



**INSIDE THIS ISSUE: HIGHLIGHTS FOR MARCH 2007**

- [MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDER \(MSD\) PREVENTION GUIDELINE FOR ONTARIO](#)
- [DIRECTOR – PREVENTION SERVICES FOR ESAO](#)
- [THE 8% LIST FOR 2007/2008](#)
- [CONFERENCE ACCOMMODATION UPDATE](#)
- [SHOULD EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS HAVE A POLICY ON SMUDGING? IS THIS A HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUE?](#)
- [OCCUPATIONAL DRIVING IS A LEADING WORKPLACE HAZARD!](#)
- [NEW TO THE WEBSITE](#)
- [YOU ASKED US – IS IT A SAFETY OR MAINTENANCE ISSUE?](#)
- [SCHOOL/POLICE EMERGENCY ACTION RESPONSE \(SPEAR \)](#)
- [ESAO REGIONAL COURSES AND ACTIVITIES](#)

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**MUSCULOSKELETAL DISORDER (MSD) PREVENTION GUIDELINE FOR ONTARIO**

On February 28, 2007, the Occupational Health and Safety Council of Ontario (OHSCO), of which ESAO is a member, released the MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario, along with the Resource Manual for the MSD Prevention Guideline for Ontario. The Guideline and the Resource Manual were developed by members of OHSCO, along with many system partners. They can be accessed as downloadable PDF files on the ESAO website, in both English and French.

MSDs represent 42% of all lost-time compensation claims across the province (43% in the education sector) and are by far the largest individual type of claim, with almost 40,000 MSD claims resulting in lost-time during 2004. Between 1996 and 2004, Ontario employers paid more than \$12 billion in direct and indirect costs related to MSDs. The Guideline is intended to assist employers in developing a proactive approach with prevention as the goal.

The term musculoskeletal disorder is used in many parts of the world, and has been chosen for this initiative because it is not synonymous with a particular injury or hazard; these problems are not necessarily an injury and they often develop over time. They can include back pain, muscle strain, tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, tennis elbow, Cumulative Trauma Disorder and Repetitive Motion Injury (RMI). This announcement was made on February 28, Repetitive Strain Injury (RSI) Awareness Day, and this is another type of injury included in the term “musculoskeletal disorder.”

Still to come is the MSD Prevention Toolbox – recommended worksheets, surveys, hazard identification tools and guidance on risk assessment methods. The toolbox has undergone stakeholder review and input from a panel of international experts, and will be released later in 2007.

The three components – the Guideline, the Resource Manual, and the Toolbox – are intended to inform workplace parties about what MSDs are and how they can be recognized, assessed and controlled to minimize their impact on workers. The intended audience is workers, employers, JH&SC members, Health and Safety reps, and unions – all workplace parties. The intent is to introduce a framework for addressing MSD risks in the workplace. The hope is that all workplace parties will download a copy of the documents and become familiar with their content.



The Guideline is not a regulatory document. However, Ministry of Labour inspectors will be knowledgeable of this document, and, where workplaces have no effective processes in place to address MSDs, they may refer workplace parties to the Guideline and Resource Manual for assistance in recognizing and controlling these hazards in the workplace.

Some questions a MOL inspector may ask are:

- Have you seen the MoL Employer Advisory on MSDs?
- How many MSD lost time claims/medical aid/first aid have you had in the 1 – years
- What job is most responsible for you MSD reports/claims?
- Do you have a modified and return-to-work program?
- Do you provide training to your supervisors and workers on manual materials handling, risk factors associated with MSD, sign and symptoms of MSDs and how to report musculoskeletal discomfort?
- Do you encourage workers to report discomfort early?
- Do you have a formal process for identifying and controlling MSD hazards in your workplace?
- Do you conduct an investigation to identify MSD hazards when a worker reports MSD symptoms?
- Are MSD Hazards identified for your Part 2 – Workplace Specific Hazard Training for Certified Members?
- What steps have been taken to prevent and control MSD (i.e. assessments, training, controls)?
- Are employees participating in processes?
- Is there early reporting of MSD symptoms?
- What training on MSD signs/symptoms/hazards has been provided to workers?
- Has there been a reduction in MSD injuries?

