

## **MOL to review OHS prevention and enforcement programs**

### *Expert advisory panel to make recommendations this fall*

In late January 2010, the province announced it was convening an [expert advisory panel to conduct a review of the province's occupational health and safety \(OHS\) prevention and enforcement programs](#). The panel will be chaired by Tony Dean, and will report back to Labour Minister Peter Fonseca in fall 2010, with recommendations related to critical areas such as integration of workplace practices, the underground economy and seamless service to workplace parties. Employers and workers will be invited to share their perspectives through a public consultation.

Louise Logan, president and CEO of the *Health and Safety Association for Government Services* welcomes this announcement. "I look forward to the results of the review and trust that together, we will find additional ways to effectively and efficiently reduce workplace injuries."

### **Who is Tony Dean and what are the priorities of the panel**

[Tony Dean](#) is a former Secretary of the provincial Cabinet, and has served as Deputy Minister of Labour. He is currently a professor in the University of Toronto's School of Public Policy and Governance and a Senior Research Fellow at the Harvard Kennedy School. According to Dean, the Minister has asked the panel to examine a range of issues, including:

*The continuum of safety practices in a workplace.* High-performance workplaces, says Dean, embed health and safety into the life cycle of their organizations. It's part of their work practices, processes, training and orientation. It takes effect from the moment new recruits walk through the door and follows people throughout their employment with the organization. Most important, it permeates the thinking and decision-making of the CEO and senior management team. Dean wants to identify all the points on the continuum where staff intersect with health and safety, and find ways to encourage other workplaces to adopt best practices.

*The impact of the underground economy on OHS practices.* The panel will address how workplaces and the nature of work are changing, and how we adapt our prevention and enforcement system to keep pace with these changes. Dean intends to look at sectors where employment is transitional, part-time, transient in nature; where groups of workers gather to perform certain tasks; and where there is no permanent workplace.

*How existing legislation serves worker safety.* The panel will review how Ontario's prevention and enforcement programs actually work in the workplace, what outcomes they generate, and what improvements need to be put in place so that everyone in the system can contribute in a more seamless and integrated way.

### **Taking a three-phase process**

The panel's work will progress in three phases: research, consultation, and development of options and recommendations.

The Institute for Work and Health has been commissioned to conduct an “inter-jurisdictional *research review*” that will look at what we can learn from how others in Canada and other countries manage their prevention and enforcement models. Results of that review are expected this spring.

The *consultation* phase will reach out to health and safety delivery partners, such as industry associations, labour and the corporate community. It will also be facilitated by a website that will provide regular updates and invite interested parties to contribute research and ideas.

The final phase will encompass *options and recommendations* that address the Minister of Labour’s priorities.

### **Aiming for what inspires us all each day**

“We are starting from a position of advantage,” says Dean. “We have an OHS regime that has been broadly emulated. For the most part, I think it works well. Over the last five to seven years, the system has been driving the numbers in the right direction. The lost-time injury rate is down and fatalities are down, but obviously we have more to do if we want to be the safest jurisdiction in the world.

“Given how hard people work at every level in our health and safety system, I believe they want to be the best. At the end of the day, this is all about keeping people safe at work.”

### **Leading change**

On March 2, leaders’ from the province’s health and safety system gathered to discuss the review and make recommendations for improving our prevention work.

Board members and Chief Executive Officers from the Health and Safety Associations, Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers and the Workers Health & Safety Centre convened in groups to discuss how to best improve injury and illness prevention, how to use technology to prevent injuries and increase awareness, and how to best protect precarious and vulnerable workers. The discussions were rich and detailed recommendations around improved funding for prevention, accreditation, and mandatory health and safety training will be shared with Tony Dean’s Expert Advisory Panel.

To learn more about the system review [click here](#).

(USE THIS LINK <http://news.ontario.ca/mol/en/2010/01/review-of-workplace-safety-system-in-ontario.html> )

To read about Tony Dean’s background [click here](#).

(USE THIS LINK <http://news.ontario.ca/mol/en/Tony%20Dean-Jan-2009.pdf>)