FTR Now

Ministry of Labour to Target Industrial/Construction Workplaces for Safety Inspections

Date: January 30, 2013

The Ministry of Labour ("MOL") has announced a safety blitz in the months of February and March which will target industrial and construction workplaces. MOL inspectors will conduct inspections relating to slip, trip and fall hazards.

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 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* ("*OHSA*"), MOL 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 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 protect the health and safety of workers.

IS YOUR WORKPLACE READY?

Some suggestions for ensuring that your workplace is compliant with the *OHSA* and that all potential slip, trip and fall hazards have been minimized as much as possible include the following:

- Review your workplace design to eliminate unnecessary obstacles, including in any office areas;
- Ensure that the workplace is clean, and that materials that could result in trips, slips or falls are appropriately stored and contained, as well as labelled;
- Maintain all personal protective equipment in proper working order, and in particular, ensure that all staff have appropriate safety footwear, including shoes with non-slip soles;
- Confirm that all ladders and other equipment in the workplace is compliant with the *OHSA* and/or industry standards; and
- Ensure that proper policies and procedures are in place that are easily accessible to staff, appropriately communicated and that records in respect of training which has been provided are maintained.

For further information regarding these inspections, including advice on how to increase your compliance with the *OHSA*, please contact Michelle A. Alton at 416.864.7238 or your regular Hicks Morley lawyer.

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