[Return to the top](#)

## **DIRECTOR – PREVENTION SERVICES FOR ESAO**

ESAO is pleased to announce the appointment of Mr. Randy Plener to the position of Director – Prevention Services for the Education Safety Association of Ontario. Randy joins us following seven years as Vice President, Safety, Health and Environment for AMEC Americas, where he oversaw the creation and integration of environmental health and safety programs in a number of AMEC North American subsidiaries.

Prior to that, his experience included postings as Corporate Manager, Safety, Health and Environment for ABB (Asea, Brown, Boveri) Canada, and Corporate Supervisor, Occupational Health, Hygiene, Safety and WCB for the Ontario Ministry of Transportation. Randy is well acquainted with some of our clients, having a B.A. in Life Sciences/Biology from Queen’s University and a M.H.Sc. in Occupational Health and Safety from the University of Toronto.

As Director – Prevention Services, Randy oversees both Field Services and the Training Division, and works out of the head office in Toronto. He is looking forward to meeting as many of our clients as possible, as well as our partners in the prevention system across the province. You can contact him at [rplener@esao.on.ca](mailto:rplener@esao.on.ca) or at 416-250-8005, ext. 112.

[Return to the top](#)



**THE 8% LIST FOR 2007/2008**

The Ministry of Labour, which operates on the fiscal year of April 1 to March 31, is in the final steps in the preparation of the 2007/8 2% and 8% lists for Ontario workplaces. As most of our clients know, the preparation of each list has been an annual event for the past four years. The Ministry applies selection criteria to the claims data supplied to the Ministry by the WSIB. The focus of the selection process is a combination of claims frequency and claims cost, with most recent data weighted more heavily.

The list for each year stands alone – that is, the selection process is applied to the database each year during the late winter, and new lists are generated for the coming fiscal year. Being selected in one particular year has no bearing on the selection process in the following year. It is all about safety performance as compared to the rest of the sector.

Many of the firms on the 8% list in the education sector chose to work with ESAO over the course of the past year - most opted to work with a number of partners in order to improve their performance.

In the education sector, there are approximately 1,400 firms. Of that number almost 1,200 in any given year do not have a single WSIB claim – these are often small firms but we applaud any firm that can operate for a year without a workplace injury. Well done!

There are also a number of firms at the opposite end of the spectrum - they have a significant number of claims every year. These 200 firms tend to be larger, including but not limited to school boards, colleges, universities and large, urban libraries and art galleries. Given the mathematics of the selection process, over 100 of these firms will end up on either the 2% or 8% list. Many will have been on the list previously, and many will be selected again, in spite of improved performance.

Safety performance improvement in large education sector firms is best viewed as a long term project. Quick fixes to "get off the list" don't really work in the long run. ESAO recognizes this, and is developing a new relationship with our larger firms, especially those who seem to be selected by the Ministry year after year. We will be offering a new program to those firms, called the Safety Performance Improvement Partnership program. The SPIP program will focus on the long term, and will seek to develop a safety culture that will produce permanent improvements in health and safety performance in the workplace. We believe that this is the best approach for firms that are likely to be selected again and again. You will hear more about this program in the future.

The announcement of the 2007/8 8% firms will be delayed until April, due to issues with the selection process. While we will not receive any information on the 2% firms (the Ministry keeps this list confidential), we do expect to get our final 8% list before the end of April. For those firms selected, the Safety Performance Improvement Partnership program will be a real opportunity to move forward in a meaningful way. Stay tuned for details in the spring.

[Return to the top](#)



**ESAO**  
 The EDUCATION  
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March 15, 2007 Issue 28

**CONFERENCE ACCOMMODATION UPDATE**

Our Conference flyer listed several hotels in the area but neglected to highlight the most cost-effective lodging available. In addition to the hotels in the surrounding area, rooms are available at very reasonable rates, right on the Victoria University Campus: Single and Double Air Conditioned rooms, all with free Internet (with a request data hook-up on arrival), shared bathrooms and common rooms. Single rooms are \$70 per night; double occupancy is \$42.00 per night per person. Please visit [www.esao.on.ca](http://www.esao.on.ca) (Conference 2007 Accommodations page), for reservation information.

