



## About Health & Safety: Do you know your Role?

### Regulations

It's time to pay attention!

The Ministry of Labour has a long history of protecting the health and safety of all workers in Ontario with stringent regulations for workplace health. The Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), R.S.O. 1990, under the Ontario Ministry of Labour (MOL), defines a **toxic substance** as:

*a biological, chemical or physical agent (or a combination of such agents) whose presence in the workplace may endanger the health and safety of a worker.*

**Sections of the Act that deal with TOXIC substances are intended to:**

1. Ensure that worker exposure to toxic substances is controlled.
2. Ensure that toxic substances in the workplace are clearly identified and that workers are provided with enough information to be capable of handling them safely.
3. Provide the general public with access to information about toxic substances used by industry in their communities.

The Act further makes provision for a toxic substance to be labelled as **designated, which is reserved for eleven substances that are particularly hazardous**. These are: Acrylonitrile, Arsenic, Asbestos, Benzene, Coke Oven Emissions, Ethylene Oxides, Isocyanates, Lead, Mercury, Silica, and Vinyl Chloride.

Allowable exposure limits and consistent approaches are outlined and mandated. Therefore, the use of designated substances in the workplace is prohibited, regulated, restricted, limited, and/or controlled.

### Asbestos is a Special Case

A supplementary regulation regarding control of asbestos exposures in the construction industry has evolved into Ontario Regulation 278/05 – **Asbestos on Construction Projects and in Buildings and Repair Operations**. Fisher's website has further information on this topic as well as a separate *Fisher File* outlining important considerations.

### Designated Substance Survey (DSS)

Based on the regulatory requirements, a survey and report of any and all Designated Substances, including asbestos, is required if they are present at a workplace or if a building is undergoing demolition and renovations.

### Your Role: What do you need to know?

1. As a building manager or property owner, it is **your duty to ensure that the environment** of your building and property, both inside and out, **meets legislated requirements**.
2. For construction professionals, **provincial inspectors randomly visit construction sites** (often without notice). If they establish problematic materials, they can shut down the job site until the issue is resolved, costing time and money.
3. **Identification often requires professional skill to establish the presence of commonly-used hazardous material** of past builders. Once identified, these materials need to be safely removed. Do you have the skill or do you need a pre-renovation or pre-building audit?

## Want to Feel Safe Before You Proceed?

### Old buildings mean old materials.

- **Get a pre-renovation audit.** Protect yourself, your workers and your job site. Time is critical during construction and delays cost you both in down-time and money. Preempt possible problems.
- **Get a survey** of your existing conditions whether you renovating or not. If you are an owner or property manager this will ensure peace of mind, aid with any future renovation planning because you will know what you are up against, and if necessary, will keep everyone safe through a controlled management plan.
- **Pay attention to your workers.** Many toxic substances cause physical reactions. If you hear about allergic or other physical complaints repeatedly, you may have a new issue where a material has been exposed through deterioration. Time to have an audit.
- **Sign up for awareness training.** Every construction, property or real estate professional should have a basic understanding of the relevant regulations and tips on how to identify possible suspicious materials typically found in buildings. Training helps you understand the next steps you should take.
- **Get suspicious material analyzed quickly.** Employ a trained professional that knows how to handle hazardous substances so that samples can be tested with an authorized CALA laboratory. Never handle possible harmful materials if you are not trained.

3. If you are trained professional you can drop off samples for laboratory analysis yourself. Alternately, we can arrange to collect these for you.

---

You'll find us at: [fishereng.com](http://fishereng.com).

## Fisher Helps Fast...

1. Our project managers will help identify something suspicious, do a pre-renovation audit, or instigate a management plan. We will arrange removal if required.
2. Fisher's CALA Laboratory can analyze a substance in record time so you don't miss a beat in your construction schedule. We offer fast tracking services, same day rush, and emergency response. This includes after hours, weekend, and holiday services.