
MOL looking at access equipment in August blitz

In August, the Ministry of Labour (MOL) will conduct a safety blitz on all types of access equipment used throughout the construction industry in Ontario.

During this effort, MOL inspectors will look at the use of access equipment and whether the most appropriate piece of equipment is being used for specific jobs. Access equipment is any piece of equipment that allows a worker to access an area of a workplace that can't be accessed from the ground or a floor surface to carry out work.

The statistics in this area demonstrate why the MOL is looking at the use of this equipment. Between 2003 and 2008, more than one-third of fatal falls involving construction workers were related to access equipment.

The blitz will focus on

- ladders
- scaffolds and work-platforms
- suspended equipment including platforms, scaffolds and boatswain's chairs
- elevating work platforms and mast climbers.

Inspectors will also look at ramps, runways, stairs and landings during this blitz.

As always, inspectors will be making sure that companies comply with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* and regulations. This includes

- making sure adequate written measures and procedures are in place for the safe use of access equipment
- checking to see that workers have received adequate instruction and training in the safe use of the equipment
- inspecting the equipment to ensure it has been maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions
- determining whether or not adequate supervision is in place.

Access equipment is a critical part of the work conducted by IHSA members. However, it is often overlooked and can be a source of hazards if equipment is not maintained or workers are not properly trained. It is important to remember to

- Maintain a thorough inspection program to make sure equipment is in good working order.
- Provide training to workers and supervisors so that they are well-versed in the workings of all

access equipment.

- Ensure the appropriate equipment is used for the specific work at hand.
- Ensure that equipment is maintained to manufacturer's specifications and load ratings.

According to the MOL, when inspectors find contraventions of the law, they can issue orders or lay charges. For each conviction, the court can impose a fine of up to \$500,000 against a corporation if convicted under the OHSA. Individuals face a fine of up to \$25,000, imprisonment of up to 12 months, or both.

IHSA has a wealth of information available on access equipment including

- The *Construction Multi-Trades Health and Safety Manual* (M033) – This manual features several chapters outlining common hazards and issues related to access equipment.
- The *Construction Health and Safety Manual* (M029) – This manual contains everything you need to recognize and protect yourself against construction health and safety hazards.
- The *Elevating Work Platforms: Training Kit* (M058KIT) – Use this industry-delivered program to train workers on the safe use of elevating work platforms.

Please visit our website to learn more about the products and services related to access equipment.