



## Safety Focus

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### In The Courts - Personal Protective Equipment

On June 19, 2009, Peninsula Alloy Inc., a Stevensville foundry that manufactures metal castings, was found guilty of violating Section 84 of the Industrial Regulations (Reg. 851) in the Ontario Court of Justice in St. Catharines, Ontario.

On March 26, 2008, a worker had suffered serious burns when he was splashed with molten metal. The worker had been loading a furnace with scrap metal for melting when the

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### Staff Training - Still a Good Idea

The media is all about the recession – business is down, unemployment is up, and the future is uncertain. Many firms are responding by cutting back, reducing staff, and slashing training budgets. It makes sense ... or does it?

Think long term for a minute. By 2002 Canada's birth rate was the lowest since we started tracking it in 1921. For the past half-dozen years virtually all of our population growth

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### HOT, HOT, HOT

Summertime, and the livin' is, well, hot! Those who work outside, or in plants where process heat is a normal part of the environment, often look upon hot summer weather as a mixed blessing. With the arrival of July, there are some things we need to keep in mind about working in the summer.

Outdoor work puts you out in the sunshine, and, especially during those hot, humid and hazy days that spell summer in southern Ontario, workers need to be careful. There are three general approaches to controlling exposure to heat for outdoor work in the summer:

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### Inspections

Why not change things up a bit for your July workplace inspection? It's summertime – take the inspection team outside. How long has it been since you looked at the outside of your workplace? What better time to do it than on a warm, summer day?

Do your workers drive to work and walk into the office? Check the sidewalks for trip hazards,

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### July 2009 Issue

#### Newsletter Highlights

- Employers and contractors should review the wording of workplace policies or procedures requiring PPE.
- Staff training is a good idea anytime, but right now it is an investment that can pay dividends long into the future.
- Working in the summer, especially outside, can be enjoyable, but it can also be dangerous.
- Accidents or injuries workers suffer on the way to the front door are considered to be compensable by the WSIB

furnace exploded. Although the worker was wearing a face-shield, gloves and work boots, he was not wearing a Kevlar fire-resistant suit and spats.

Regulation 84 states that, “A worker exposed to the hazard of injury from contact of the worker’s skin with, ... (c) a hot object, hot liquid or molten metal, ... shall be protected by (e) wearing apparel sufficient to protect the worker from injury; or (f) a shield, screen or similar barrier.”

A \$ 70,000 fine, plus a 25-per-cent victim fine surcharge as required by the Provincial Offences Act, was imposed by the Justice of the Peace.

This ruling clearly supports the concept that personal protective equipment must be determined to be adequate to protect the worker from the specific hazards in each workplace. This is a reminder to employers and contractors to review workplace hazards as well as the wording of any workplace policies or procedures requiring personal protective equipment.



has been through immigration. Add to that the fact that by 2006 over 40% of our population was between 45 and 65.

Before the current recession many skilled trades were experiencing shortages, and good workers in many fields were becoming hard to find. Unemployment may be up right now, but the economy is going to turn around. When it does, Canada’s unemployment rate is going to drop to levels we haven’t seen in decades.

Bottom line – the staff you cut this year may be lost to you forever. Their knowledge of your products, services and clients, their understanding of who you are and what you do, will all be gone, probably to a competitor. Making cuts to survive the current down-turn is one thing, but crippling yourself for the time things turn around is something else entirely.

This is an excellent time to let key staff know they are valued – and some of them are probably worrying about their future right now. Show your loyalty to them by investing in their future. Start with safety training (a legal requirement anyway), or First Aid and CPR, or specialty programs like accident investigation or workplace safety inspections. Provide the training now, when things are not so rushed, and the benefits will be obvious when things pick up – your workplace will be safer, and you won’t be pulling valuable people off the job to address training needs when they could be producing.

Staff training is a good idea anytime, but right now it is an investment that can pay dividends long into the future.



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**Scheduling:** Can some or all of the work be completed earlier in the day, or even at night? Paving companies, especially, can benefit from working when the sun is down, and the traffic is lighter. Grounds maintenance can be done in the early part of the morning, since it is light enough to work before 6:00am. Think about keeping your workers out of the sun during the hottest part of the day. If this is simply not possible, remember to schedule breaks during the day.

**Shade:** This includes temporary sunscreens, umbrellas, hats, and anything else that can keep your worker, or your workplace, out of the direct sunlight. If you can limit direct exposure to sunshine, you can reduce the heat load your workers are exposed to.

**Sip, sip, sip:** Keep fluids readily available for those who work outside. Drinks which replace electrolytes are better than water or soft drinks, since sweating reduces salts and minerals in the body as well as water. Keeping workers hydrated will go a long way to keeping them healthy while working in the sun.

Indoor work in the heat is much the same, although shade is not an issue. Increased ventilation to promote sweat evaporation, job rotation, scheduling and fluid replacement all have their roles in keeping workers safe. Reducing the personal protective equipment required when working near machines or furnaces is **NOT** an option, so make sure that those workers get special consideration.

Working in the summer, especially outside, can be enjoyable, but it can also be dangerous. We can keep our workers safe and productive all summer with just a little bit of planning.

places where the sidewalk is missing, or pools of water which will become ice rinks in the winter.

Check your steps, stairways and, especially, the main entrance to the building. Is everything in good repair, floor mats available for wet days, railings secure on stairs, lighting adequate for those who come and go after dark?

Walk around the building and check your emergency exits from the outside. If you need to use them, can you actually get out of and away from the building? Are they at grade, or are there steps, and are they clear from bushes and shrubs? Is the lighting adequate if they have to be used at night?

Think personal security as well. Are you comfortable with the walk from the parking lot to the entrance after dark? Do any bushes or shrubs need trimming? Is the lighting adequate and is it on whenever workers may arrive at or leave work?

Once a worker parks their car and begins that walk to the office, they are at work – any accidents they have or injuries they suffer on the way to the front door are considered to be compensable by the WSIB. Remember to include that path in your workplace inspections.



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