FTR Now

Ministry of Labour to Target Health Care Workplaces for Safety Inspections

Date: January 30, 2013

The Ministry of Labour ("MOL") has announced a safety blitz targeting health care workplaces in the months of February and March. MOL inspectors will conduct inspections to check on issues related to workplace violence and harassment.

In this *FTR Now*, we review some steps you can take to ensure your workplace is compliant with its health and safety obligations.

BACKGROUND

The purpose of the MOL inspections is to:

- Increase awareness of health and safety in the workplace;
- Prevent injuries and illnesses that could arise from unsafe work practices; and
- Ensure that employers are complying with all statutory obligations.

Pursuant to Part VII of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, (the "*OHSA*"), Ministry of Labour Inspectors have a broad range of powers. Employers found to be in violation of the *OHSA* can be ordered to undertake actions to comply, and can also face monetary penalties if shown to have failed to fulfill their obligations. It is therefore important that employers take all reasonable precautions in the circumstances to the protect the health and safety of workers.

IS YOUR WORKPLACE READY?

Some suggestions for ensuring that your workplace is compliant with the *OHSA* regarding your workplace violence and harassment obligations include the following:

- Review your policies and procedures regarding workplace violence and harassment to confirm they are up to date;
- Review any other relevant documents to confirm that they comply with your workplace violence and harassment obligations;
- Consider whether your workplace violence and harassment materials adequately address the issue of bullying;
- Ensure that all staff have received appropriate training and information pertaining to workplace violence and harassment and the procedures to be followed;
- Examine your last risk assessment and ensure that all identified actions have been taken to reduce the risk of violence in the workplace and that no additional actions are necessary at this time; and
- Review records to ensure that employer actions regarding workplace violence and harassment have been properly documented.

For further information with respect these inspections, including advice on how to increase your compliance with the *OHSA*, please contact your regular Hicks Morley lawyer.

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