

Dave Killham
Executive Director



Workers Health & Safety Centre

15 Gervais Dr., Suite 802, Toronto, ON M3C 1Y8 • Tel: 416.441.1939 or 1.888.869.7950 • Fax: 416.441.1043
www.whsc.on.ca

May 14 2015

Attention:
All Young Worker Awareness Program Presenters and School Liaisons

Re: Young Worker Awareness Program

Dear Young Worker Awareness Program Presenters and School Liaisons:

As you may know the Workers Health and Safety Centre first developed a new worker program in 1988 to help raise awareness about hazards which new workers may face at work and their legal rights and responsibilities – including their right to employer-provided health and safety training, the importance of reporting health and safety concerns and when necessary refusing unsafe work. The Centre worked with the Ontario Teachers Federation to develop these sessions for high school students delivered by WHSC-trained, Ontario-qualified teachers.

As a result of early and proven success and then replicated year after year, the Young Worker Awareness Program (YWAP) has received a separate grant from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB and before that the WCB) since 1993.

A 2010 report from the government-appointed Tony Dean Expert Advisory Panel further acknowledged the effectiveness of leveraging our public education system to bring this awareness to a large segment of new workers. The Expert Panel reported between 2000 and 2008 lost-time injuries among teenagers dropped 45 per cent and attributed this dramatic achievement to the concerted young worker education efforts of Ontario's health and safety system. The same report recommended continued awareness efforts in the schools.

Unfortunately with the recent changes in legislation and the transfer of occupational health and safety prevention to a Chief Prevention Office (CPO) of the Ministry of Labour much has changed. To illustrate this point, at the end of 2014, the Workers Health and Safety Centre had to apply along with any interested party in the province of Ontario for the 2015/16 Occupational Health



A Workers Health & Safety Centre near you

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Toronto

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Page 1 of 2

and Safety Prevention and Innovation Program (OHSPIP) Grant. In early May 2015, the WHSC was informed by the Ministry of Labour that after 26 years of reaching thousands upon thousands of Ontario students, our Application had been denied as it did not fit into the Ministry's Strategic Plan and was not recognized as a "value for money" initiative. In conversation with a member of the Chief Prevention Office, it was explained to me the grant application was analyzed by two people who were called Subject Matter Experts (SME) although I was told these SMEs had no expertise in health and safety prevention nor any expertise in training or instruction. It would appear the Chief Prevention Office of the Ministry of Labour is more interested in funding post injury and accident organizations rather than prevention organizations.

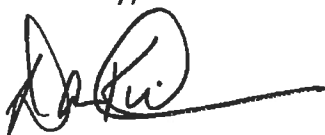
To be clear, the WHSC's Young Worker Awareness Program between January 1, 2013 and March 31, 2015 alone made over **3,000** presentations to over **75,000** students. These presentations were given in high schools and other venues across Ontario in over eighty (80) communities covering almost all of Ontario, east, west, central and north.

We know how important the Young Worker Awareness Program was to your course by promoting awareness of the rights and responsibilities of young and vulnerable workers, including potentially reducing the risk of workplace injuries and deaths. We are incredibly disappointed we cannot continue with these presentations. We wish to thank you for your support of the Program over these many years.

The Workers Health and Safety Centre does not agree with the Ministry's decision; however, we do not have the means to bear the costs of fulfilling these requests from our own, separate budget especially now when the Ministry of Labour has also decided to reduce the WHSC's overall funding envelope. Therefore any requests received for presentations cannot be honoured by the WHSC and therefore must unfortunately be denied.

Any further inquiries or concerns should be directed to your local MPP or the Ministry of Labour.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dave Killham', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Dave Killham
Executive Director
Workers Health and Safety Centre