Registrations will be accepted by phone; call 416-585-4524 and speak to reception. Callers must identify themselves as with the ESAO Conference. Payment can be by Visa, Master Card, or certified cheque. Cut-off date for reservations is April 15, 2007. Continental breakfast is included at Burwash Dining Hall, from 7 a.m. to 9 a.m.


Please visit <http://www.esao.on.ca/conferences/2007/accommodations.htm> for more detailed information

[Return to the top](#)

**SHOULD EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS HAVE A POLICY ON SMUDGING? IS THIS A HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUE?**

Smudging is an Aboriginal cleansing ceremony, often performed at openings of events but can be a daily ritual for some individuals. The ceremony can involve four different medicines: sweetgrass, sage, cedar and ceremonial tobacco (not commercial). Sweetgrass is recommended for indoor rituals as it is not as acrid, smells sweeter and the scent is tolerated better by most participants. It is a short ceremony in which the participant directs the smoke close to his/her mouth to ensure he/she speaks with good intentions, toward his/her eyes, to ensure he/she sees with positive intentions, and his/her ears, over the head, body, etc.

This topic came up at a time when ESAO was attending an Aboriginal cultural awareness day organized by the Municipal Health and Safety Association of Ontario and the Ontario First Nations Technical Services Corporation. The goal of the event was to allow participants to gain an understanding of Aboriginal cultures and practices. The speakers included Elder Hubert Skye, Six Nations of the Grand River, Professor Dan Longboat, Trent University, Brenda Nadjiwan, INAC and Rick Hill, McMaster University. We spoke with some representatives from the Technical Services Corporation, Indian Affairs, Aboriginal Tobacco Strategy, and a number of other sources found through an Internet search, but although we discovered that many interested individuals had opinions on the subject, no one we had contacted had a policy in place or had ever heard of smudging being performed in a school. An issue at a school had arisen from a ceremony that was held in a regular classroom during school hours, and sweetgrass was used. The smell permeated the adjoining rooms and resulted in complaints to the administration by some individuals about the smoke and odor.

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	<p>March 15, 2007 Issue 28</p>

Culturally diverse workers are a reality in the workplace. To manage successfully in a culturally diverse environment, employers and workers must add intercultural communication to their skill set, as they will need to explore the cultural knowledge, skills and awareness necessary to identify and overcome cross-cultural communication barriers.

It would seem that it would be wise for school boards to adopt a policy regarding this matter before it becomes an issue involving all interested parties in its conception. After more research, we found that the following institutions are ensuring that the traditional Native ceremonies are respected but also have policies in place to control the discomfort felt by some occupants when a smudging ceremony is performed.

- Trent University, Ontario  
<http://www.trentu.ca/healthandsafety/documents/IndoorAirQualityStandard.pdf>
- University of Manitoba, Manitoba  
[http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/governing\\_documents/staff/688.htm](http://umanitoba.ca/admin/governance/governing_documents/staff/688.htm)
- Lakehead University, Ontario  
<http://aboriginalinitiatives.lakeheadu.ca/?display=page&pageid=38>
- Brandon University, Brandon Manitoba  
[http://www.brandonu.ca/admin/policies/Administrative/traditional%20aboriginal%20activities%20\(guidelines\).doc](http://www.brandonu.ca/admin/policies/Administrative/traditional%20aboriginal%20activities%20(guidelines).doc)
- Grand Prairie College, Alberta  
<http://www.gprc.ab.ca/pdf/policies/admin/CleanAirPolicy.pdf>

We would be interested hearing from any educational facility that has developed a policy about which they would like to share information, and from those interested in obtaining a copy of a policy for their own use.

[Return to the top](#)

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**OCCUPATIONAL DRIVING IS A LEADING WORKPLACE HAZARD!**

As safe as our roads are, on an average day, two people will die and over 200 more will be seriously hurt in preventable collisions. There isn't a family in the province that hasn't been touched. Financially, the damage costs us over \$9 billion a year.

Our families, friends and communities are worth protecting. The Road Safety Partners is an alliance of organizations working together to improve road safety by encouraging everyone to make better choices on the road. ESAO has begun participating in the RoadSafe Occupational Driving Working Committee.

