

# The High Costs of Not Working Safely

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In a competitive marketplace with often tight margins, companies are trying to complete projects as quickly as possible. However, it is of the utmost importance that work is done safely. If an accident were to occur, it can cost a company or a worker a substantial amount of money, time lost to critical injury or, in the worst case scenario, loss of life.

## Ontario Ministry of Labour (MOL) Study

MOL recently conducted a study reviewing construction site safety. During September and October of 2013, ministry inspectors conducted 1,280 visits to 1,082 workplaces and issued 3,832 orders under the OHSA, including 342 stop work orders.

*Falls are one of the leading causes of critical injuries and deaths of workers at construction sites in Ontario. MOL inspectors checked for hazards, including those that could lead to falls from one level to another. They checked that employers were complying with the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) and its regulations.*



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The goal of the MOL study was to:

- Raise awareness of hazards involving fall hazards at construction projects
- Increase worksite compliance with the law
- Prevent injuries that could arise from unsafe work practices

The top three commonly issued orders from the MOL were:

1. Personal protective equipment not employed
2. Guardrails not in place
3. Scaffolding and other work platforms not in place

Here are a few examples of the costs to a company if an accident were to occur on a jobsite. Keep in mind that this is just the fine from the incident; there can also be many other added costs including increased Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) rates, compensation to the victim's family, increased private insurance rates, and possible jail time for supervisors or management.

## **J.R. Contracting Property Services Ltd. Fined \$75,000, Supervisor Jailed After Worker Permanently Injured in Fall**

TORONTO, ON - MARCH 6, 2014 4:59 P.M. - MINISTRY OF LABOUR

*J.R. Contracting Property Services Ltd., a Woodbridge company engaged in garbage removal and hauling, and a supervisor have been found guilty of failing to ensure the safety of a worker who fell off a roof. The company was fined \$75,000 and the supervisor has been sentenced to 45 days in jail. A company representative has also been fined \$2,000 for obstructing a Ministry of Labour investigation.*



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The injuries from this accident may have been minimal or none if the worker had been wearing a full-body harness and been connected to an anchor point on the roof with either a lanyard or rope with rope grab/adjuster. W.S. Safety makes it simple to purchase a set of equipment; for example, most manufacturers have a product called *Compliance in a Can*, which includes a temporary roof anchor, a rope with rope grab, and a full-body harness, all in a plastic pail or bucket. Proper equipment as well as proper training may have helped to prevent this accident and the subsequent consequences.

## Crawford Roofing Corporation Fined \$150,000 After Worker Dies in Fall

SCARBOROUGH, ON - NOVEMBER 18, 2013 4:45 P.M. - MINISTRY OF LABOUR

*Crawford Roofing Corporation, a Toronto-based roofing company, has been fined \$150,000 for a violation of Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act after a worker fell through an unprotected skylight opening.*

*On May 14, 2010, workers were engaged in replacing various sections of the roof on a single-story industrial complex located at 1399 Kennedy Road in Toronto. The project included the removal and replacement of skylights on the roof. Workers first removed all of the existing material in the work area of the roof, then removed a skylight and placed a vapour barrier, consisting of reinforced paper, over the skylight opening. None of the workers were protected by any system of fall protection while performing this task and no signs were put up to warn other workers about the fall hazard.*



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The problem with this situation was that the hazard was not properly marked nor protected when there was an opening in the roof where the previous skylight would have been. *Safety Rail 2000* non-penetrating guardrailing available from W.S. Safety could have been used to temporarily protect the opening in the roof. The *Perma-Line* or *Kwik-Stand* warning line systems we also carry could have been set up a safe distance around the opening. Workers on the roof would have been aware of the fall hazard and taken necessary precautions to use the proper equipment and work safely around it.

