

RIPPLE EFFECTS
How accidents impact an entire community. **p02**

AN INVISIBLE DISEASE
Bringing attention to workplace mental health. **p05**

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Inspiration from Tragedy

Trish Penny took her brother's shocking workplace death and built both a passion and a career. **p03**



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IN THIS ISSUE



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p04



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Shock Waves of a Workplace Injury


For a family whose loved one has been killed on the job, there are plenty of milestones and days of memory — missed birthdays and holidays, anniversaries of the day it happened, and the date of the funeral. Whether it's a death, a serious injury or an occupational disease, when someone is hurt at work the shock waves travel far; pain and grief last a lifetime. A family is thrown into a world that is unfamiliar to most — one of investigations, inquests, and compensation claims. A serious workplace incident or illness touches their finances, their emotional lives, their physical and mental health. The impact isn't limited to family — co-workers and

community also feel the ripples. Day of Mourning, observed on April 28 each year, is an opportunity for the broader community to honour these lives that have been permanently scarred. In workplaces and at monuments across Canada and around the world, people will gather to lay wreaths, light candles, and remember. **Remembering isn't enough** Trish Penny, whose story is in these pages, would emphasize this point. Trish, whose brother Luke was killed in a trench collapse in 2010, has chosen to dedicate her career to improving workplace health and safety. Many others who have personally felt the pain of a workplace tragedy share Trish's passion and commitment. If not a health and safety career, they find other ways



Shirley Hickman
Executive Director,
Threads of Life

to contribute to prevention in a bid to ensure others don't have to live through what they've experienced. Occupational health and safety has witnessed impressive advances over the past decades — the attention paid to upgraded training standards, and the focus on workplace mental health are evidence of the sophistication of health and safety programs in many sectors. And yet, across the country the number of work-related deaths remains stubbornly pegged where it's been for 15 years: 900 to 1,000 deaths per year. **Mourning those lost** It's probably no coincidence that North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) week so closely follows Day of Mourning each year. While workplace health and

safety must be a focus year-round, NAOSH week is a chance to recognize achievements and re-commit to achieving more. NAOSH events — like Threads of Life's national Steps for Life walk — help workplaces to integrate consciousness of health and safety at every level, and maybe even have a little fun. Day of Mourning honours those whose lives were altered or ended when something went wrong at work. It reminds us why workplace health and safety is vital. NAOSH week and all the weeks that follow challenge us to do something about it — to work towards a world in which every worker comes home safely and healthy, every day. 

Shirley Hickman

Workplace Safety Is a Shared Responsibility


As Ontario's Chief Prevention Officer, my goal is to ensure all workers return healthy and safe after a day's work. In Ontario we have seen a steady decline in injury claims over the past 10 years, but critical injuries and fatalities remain at unacceptable levels. In response we have been working to transform the health and safety system in Ontario. We are working to create a culture in Ontario where being safe at work is an intrinsic part of every workplace, and ingrained in all workplace parties. Prevention of workplace health and safety incidents is supported by the province's occupational health

and safety strategy — Healthy and Safe Ontario Workplaces. The strategy helps guide system efforts and ensures a clear, common vision and targeted approach for decreasing injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. When considering how to focus our efforts, it's important all workplace parties promote prevention efforts in areas of highest risk. Working at heights is one of the most dangerous types of work. For the past five years falls from heights in all sectors has been the second leading cause of traumatic fatalities. As of April 1, 2015, employers are required to ensure that workers on construction projects who need to use fall protection equipment complete approved working at heights



George Gritziotis
Ontario's Chief
Prevention Officer

training. This year the ministry will be conducting more than 20 targeted inspection blitzes in high risk sectors to raise safety awareness and help prevent injuries and fatalities, including a targeted blitz in construction focused on falls. Our health and safety partners are also focusing their efforts this year on preventing falls from heights, providing training, raising awareness, and educating both workers and employers on how to prevent falls. In addition to focusing on the highest risk, all workplaces and the health and safety system must adapt and respond to emerging needs of workplaces. This adjustment includes the recently announ-

ced post-traumatic stress disorder prevention strategy to help address this serious issue. Other emerging priorities include general workplace mental health issues along with workplace harassment. We can't do it alone. Workplace safety is a shared responsibility. We all need to be responsible for what happens on the worksite every day. Everyone has a role to play to keep themselves and their workplaces healthy and safe. By working together — employers, workers, and our health and safety partners — we can take significant steps in preventing worker injuries and deaths. 