The purpose of RoadSafe is to promote road safety and help change driver behaviour to ultimately reduce motor vehicle-related social costs, injuries and deaths. The mission of the Road Safety Partners is to significantly reduce and prevent the deaths, injuries and social costs resulting from motor vehicle collisions, specifically focusing on:

- aggressive, distracted and drowsy driving
- trucking safety and sharing the road safely with trucks
- workplace road safety management, awareness and skills

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- the use of seatbelts
- young/new drivers' road safety awareness and skills

What can we do to ensure the safety of our employees?

- Understand the definition of a workplace vehicle;
- Appreciate the value of a Safe Driving Program for your employees;
- Recognize the benefits of managing your occupational Road Safety Program.

Winter Driving Hazards CD-ROM and courseware developed by ESAO is the newest CD-ROM training tool developed to fill the need for driver's education and training in winter conditions. This program provides an introduction to safe winter driving for those who may be required to drive in winter conditions in the course of their assignments.

The knowledge gained from this program will assist all drivers when confronted by snow and freezing conditions. It will assist their ability to identify the safest tires for all road conditions and introduce them to the complexities of skid control and how to stop safely in slippery conditions.

The information is presented in four modules: Winter Driving, Braking and Steering, Skid Control, and At the Scene of a Collision.

Who would benefit from this CD-ROM training?

- employers who recognize the workplace specific hazard
- workers who drive as part of their job
- volunteers whose duties include driving, and
- new drivers of all ages

This new tool may be one of the resources employers reach out to when addressing their organizations' occupational driving hazards. We in the education sector recognize the value of continuing education for all ages.

For more information on other resources and events that could assist you in addressing this hazard, please visit the RoadSafe website at [www.roadsafe.ca/what.htm](http://www.roadsafe.ca/what.htm).

[Return to the top](#)

**NEW TO THE WEBSITE**

Click to Download

- [Portuguese WHMIS Poster](#) (full colour)
- [Conference 2007 16 Page Guide](#)
- [Directions Magazine 2007](#)
- [Field Trip Sample Policy & guide to Vehicle Selection](#)

Links



- [MSD Prevention Guidelines \(Part 1\)](#) – English and French
- [MSD Resource Book \(Part 2\)](#) – English and French

If you are writing, reviewing or updating your H&S policies, please review the many links to other university, college and school policies. If you need any assistance navigating the website or have suggestions for improving it, please feel free to contact us at [esao@esao.on.ca](mailto:esao@esao.on.ca), or call your local Field Consultant.

[Return to the top](#)

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## YOU ASKED US!

ESAO and its staff receive many inquiries and questions on a wide array of topics. Some questions of a general nature will be included in this section of the newsletter to update all interested parties. In all cases, ESAO attempts to obtain the most accurate and up-to-date answer possible. We do not assume to take the regulatory responsibility for a certain situation, and the client is advised to contact the regulator responsible.

### You Asked Us:

I am a Certified Member on my Joint Health and Safety Committee, and I perform regular inspections of my workplace. Many times I note things that need to be addressed, but the employer tells me that these are maintenance items, and not my responsibility. What is the difference between maintenance items and safety items?

**Answer:** This is a question we hear all the time, probably because there is such a fine line between maintenance items and safety items. Often, maintenance items become safety items over a period of time. The difference really involves determining whether or not the item creates a hazard for a worker.

As an example, suppose a light is burned out. If the light is one of many in a well-lit room, it is a maintenance item. If, however, the light is one of only a few, and is in a stairwell or an area that is dimly lit at best, it is a safety item.

In general, defects involving protective devices such as guardrails, barriers, emergency lights, etc., are definitely safety items. Defects that involve items such as a broken rung on a ladder, a loose handrail on a staircase, poor ventilation in a fume hood could result in an injury to a worker. Such items are safety items and raise safety concerns.

There is often a long list of items that need attention at our larger workplaces, and the line between safety items and maintenance items can be a fine one. But, if the situation increases the likelihood of an injury or creates a hazardous situation, you should report it.

[Return to the top](#)

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## SCHOOL/POLICE EMERGENCY ACTION RESPONSE (SPEAR)

SPEAR is a comprehensive computer database and proactive emergency preparedness plan, coordinating the response of front-line officers and specialized units. Peel Regional Police (PRP) have devised a plan to ensure that the police force can respond quickly to a violent or large scale incident effectively and coordinate an efficient and safe resolution.

