 65,000 COVID-related workplace inspections, issuing 79,200 orders and stopping unsafe work 102 times. Data from the most recent visits, conducted over the summer, shows the education assistance provided by inspectors helped double the number of businesses who were fully compliant with their responsibilities under the *Reopening Ontario Act*.

Quick Facts

- The addition of the new inspectors will enable the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development to reach thousands of additional workplaces each year to promote workplace health and safety.
- Ontario is continuing to promote health and safety in the workplace, led by Joel Moody, newly appointed as Chief Prevention Officer.
- Businesses can also access free training for their health and safety representatives through Ontario’s [Small Business Health and Safety Training Program](#). Small businesses will be reimbursed \$150 for the representative’s training time.
- Any worker who feels they are working in unsafe conditions should report their concerns to their employer or supervisor, local joint health and safety committee or health and safety representative. If concerns remain, a complaint can be filed online. See [Filing a workplace health and safety complaint](#) or by calling Ontario’s Health and Safety Contact Centre, at 1-877-202-0008.
- These actions are part of Ontario’s commitment to protect and support workers and contribute to a prosperous and stable economy as part of the province’s *2021 Budget*, [Ontario’s Action Plan: Protecting People’s Health and Our Economy](#).

Quotes

"The Safety Plan Builder is an easy tool to help put an effective COVID-19 safety plan together. It keeps us all accountable, and it gives staff and patrons assurances that we are doing our best as a business to keep them safe during these uncertain times."

- Eoin Mac Gearailt
General Manager, Saulter Street Brewery

"As a new inspector, the training has been fulsome and very informative which has set me up for future success in my role with the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development. Our Divisional Learning Unit specialist, incumbent inspectors and online training provided us with a diverse, broad scope of all aspects of becoming a successful inspector and ensuring safety of the workers in Ontario."

- Brent Ford
Occupational Health & Safety Inspector, Industrial Health & Safety, Windsor (Western Region)

"This pandemic has proven our flexibility and adaptability. Remote learning can be challenging, but the Divisional Learning Unit, Regional Program Co-ordinators and our managers worked together to provide comprehensive training that was seamless. The training has equipped me with the knowledge and confidence to transition into the field."

- Abbey Alonzo
Occupational Health & Safety Inspector, Kitchener-Waterloo (Western Region)

"Throughout these informative months, the training, which was presented in such an enthusiastic and engaging way, has definitely strengthened my knowledge in occupational health and safety. Not only have I become more confident in my role as an inspector and as a worker in identifying the unique challenges and hazards in our workplaces, I can now communicate the ministry's mandate to the people of Ontario more effectively and assist on how to promote well-being in the workplace. This training has exceeded my expectations thanks to the trainers sharing their wealth of knowledge and experience!"

- Karen Jacobe
Occupational Health & Safety Inspector, Industrial Health and Safety (Central West Region)

"The new inspector training was very interactive and prepared me to deal with complex workplaces. As an experienced compliance officer from other ministries, it built on my existing knowledge and gave me the technical skills to be successful in the position."

- Kirk Dillabough
Occupational Health & Safety Inspector, Sault Ste. Marie (Northern Region)

Additional Resources

- [Resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace](#)
- [Screening for COVID-19: Guidance for employers](#)
- [COVID-19 safety checklist for workplaces](#)
- [COVID-19 self-isolation and return to work](#)

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