George Gritziotis

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Contributors: **George Gritziotis, Sarika Gundu, Shirley Hickman, Dave Killham, D.F. McCourt** Cover Photo: **Elif Rey** Photo credits: All images are from Getty Images unless otherwise credited.
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The Motivation to Make a Difference

Luke Penny's workplace death shook his entire family and community. Ultimately inspiring his sister, Trish Penny, towards a career in health and safety.



Photo: Elif Rey

Mediaplanet Can you briefly tell the story of what led to your commitment in promoting workplace health and safety?

Trish Penny In 2010 my brother was involved in a workplace incident which ultimately took his life. He was performing weather proofing on a detached garage when the wall caved in, collapsing on top of him.

MP Prior to your brother's accident in 2010 how often did you think about workplace safety? Did you realize the significance it has for so many Canadians?

TP Luke's death was my wake up call. The saying "you never think it's going to happen to you" comes to mind. Only I would take it one step further. The thought wasn't even on my — or probably most people's — radars until it became a reality. Before losing Luke, I, like many, went through the mandatory safety training at new jobs because it was part of getting hired. It wasn't until losing him because of a workplace accident, I realized the merit in those videos and orientations.

After an incident like Luke's occurs, the immediate feeling is isolation — no one could possibly understand what just happened to you. Becoming a part of Threads of Life was the catalyst that lead to understanding the significance of workplace safety. My family and I were now part of a group of people who have all been affected in some way by workplace loss. That's when it hit us — this group has way too many members.

MP Why do safety and health concerns so consistently take a backseat to other day-to-day operations on worksite?

TP I think the easy answer would be time and money. We live in a world with tight timelines,

on even tighter budgets. However, I also believe health and safety concerns can sometimes take a backseat to operations due to deficiencies in communication and understanding. In most cases, people are receptive to hearing about how to do their job. But, their attention gets lost when we migrate to the safety components. We need to be teaching one concept: how to do our job, safely. By building safety initiatives into operations we are reinforcing the foundation that working safe is the only way to perform one's job.

MP Can you explain the personal and educational process that led you to your current career as a health and safety specialist?

TP As we were going through the legal proceedings, I started taking an online health and safety course on legislation through Seneca College. I wasn't sure if I was heading down the path of turning it into a career at that point. I just really wanted to understand what happened — what went wrong and will anything be done to ensure it doesn't happen to someone else? When I finished my first class, I enrolled into my next two courses without questioning it. Any chance I had at taking a course in health and safety — I took it.

MP How have you seen workplace health and safety develop over the past few years? What have been the most important steps taken by regulatory bodies to establish safer environments?

TP One of the biggest changes I have seen is the responsibility shift. Supervisors are becoming more accountable for their employees. Likewise, employees are being held responsible

"My family and I were now part of a group of people who have all been affected in some way by workplace loss. That's when it hit us — this group [Threads of Life] has way too many members."



for their own health and safety while at work.

Another big change from the regulatory bodies is having the training requirements be reviewed and approved by the chief prevention officer of the Ministry of Labour. This requirement ensures training providers are producing accurate content with enough information to certify all workers are trained to the highest standards. Knowledge is one of the biggest components of ensuring a safe workplace.

MP What can be quickly and easily done by companies to take the initiative in making safety and wellness a priority?

TP Culture shifts are never quick and easy. But, the first steps in creating change would be to talk about it.

Have safety moments in your meetings, and have the employees and management engage at all levels. While the week long safety blitzes are a great way to raise awareness — they can become redundant and almost dreaded. If we can get to a place in which we speak about health and safety as naturally as we speak about operations, we are well on our way to making safety and wellness a priority in our work.

MP What would be the single biggest regulatory change you would make to improve workplace health and safety?

TP One thing I would like to see enforced is appropriate consequences for actions of those not engaged in safe work practices, and ensuring we are holding the correct person accountable. Workers, supervisors, and employers all have responsibilities under the law. When all parties work together to fulfil those responsibilities — we all go home safe. **●**

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INSIGHT



Top of the rock, top view of Rockefeller Center. Photo: Scott Dixon

Keeping Workers Safe at Any Height

Prevention, through getting the right equipment and knowing how to use it, is paramount.