PRP's plan has the ability to provide detailed profiles of any institution (i.e., a school, college, and/or a university) for which data (which could include area maps, floor and site plans, internal, external and aerial photos of the institutions, tactical plans and data sheets) has been recorded and would be accessible to desktop computers, mobile tactical units and duty inspectors. If an incident occurs, the dispatcher or front-line supervisor determines whether to activate SPEAR, which is used for only five scenarios: armed suspects, bomb threats, chemical spills, bio-chemical incidents and events requiring extraordinary deployment of resources.

A number of our clients have already implemented this, are in the process or are actively researching the program. Peel Regional Police began developing SPEAR in 2004 and officially launched the program in November with the cooperation of both the Public and Catholic school systems.

This program has been shared with other emergency services, including local fire departments in Peel that are currently training with it. For more information on implementation, please contact Detective Taufic Saliba at 905-453-2121, ext. 3620, or Grace Kempers at ext. 3621.

[Return to the top](#)

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## ESAO REGIONAL COURSES & ACTIVITIES

The following activities have been booked for September to December by the ESAO Field Consultants. Any client interested in attending one or more of the following sessions or courses should directly contact the Field Consultant responsible for the activity. Should you have problems or concerns regarding a scheduled activity or wish to attend one, please contact your ESAO Field Consultant or the ESAO Toronto office at 1-877-732-3726, or via email at [esao@esao.on.ca](mailto:esao@esao.on.ca)

**Niagara - Bill Urie  
(905) 312-9962**

Basic Certification:  
 March 12, 13 & 14, 2007  
 Brantford, ON - TBA

July 3, 4 & 5, 2007  
 Ontario Alliance of Christian  
 Schools, 617 Garner Road  
 East, Ancaster, ON

Phase II Training:  
 April 16 - 19, 2007,  
 Grand Erie District School  
 Board, Cayuga Support Centre  
 72, Hwy 54, Cayuga, ON  
 all 16 modules

July 6, 2007,  
 Ontario Alliance of Christian  
 Schools, 617 Garner Road  
 East, Ancaster, ON  
 Bio, Chem, Enviro & Slips

Client Network Meeting:  
 March 23, 2007, 9:30am  
 Brant/Haldimand Norfolk CDSB  
 Education Ctr 322 Fairview Dr  
 Brantford, ON  
 April 2007  
 Hamilton, ON – TBA

Workshops:  
 March 23, 2007 1:00pm  
 Accident Investigation

Brant/Haldimand Norfolk CDSB  
 322 Fairview Dr.  
 Brantford, ON

**Francophone – Alain  
 Chenard  
 (613) 837-2042**

Programme de Formation  
 de Base à l'Agrément  
 le 14, 15 & 16 mai, 2007  
 Sudbury, ON

Phase 2  
 le 28 mars, 2007  
 Orléans, ON

**East – Jean-Guy Raymond  
 (613) 592-4491**

Basic Certification:  
 April 10, 11 & 12, 2007  
 Renfrew County DSB  
 1270 Pembroke St. W.  
 Pembroke, ON

Phase II Training:  
 June 25 – 28, 2007  
 all 16 modules  
 St. Lawrence Parks  
 13740 County Rd. 2  
 Morrisburg, ON

WHMIS Train the Trainer  
 June 13 – 14, 2007  
 Catholic DSB Eastern Ontario  
 2755 Highway #43 Kemptville

Client Network Meeting:  
 June 5, 2007  
 Catholic DSB of Eastern  
 Ontario  
 2755 Highway #43  
 Kemptville

**North East – Doug Bennett  
 (705) 476-7433**

Basic Certification:  
 March 6, 7, & 8, 2007  
 Sudbury, ON – TBA

**North West – TBA  
 1-877-732-3726**

Workshops:  
 March 20, 2007 12:00 Noon  
 Principals Due Diligence  
 Red Rock Inn, 145 White  
 Blvd, Red Rock ON

