



EAC, an initiative of Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters

MEDIA RELEASE

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Attention Business/News Editors

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The Employers' Advocacy Council Supports New Prevention Initiative

KITCHENER, ONTARIO, December 23, 2010 – With the average cost of a lost-time injury (LTI) in Ontario now spiraling well over \$100,000, the Employers' Advocacy Council (EAC), welcomed the release of the Expert Advisory Panel's review on occupational health and safety, led by Tony Dean. The Advisory Panel's review focused on needed improvements in workplace health and safety, in Ontario.

Some of the Panel recommendations that have been designated as priorities for implementation in the next twelve months include: creation of a new prevention organization within the Ministry of Labour, mandatory health and safety awareness training for all workers, and the creation of a small business committee to represent the needs and interests of employers and workers in small businesses.

The Panel recommendations support EAC's work. *"We believe that the removal of the prevention function from the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) is long overdue. The WSIB is an insurance program, first and foremost. The prevention function simply added confusion, duplication, and a lack of clarity regarding the roles of the Ministry of Labour (MOL), the WSIB prevention area and the other health and safety delivery partners,"* said Ian Howcroft, Vice President, CME Ontario. *"We are pleased with the recognition by the Panel that the report's recommendations can be fully funded within the current spending allocations. During this critical period of economic recovery, it is vital that employers not be saddled with additional WSIB costs."*

For a detailed listing of EAC's policy recommendations, actions, key report recommendations and what this means to Ontario employers, please see the attached **EAC "At-a-Glance" Key Recommendations Overview**.

The EAC, is a membership based non-profit employer group, and takes great pride in being the leading source of information, training and advocacy on workplace safety insurance. For 25 years, through our advocacy, workshops and safety group programs, we work with employers to reduce worker compensation costs, the number of worker claims and to prevent workplace injuries. The EAC, is an initiative of Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME), Canada's leading trade and industry association, since 1871, and the voice of manufacturing and global business in Canada.

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EAC “At-a-Glance” Key Recommendations Overview
Expert Advisory Panel on Occupational Health & Safety Report

EAC Policy Recommendations: What the EAC asked for:	Action	OHS Report Recommendations What we got:	What this means to Employers
1. EAC recommended that the Workplace Safety & Insurance Board (WSIB) focus on their insurance functions only and with no prevention obligations.	✓	1. The report recommended that a new prevention organization be created within the Ministry of Labour (MOL).	1. These proposed changes are designed to eliminate or minimize duplication between the prevention and enforcement pillars of the occupational health & safety system.
2. EAC recommended that the government legislate enforcement tools to address the impact of the underground economy.	✓	2. The report recommended that the Ministry of Labour target workplaces and sectors operating in the underground economy for proactive inspections, particularly after normal working hours.	2. By having MOL inspectors visit sites in the evenings or on the weekends, there is a greater likelihood in improving the working conditions for vulnerable workers while detecting employers operating in the underground economy.
3. EAC recommended a mandatory health & safety course for high school students.	✓	3. The report recommended that the Ministry of Education make high school graduation dependent upon demonstration of knowledge of occupational health and safety.	3. Young workers will be more protected in the workplace if the Ministry of Education considered enhancing health and safety curricula by introducing a mandatory graduating course or a test similar to the existing literacy test diploma requirement. EAC will monitor progress during the implementation process.
4. EAC supported the government in taking a lead role in linking procurement decisions to health and safety goals.	✓	4. The report recommended that the Ontario Government develop procurement policies that consider the occupational health and safety performance of suppliers in order to motivate a high level of performance.	4. By improving their safety performance, companies can be eligible for a financial incentive from the WSIB.
5. EAC recommended a strategy to reach small employers by focusing on their specific needs, limited time and financial resources.	✓	5. The occupational health and safety system should intensify support for small business compliance through the creation of focused and integrated programs with dedicated resources.	5. Small business needs are different from those of medium and large businesses. Small employers don't need additional burdens. The creation of this new support system would provide the owners of small business with specific program info and the knowledge to ensure they are in compliance with health and safety regulations.
6. EAC encouraged the adoption of a health & safety management system framework.	✓	6. The report recommended that the new prevention organization create, implement and audit training standards that would apply to training required by the Occupational Health and Safety Act and regulations.	6. By having a centralized system for the development and monitoring of health and safety programs, employers will be able to benefit from a more efficient and progressive system that will take individual program objectives into account.