



NEWS RELEASE

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AMENDMENTS TO FALL PROTECTION LEGISLATION WILL IMPROVE SAFETY

On January 1, 2011 amendments to fall protection legislation under General Regulation (91-191) of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* will come into effect. The amendments will improve the protection of employees working at heights, and are the result of several years of research, analysis, consultation and evaluation by WorkSafeNB and industry stakeholders.

Falls from heights cause serious injuries to New Brunswick workers, and are one of the most frequent causes of workplace deaths in the province. While no dollar amount can be attached to the toll borne by injured workers and their families, injuries from falls account for as much as \$5 million in workers' compensation costs each year. These costs are borne by employers, who may face increasing insurance premiums under the *Workers' Compensation Act*.

The new legislation recognizes significant advances in fall protection equipment and training. In past years, fall protection meant protecting workers from injury once a fall had occurred by using equipment to stop the fall before the worker hit the ground. Workplaces now seek the most effective means to prevent falls before they occur and only recognize mechanisms to arrest falls in progress as a last resort. This new thinking forms the foundation of the new legislation.

The amendments include:

- Implementing an intervention hierarchy, where systems that do not allow employees to fall, such as guardrails and travel restraints, are preferred because there is no longer a risk of minor injury from stopping a fall or the need for an employee to be rescued.
- Instruction and training requirements.
- Requirement for a *Fall Protection Code of Practice* for working from a height of 7.5 metres or more and when working within a control zone with a safety monitor.
- New provisions for roofing and weatherproofing.
- Reference to new and updated CSA Standards.
- Additional responsibilities for building owners to ensure anyone conducting work on their behalf comply with the fall protection legislation.

WorkSafeNB will host information sessions throughout the province to help employers and workers better understand the new legislation. For more information, contact WorkSafeNB at 1 800 222-9775 or visit the website at www.worksafenb.ca.

ABOUT WORKSAFENB

WorkSafeNB administers no-fault workplace accident and disability insurance for employers and their workers, funded solely through employer assessments. WorkSafeNB is committed to preventing workplace injuries and illness through education and enforcement of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*.