You’ve almost certainly seen the iconic black and white 1932 photo Lunch atop a Skyscraper in which eleven construction workers sit high above Manhattan, without a safety line in sight, lunching on a girder during the construction of 30 Rockefeller Center. The men look happy and without a care in the world as their feet dangle over 256 meters of open air. The joy of the photo is dampened somewhat however when you learn at least three workers fell to their deaths during the construction of the Rockefeller Center. It’s estimated that one worker died for roughly every million dollars spent during the 1930s skyscraper construction boom.

We’ve come a long way since then, thanks to the introduction and con-

stant improvement of fall protection technology. “We’ve gone from nothing to body belts to full-body harnesses where the forces on the body are much less dynamic than they used to be, and we’re now including things like dual-line lanyards and self-retracting lifelines,” says Andrea Martin, Fall Protection Sales Specialist at 3M Canada, who have recently expanded their leadership role in fall protection with the 2015 acquisition of Capital Safety, including DBI-SALA and Protecta. “The technology and equipment have really improved.”

Still, falling incidents killed nine construction workers in Ontario and injured thousands more in 2015 alone. The equipment exists to prevent these accidents, but increased awareness and proper training is essential. There are a lot of factors workers have to understand for proper fall protection — from fall clearances to the dynamics of falling

— to ensuring proper fit and proper inspection of equipment. “We always say that training should be the number one product that a company purchases for their employees protection,” says Martin. “You can have the best equipment in the books, but if you’re not wearing it or not wearing it properly, it’s not going to prevent you from getting injured.”

New safety standards improving outcomes

Last year, Ontario introduced new legislation raising the safety training standards for all workers who work at heights. Evidence of improved safety awareness is already mounting. “With the new Working at Heights legislation for the con-

struction industry, employers are now required to set aside time for their employees to take this eight hour training that’s mandated by the government,” says Martin. “We get a lot of phone calls from guys who have just completed their training and realized that they don’t currently have the right equipment or just having a 6’ lanyard in their job box isn’t going to cut it.”

As safety standards are improving, equipment manufacturers are constantly seeking ways to further improve their technology. “There are always lots of additional technologies being developed to improve the workplace experience and keep workers safe,” says Laura Brown, Fall Protection Marketing

Manager, also at 3M. “You’re going to continue to see trends of focusing on things like better weight distribution systems and improving the comfort level of the worker.”

There is a growing awareness that fall protection is not just about protecting the workers above, but also the workers below, using specialized tool lanyards to prevent dangerous objects from falling from heights. “Dropped objects protection is a trend that is just emerging now,” says Brown. “It’s something people are becoming more and more aware of.”

Looking to the future, there is a sense of optimism that the converging paths of better training and better equipment will move us towards the goal of bringing every worker home safe at the end of the work day. **●**

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Mental Health

The Stats Speak for Themselves

The top three workplace mental health goals identified by respondents



1 provide employees with access and support to health and wellness programs and resources



2 be proactive about employee health and wellness

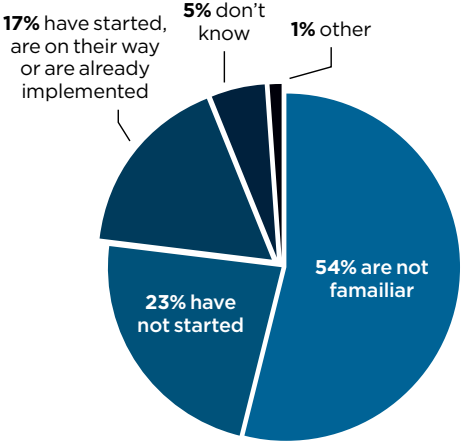


3 create a culture of respect and trust in the workplace

Landbeck Canada and the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) teamed up to take the pulse of psychological health and safety in Canadian workplaces. More specifically, they wanted to understand where employers are at in their organization’s journey and how they can be supported best to promote workplace mental health. To that end, they invited organizational representatives from across Canada to complete an anonymous survey to share their perspectives on this important issue.

Just under 600 respondents from across the workplace spectrum and every province and territory (except Nunavut) completed the survey. Less than one in four organizations reported doing “quite” or “very” well in addressing workplace mental health, while 32 percent of respondents reported doing “somewhat” well, 42 percent reported not doing well at all.

