

***Occupational Health and Safety (OHS)  
Focused Inspection Project:  
Commercial Construction***

***Inspection data timeframe: October 8 – November 22, 2010***

***Report Date: December 2010***

**Government  
of Alberta ■**



## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Alberta Employment and Immigration (E&I), Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) identified commercial construction as one of the key industry sectors for focused inspections extending over a 30-day period in the 2010-11 fiscal year.

Commercial construction includes all major construction projects outside the residential program, not including industrial construction. Examples of typical commercial construction projects include, but are not limited to, high-rise buildings, apartment buildings, libraries, schools, retail outlets, multi-bay complexes, etc.

The purpose of the focused inspection project was to raise awareness of known workplace hazards, and ensure compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, Regulation and Code.

The overall goal is to enhance employers' awareness of their responsibility to protect the health and safety of their workers by identifying and controlling hazards associated with their work.

## 2.0 OVERVIEW OF FOCUSED INSPECTIONS PROJECT

The focused inspections were conducted at the following key work sites:

1. High-rise buildings – primarily in urban areas
2. Typical commercial construction work sites as listed in section 1.0.

During the inspections, OHS Officers focused on the following sections of the OHS legislation as known hazards in this industry:

- **OHS Code Part 9 Fall-Related Hazards**, including but not limited to:
  - General Protection
  - Fall Protection Plan
  - Instruction of Workers
  - Elevated Work Platforms
  - Control Zones
  - Boom-Supported Work Platforms.

- **OHS Code Part 22 Safeguards**, including but not limited to:
  - Covered Openings
  - Safeguards
  - Guardrails
  - Building Shafts
  - Toe Boards
  
- **OHS Code Part 23 Scaffolds and Temporary Work Platforms**, including but not limited to:
  - Scaffolds – Tagging Requirements
  - Scaffolds – Design
  - Scaffold Planks
  - Elevating Platforms and Aerial Devices
  - Free Standing or Rolling Scaffolds
  
- **OHS Code Part 12, Section 189:**
  - Securing of materials and equipment.

Officers' inspection at site included:

- Determination of compliance with sections of the Alberta *OHS Act*, Regulation and Code related to fall-related hazards and securing of materials and equipment.
  
- Officers addressed any additional hazards observed during their inspection. When an OHS officer observed imminent danger, a stop work or stop use order to the employer was issued.
  
- Officers issued a written Client Contact Report (CCR) to the employer documenting the results of the Officer's observations, including Orders issued to correct observed deficiencies.
  
- Re-inspections of the worksites where orders were issued occurred to verify compliance with orders.
  
- A re-inspection report (CCR) was provided to the employer with a requirement to post the report in a conspicuous location readily accessible to the affected workers.

### 3.0 RESULTS OF INSPECTION ACTIVITY

#### Number of Inspections:

This project took place between October 8 and November 7, 2010, and follow-up inspections continue. From October 8 to November 22, 2010, a total of 298 initial and follow-up inspections were completed at 73 work sites of 146 commercial construction employers across Alberta. One hundred and fifty-nine (159) initial inspections and 139 follow-up inspections were conducted.

#### Orders Issued:

A total of 214 orders were issued to employers during this Commercial Construction focused inspection project. A total of two (2) “Notice to Produce” documents demanding health and safety information be provided were issued to employers. Notice to Produce documents are not viewed as orders in the OHS legislation. It is important to note that orders only reflect what is observed at the work site at the time of the inspection.

**Table 3: Orders written by type**

Type of Order	Number of Orders	Per Cent*
Stop work order	39	18%
Stop use order	12	6%
Other	163	76%
<b>Total orders written</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Percentages are rounded to nearest whole number

- Fifty-one stop work or stop use of equipment orders were issued to employers. The work stoppages related to non-compliance with fall protection, lack of proper use of fall protection, absence of a fall protection plan, materials and equipment unsecured at height, scaffold design, ladder use, and safeguards.
  - A total of 39 stop work orders were issued to employers. These stop work orders related to employer non-compliance with legislated requirements for fall protection, including lack of proper fall protection or a fall protection plan, unsecured equipment and materials at height, and non-compliance with legislated requirements in the design of scaffolds.
  - These 39 stop work orders were issued at 20 of the 73 work sites (27%)
  - A total of 12 stop use orders were issued to employers relating to non-compliance with legislative requirements for safeguards and design of scaffold and ladder use.

**Table 4: Orders written by Part of Code**

<b>Part of OHS Code</b>	<b>Number of Orders</b>	<b>Per Cent*</b>
OHS Code Part 9: Fall Hazards	57	27%
OHS Code: Part 12, Section 189: Securing Equipment and Materials	17	8%
OHS Code: Part 22: Safeguards	49	23%
OHS Code: Part 23: Scaffolds and Temporary Work Platforms	39	18%
Other	52	24%
<b>Total Orders Written</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>100%</b>

\*Percentages are rounded to nearest whole number

- Fifty-seven of the orders issued were related to fall hazards (Part 9 of the OHS Code); 27% of all orders issued.
  - Findings indicate that working at height without required fall protection continues to be a safety issue in the commercial construction sector.
- Seventeen orders issued were related to securing of equipment and materials (Part 12 Section 189 of the OHS Code); 8% of all orders issued.
  - Findings indicate that securing of materials and equipment continues to be a safety issue in the high rise commercial construction area.
- Forty-nine orders were issued relating to safeguards (Part 22 of the OHS Code); 23% of all orders issued.
  - The areas of building shafts, covering of openings and guardrails are continued areas of non-compliance posing potential fall hazards in the commercial construction sector.
- Thirty-nine orders were issued relating to scaffolds and temporary work platforms (Part 23 of the OHS Code); 18% of all orders issued.
  - The areas of scaffold design, tagging requirements, scaffold planks, bracket scaffolds and outrigger scaffolds are areas requiring OHS intervention to achieve compliance with the OHS Code requirements.

## **4.0 OHS FOCUSED INSPECTION PROJECTS**

OHS focused inspection projects are part of E&I's OHS operations and are designed to raise the profile of known workplace hazards, promote a sustained increase in employers becoming self-reliant in achieving compliance with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, Regulation and Code, and to enforce these legislated occupational health and safety standards.

Inspection results will be used to determine future focused inspection areas, frequency of inspections of individual workplaces, and to track the progress and trends related to the control of workplace hazards within specific industries.

### **Next steps**

OHS officers continue to conduct inspections to ensure occupational health and safety compliance in the commercial construction industry on an ongoing basis. A follow-up OHS focused inspections project will be conducted in the 2011-12 fiscal year to further enforce compliance with OHS legislation. Given the results of the current project, particular focus will again be on worksites where fall related hazards relating to non-compliance associated with Parts 9, 22, 23 and Section 189 (relating to the securing of material and equipment) hazards pose potential danger to workers.

Commercial/industrial construction has previously been identified as one of the key industry sectors requiring a health and safety focus, and a specific commercial/industrial construction program is updated annually.

OHS will continue to implement OHS focused inspection projects directed at industries where specific hazards are known to exist, and where OHS observes non-compliance.

Future OHS focused inspections planned for 2011 include:

- Forklifts and mobile equipment
- Young workers
- Residential construction