

Safety Makes Cents: Summary of Presentation Given at the Recent STA Annual Field Day

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No one wants an accident to happen. They can cause personal injury, pain and suffering; thoroughly disrupt a person's life; result in property and equipment damage; and create major cost and profit implications to an organization. They are a major cost to society in general – especially considering all accidents can be prevented.

One person dies each week in Ontario from a workplace accident. There are 300,000 major accidents in our province each year resulting in at least one amputation a day from such incidents. These accidents can be prevented. We have the power to reduce and eliminate them. It is not easy but it can be done. We need to take the time to make it happen!

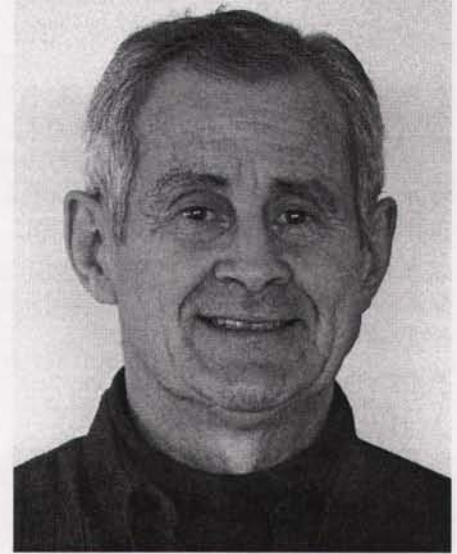
Governments are tired of companies neglecting their obligations under the provincial Occupational Health and Safety legislation to have safety processes in place within their businesses. Firms are tired of paying large premiums to fund accident costs. In Ontario, 10% of companies cause the majority of accidents. Do you realize that the good companies, the ones who have safety policies in place and who train and care about safety, are paying for the bad ones, that couldn't care less about safety and accident prevention? That's why your rates are so high! Recently the Government of Canada passed a federal law, Bill C-45, which makes safety violations from these bad

companies a criminal offence that is prosecutable in a court of law under the Criminal Code. The police can now investigate accidents and lay charges. This can result in large personal fines and years in jail for those convicted.

How can we be better at managing safety? In the landscape industry, Landscape Ontario has been leading the charge in this important area. Landscape firms are not only making themselves safe, but they are making money doing so.


For the last five years, Landscape Ontario has been a safety sponsor for the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) programs, Safety Groups and Safe Communities Incentive Plan (SCIP). Both programs rebate companies 5% annually on their pre-miums for a successful completion. The last two years have seen over 175 firms receive \$1,000 each. This also drives down the industry group rate. Companies are being paid to develop a "safe culture" which is what they need to do to avoid convictions under Bill C-45. It is a win-win for everyone. Statistics show that groups of companies working in these programs are operating more safely than others not in such a safety group.

During the last six years, the landscape industry has reduced their WSIB industry premium rate in rate group 190 from 9.11% to a projected 4.69% in 2005 per \$100 of wages. This is a 50% reduction over seven years which will save the



industry over \$10 million each and every year. The Ministry of Labour has announced that they will add another 200 inspectors to zero in on the 2% of bad firms that cause the large number of accidents. This is good news for those companies who are striving to develop safety cultures and reduce accidents. It is also a very good reason for all companies to consider joining the Landscape Ontario sponsored safety programs. Most of the training takes place in the winter during the off season.

To conclude, safety makes cents! In fact, safety management makes both dollars and sense! Contact Terry Murphy at Landscape Ontario, 1-800-265-5656 x 317 for further information on the landscape industry WSIB programs, any safety issue or about this article. ♦



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