Reaching a national standard
When it comes to the voluntary National Standard of Canada for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace, launched with much fanfare in Canada three years ago it’s clean based on those surveyed (and outlined in the chart below) there is still a long way to go. A majority of those surveyed, 54 percent are not familiar with the standard.



“What’s most important is how workers — including leadership — feel their organization is addressing workplace mental health, whether their organization is considering the structures that create or interfere with psychological health and safety, and if they feel the supports exist for them to access help early,” said Julia Kaisla, Director Community Engagement, CMHA BC Division.

Added Sarika Gundu, National Director, Workplace Mental Health Program, CMHA National, “We need to act now. There is way too much writing on the wall to ignore workplace mental health.” CMHA’s Workforce Mental Health Collaborative provides employers and unions with in-depth training, practical resources, and valuable support that can address and improve psychological health and safety in the workplace. ●

A summary of the findings can be found at www.cmha.ca

Sarika Gundu
National Director, Workplace Mental Health Program, CMHA National

Source: CMHA

The top challenges to addressing workplace mental health include

-  Lack of resources and capacity.
-  Lack of understanding of workplace mental health.
-  Leaders who do not walk the talk or role model workplace mental health.

“The National Standard is one tool to help them get there, but it might not be the first tool organizations are reaching for. The survey also indicates that face-to-face contact with an expert, such as a workshop, is one of the tools they have found most effective,” she said.



Less than one in four organizations are doing well in addressing workplace mental health

Leaders are not walking the talk
At least part of the problem is leadership as 52 percent of respondents feel leadership does not walk the talk. Specifically, 36 percent point to a lack of buy-in and commitment from senior leadership.

Training — The Right Thing, The Right Way



Dave Killham
Executive Director, WHSC

Health and safety training is a key component of an effective workplace prevention program for a host of reasons.

To begin, health and safety law certainly recognizes the value of training. In Ontario, employers have a general duty to provide information, instruction, and supervision to workers to protect their health and safety. As a minimum, employers must also comply with specific training requirements, including those related to worker awareness, Joint Health and Safety Committee certification, WHMIS, confined space, workplace violence, working at heights, and competency for supervisors and equipment operators. Although it must be said, employers are all too

often met with misguided attempts to reward or incentivize them for meeting — rather than exceeding — these basic standards.

Regardless, independent research also demonstrates that quality training works. It can help ensure participants play their role in workplace prevention. Research tells us quality training is defined by the following attributes:

- Embraces proven adult teaching techniques.
- Builds on workers’ experiences.
- Is delivered by a trusted and qualified source.
- Provides opportunity to apply and observe what is learned.
- Addresses root problems, namely workplace hazards.

Compare the cost of this training with unacceptable outcomes of inaction and one finds training makes sound business sense too. The average cost of one lost-time injury in Ontario is estimated at \$106,500.

Associated human costs are incalculable though. Thousands of Ontario workers suffer work-related injuries and illness every year, while hundreds more are killed as a result of hazardous exposures. Quality training can help avoid needless suffering.

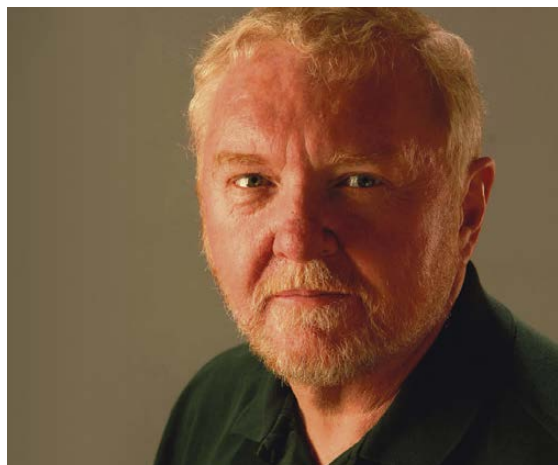
As we observe the National Day of Mourning — and for all the reasons listed above — let’s re-commit to the fight for the living by developing and delivering truly protective health and safety training programs and standards. ●

Dave Killham,
Executive Director, WHSC



Mandatory training has already triggered a noticeable reduction injuries on the job. Photo: WHSC

Workplace Fatalities Should be Unacceptable in Modern Society



By DON MACKINNON
President
Power Workers' Union

According to the Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) statistics, every year in Ontario, 250 to 300 workers lose their lives as a result of traumatic workplace accidents and occupational illnesses. In 2014, almost 200,000 accident claims were filed with the Ontario WSIB.