**Georgian Bay – TBA  
 1-877-732-3726  
 esao@esao.on.ca**

Basic Certification Training  
 April 27, May 4 & 11, 2007  
 Waterloo Regional Children's  
 Museum  
 10 King St. W. Kitchener, ON

Workshops  
 April 25, 2007  
 Georgian Staffing Services  
 50 Hume St, Collingwood,  
 Violence Prevention, Working  
 Alone and Dealing with  
 Difficult and Angry Persons

Phase II Training  
 May 25, 2007  
 Conestoga College, Doon  
 Campus  
 299 Doon Valley Drive,  
 Kitchener, ON  
 Chemical Hazards, Fire &  
 Explosion Hazards, Machine  
 Guarding Hazards

June 8, 2007  
 Conestoga College, Doon  
 Campus 299 Doon Valley  
 Drive, Kitchener,  
 Ergonomics, Slips, Trips &  
 Falls, & Workplace Violence

**GTA – Training  
 416-250-8005**


Basic Certification:  
 March 13, 14 & 15  
 4950 Yonge Street  
 Toronto, ON

Phase II Training  
 May 28, 2007 - Office  
 Hazards  
 Victoria College – U of T  
 Campus Toronto, ON –  
 CONF PD 2007

May 29, 2007 Plant Hazards  
 Victoria College – U of T,  
 Toronto, ON – CONF PD  
 2007

Phase II Train the Trainer  
 May 28 - 29, 2007  
 Victoria College – U of T,  
 Toronto, ON – CONF PD  
 2007

WHMIS Train the Trainer  
 May 28 & 29  
 Victoria College – U of T,  
 Toronto, ON – CONF PD  
 2007

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**GTA East - Mike Atkinson  
(416) 466-1923**

Basic Certification:  
 April 10, 11 & 12, 2007  
 Toronto Public Library,  
 Coxwell-Danforth Branch  
 1675 Danforth Av, Toronto,

June 12, 13 & 14, 2007  
 North York Memorial  
 Community Hall  
 5110 Yonge St., Toronto, ON

Phase II Training  
 March 22, 2007 FULL  
 Toronto Public Library –  
 Rm 200 40 Orchard View  
 Blvd.

Client Network Meetings  
 March 12, 2007  
 St. Michael's College  
 1515 Bathurst St. Toronto,

March 27, 2007  
 Toronto, ON. - TBA  
 Workshops  
 March 12, 2007  
 Workplace Inspection  
 St. Michael's College  
 1515 Bathurst St. Toronto.

**GTA West: - Janice Gallant  
(905) 785-3742**

Phase II Training  
 March 29, 2007  
 Benares Museum  
 1507 Clarkson Rd. N Miss.  
 Ergonomics, Slips, Trips &  
 Falls, and Violence in the  
 Workplace

Client Network Meetings  
 March 12, 2007  
 St. Michael's College  
 1515 Bathurst St. Toronto

Workshops  
 April 10, 2007  
 Dealing with a Difficult  
 Person  
 Oakville Public Library  
 120 Navy St. Oakville, ON

**South West – Ed Hager  
(519) 264-9738**

Basic Certification:  
 Feb 19, 26 & Mar 26, 2007  
 Avon Maitland DSB –  
 Boardroom  
 62 Chalk St. N. Seaforth, ON

March 22, 23 & 28, 2007  
 Greater Essex County DSB  
 360 Fairview Avenue, Essex,  
 ON

May 2, 9, 16, 2007  
 London DCSB – Education  
 Ctr, 5200 Wellington Rd. S.  
 London

Apr 27, May 4 & 11, 2007  
 The Children's Museum  
 10 King St. W. Kitchener

Client Network Meetings

**Central Lakes - TBA  
(705) 876-1001**

[Click to access Training Events Calendar](#) [Click to access Workshop/Conference Calendar](#)

**ESAO Offices & Staff**

ESAO serves all Schedule 1 firms in the WSIB rate groups 810 & 817, as well as Schedule 2 firms in the education sector. Contact your ESAO Field Consultant for more information on any courses or products. Head Office: [www.esao.on.ca](http://www.esao.on.ca) Tel: (416) 250-8005 Fax: (416) 250-9190 Toll Free: 1-877-732-3726

**Drive Carefully! Next Newsletter: April 2007**