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Ontario to Review OHS prevention and enforcement programs

The Province of Ontario's Ministry of Labour has announced the creation of 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 former Ontario Cabinet Secretary/former Deputy Minister of Labour Tony Dean. He will report back to Labour Minister Peter Fonseca in the fall of 2010.

This is an interesting development because it may trigger similar reviews of legislation and policy in BC.

I will closely monitor the Ontario review and provide COCA Updates as there are new developments.

The Minister of Labour has asked the panel to examine a range of issues, including:

- 1. 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 is part of their work practices, processes, training, and orientation. Dean wants to identify all the points on the continuum where staff intersects with health and safety, and find ways to encourage other workplaces to adopt best practices.
- 2. 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.
- 3. 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.

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

The Institute for Work and Health will conduct an "inter-jurisdictional research review" that looks at what we can learn from how other jurisdictions manage their prevention and enforcement models.

The consultation phase will involve health and safety delivery partners, such as industry associations, labour, and the corporate community.

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

More information is available at:

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