

# Ontario Hires 100 Additional Health and Safety Inspectors

New employees will support business inspection blitz during COVID-19

March 3, 2021

[Labour, Training and Skills Development](#)

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**TORONTO** — The Ontario government has hired over 100 new occupational health and safety inspectors to support business inspection campaigns, and help ensure employees, businesses and the public are protected. The new inspectors have begun a condensed training program, and will begin making field visits, with a mentor, within five weeks of their start date. They are scheduled to be fully trained and deployed by July 1, 2021.

"As the province continues to reopen, we need businesses of all sizes to do better as there are no shortcuts to safety," said Monte McNaughton, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development. "With a new total of more than 500 inspectors, our government is building the largest team of inspectors in Ontario's history to educate business owners, enforce public health measures and keep workplaces safe now, and for many years to come."

To date, Ontario's provincial offences officers have conducted more than 13,374 COVID-related workplace inspections and investigations across the province since the beginning of 2021, issuing 9,480 orders and 373 tickets, and stopped unsafe work 15 times. These inspections have demonstrated that the majority of businesses are learning how to operate safely during COVID-19 and appreciate the support and guidance from the province.

Workplace inspections continue to focus on educating small businesses across the province to help them reopen from lockdowns safely. Over the past week, 110 provincial offences officers in Eastern Ontario, Durham Region, and Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph visited 1,081 workplaces, the majority of which were small businesses with fewer than 25 employees. The two-stage inspections provide COVID-19 education and guidance for small businesses in the first round - particularly those that were closed during the provincial shutdown - followed by more enforcement-oriented inspections on follow-up visits.

Over the coming weeks, officers will return to businesses that have already been visited in Eastern Ontario, Durham Region and Wellington-Dufferin-Guelph, shifting toward enforcing COVID-19 safety requirements, and issuing orders and tickets, if necessary. Additional two-stage campaigns, focusing on small businesses, are scheduled to take place in York Region on March 5 and 6, Windsor Essex on March 6 and Waterloo Region from March 11 to 16.

These initiatives, in consultation with local public health units, include targeted blitzes of big-box stores, the farming sector, and the province's "Stay Safe All Day" campaign, focusing on areas of high transmission such as breakrooms. In the most recent two-week campaign in Peel Region, inspectors visited 208 warehouses and distribution centres and issued 26 tickets. The most common areas of non-compliance were related to safety plans, screening and masking.

"Our business community and especially our small business owners are very appreciative of these collaborative workplace safety campaigns with the Durham Region Health Department," said Dr. Robert Kyle, Durham Region Medical Officer of Health. "Throughout the pandemic, we have been actively working with our business community to educate owners and operators about their responsibilities to ensure that all public health measures are in place and rigorously followed to protect public safety. When workers and employers learn how to stop the spread of COVID-19 in their workplaces, our entire community benefits."

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## Quick Facts

- Businesses can access free training and assistance, including the [workplace safety plan toolkit](#), live [webinars on how to operate a business safely](#) and comply with COVID-19 health and safety requirements, and a [30-minute online course on infection prevention and control](#) provided by the Public Services Health and Safety Association.

- Assistance and support for small businesses is available from the [Provincial Employment Standards Call Centre](#) and [Occupational Health and Safety Contact Centre](#)
  - Sector-specific workplace COVID-19 safety fact sheets, guides and posters are available at [Ontario.ca/covidsafety](https://ontario.ca/covidsafety). These include multilingual tip sheets for employers.
  - Financial supports for businesses include the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board's Health and Safety Excellence Program, which offers rebates to safe employers, and its [financial relief package](#). The Ontario government offers [other supports for businesses](#), including the Ontario Small Business Support Grant, rebates for PPE, property tax and energy bills.
  - Corporations can be fined \$1,000 for failing to comply with the orders under the *Reopening Ontario (A Flexible Response to COVID-19) Act* and the *Emergency Management and Civil Protection Act*. Individuals, including employees and patrons, can also be fined \$750 for failing to comply with orders under the Acts.
  - For more serious offences, a person can be charged under Part III of the *Provincial Offences Act*. If convicted, the court can impose fines as high as \$100,000 for individuals, and up to up to \$500,000 for directors and officers of a corporation. Both could also receive terms of imprisonment of up to one year.
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## Additional Resources

- [Resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace](#)
  - [Guidance for employers during breaks](#)
  - [Break poster](#)
  - [Lunch poster](#)
  - [Keep it to yourself poster](#)
  - [COVID-19 safety checklist for workplaces](#)
  - [COVID-19 self-isolation and return to work](#)
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## Related Topics

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