All of those killed and injured were ordinary people working to make a living — mothers, fathers, daughters and sons. With the passage of Ontario's *Occupational Health and Safety Act (the Act)* in 1979, workplace fatalities dropped significantly over the following years. Unfortunately, since this initial decrease, the number of workers killed in the province's workplaces has remained at almost one per day.

On April 28th, the "National Day of Mourning", we remember those who lost their lives as a result of work-related accidents or occupational diseases. Actions taken in the mid-1980s by the Canadian Union of Public Employees and the Canadian Labour Congress were instrumental in establishing this day of remembrance. This date was chosen because Canada's first comprehensive *Workers' Compensation Act* received Third Reading in Ontario on that day in 1914. It is now recognized in one fashion or another in more than 100 countries.

Unions like the Power Workers' Union (PWU) have worked diligently with employers in our industry over the last seven decades to establish a province-wide safety framework for the protection of the general public and workers.

PWU members work in a wide variety of locations and weather conditions across Ontario. Extreme weather often creates situations, such as those seen during the

December 2013 ice storm, that are among the most potentially dangerous anywhere. Dedication to the development and implementation of safe work procedures, planning, training and experience are all essential to insulate workers from potential hazards. Today, new technologies are dramatically changing the way Ontario's electricity system operates. These changes require an unwavering commitment to the development of new work methods, procedures and training in order to achieve accident-free workplaces in the future.

Traditionally, electricity flowed from large hydroelectric, nuclear and coal generating stations along a network of transmission and distribution wires to our homes, businesses and factories. Now, reliability must be maintained while managing a two-way flow of power that can change rapidly. Large numbers of small-scale consumer-owned wind turbines, solar panels and biogas generators produce intermittent power to sell to the grid at one price, while buying the electricity they use from the grid at another. A customer can become a generator at any time and many can be both customer and generator simultaneously. It is a constant challenge in our industry to ensure that safe work methods keep up with rapidly changing technologies.

Regardless of the industry, there are hazards present in all workplaces. Work needs to be carefully planned with a focus on safety and workers must be well trained to implement the plan. All hazards must be identified, eliminated or controlled. Anything else will result in accidents, injuries and fatalities. Special attention needs to be placed on ensuring that new workers are supervised effectively and given adequate knowledge and understanding of workplace hazards and safe work procedures so they come home safe and sound at the end of their workday.

In Ontario, our workplace health and safety system relies on the co-operation of employers and workers through the appointment of Health and Safety Representatives and the establishment of Joint Health and Safety Committees that are required to inspect, identify and address health and safety issues in the workplace. It should be no surprise that the safest workplaces are those where employer and worker representatives

genuinely cooperate to create an accident-free environment. When the parties can't agree, the Ministry of Labour can be called to assist or intervene.

The single most important legal right that a worker has to protect himself or herself in Ontario workplaces is the right to refuse to work in situations where the worker has reason to believe that they have not been adequately trained to perform a particular task safely or that the work plan, the equipment, the physical condition of the workplace or the threat of workplace violence is likely to endanger them. In the event that a health and safety related work refusal is not resolved immediately to the satisfaction of the worker, the Ministry of Labour is called to investigate

Ensuring workplace safety requires constant vigilance on the part of employers, unions, workers, Ministry of Labour officials and legislators.

and prescribe remedies to ensure that workers are safe. Workers are protected from retaliation by their employer in these instances under the Act.

This year in Ontario, thousands of workers will be injured and hundreds more will die from workplace accidents and industrial illnesses. All of these accidents are needless, preventable and unacceptable. Ensuring workplace safety requires constant vigilance on the part of employers, unions, workers, Ministry of Labour officials and legislators.

Regrettably, we still have a long way to go to eliminate workplace deaths and injuries. At our somber Day of Mourning ceremonies, we renew our commitment to achieve those goals. We speak for the dead to protect the living.

FROM THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO KEEP THE LIGHTS ON.