## Worker Fined \$1,500 for Not Using Fall Protection

TORONTO, ON - MARCH 12, 2014 10:30 A.M. - MINISTRY OF LABOUR

*Christopher Schwaemmie, a Toronto hoist worker, was fined \$1,500 for a violation of the Occupational Health and Safety Act. On October 12, 2011, Mr. Schwaemmie was on a hoist tower at a construction project located at 717 Sheppard Avenue West in Toronto. He jumped from the tower to a nearby roof without a tied-off harness.*

*Mr. Schwaemmie's jump was seen by a Ministry of Labour inspector. The inspector saw that he was wearing a fall protection harness and lanyard, but the lanyard was not tied off to anything. The hoist tower he jumped from was approximately 15.24 metres (50 feet) above the ground.*

*Mr. Schwaemmie pleaded guilty to failing to be adequately protected by a method of fall protection while exposed to a fall of more than three metres (9.8 feet).*



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Many workers believe that compliance to the regulations is optional; however, personal fines are beginning the change that mindset. At W.S. Safety, we ensure your staff is properly trained in safety equipment usage. It's not just management's responsibility to work safely. It also comes down to proper training for individual workers.

## What W.S. Safety Can Do To Help With Jobsite Compliance

W.S. Safety Technologies is familiar with jobsite safety requirements through many years of experience installing fall arrest systems, guardrails, work platform systems, fall arrest anchors, as well as many other project. We know how to complete a job safely and efficiently while following OSHA Regulations. Since we know what it's like to work on a jobsite, we understand the challenges our customers often face trying to complete jobs safely and efficiently. To that end, whenever we are with a construction company to install safety equipment, our team always:

- Ensures crews have up to date training in numerous disciplines including fall protection, WHMIS, PPE, etc.
- Holds site meeting and pre-job safety review identifying scope of work, on-site hazards, safety equipment required, etc, prior to starting a project.
- Dons safety equipment which may include: safety boots, hard-hat, safety glasses, reflective vests, gloves, as well as any other equipment specific to the customer's site or project being completed.
- Obtains work permits if required, i.e., hot work permit for drilling or cutting.
- Safely transports materials to rooftop, using boom-truck, crane, existing staircase or roof hatches if possible.
- Dons full-body harnesses and uses rope and rope grab or lanyard systems to protect themselves when accessing the edge or near the edge of the roof.
- Follows a safe installation procedure for rails, meaning the majority of the installation time they can use EZ Mover carts to position rails and bases while remaining at least six feet from the roof edge, minimizing exposure to the fall hazard.
- Leaves the jobsite neat and tidy and safely leaves the jobsite.

As a combination of using both the correct safety equipment and planned procedures, the job can be done safely and efficiently, minimizing both our crew's and therefore customer's exposure to risk.

We distribute a wide variety of products that address the most commonly issued orders in the MOL report. We carry a full line of fall protection equipment from *Capital Safety*, guardrail systems of several different types including *Safety Rail 2000*, safety gates by *FabEnCo*, as well as custom work platforms to suit customers' specific requirements. We can walk our customer through their specific requirements and offer them guidance and recommendations on proper equipment and procedures to help them reach a successful conclusion on their projects.

From our experience, companies are making very good progress in ensuring jobsites are being safely protected; however, there is always room for improvement. We encounter customers who will make an effort to protect an RTU unit with guardrails, but do not pay attention to a ladder at the corner of the building and directly next to a fall hazard. We often see customers making an effort to protect a roof edge, but neglect a skylight that can be just as dangerous.

*Proper worker training in understanding fall hazards and fall protection equipment is essential and it appears that many workers have training that is inadequate for the fall hazards they may be exposed to. The good news is that there is a new working-at-heights training standard from the Ontario MOL that should help to ensure that fall protection training in the future will be more thorough and effective.*



Learn more at  
[wssafety.com](http://wssafety.com)

We look forward to continue working with our great customers in making their jobsites safer so that they can avoid the often high costs of non-compliance. We endeavour to continue offering and innovating new products and services so that the workers can have a safe worksite and come home to their families at the end of the day.

**"It's better to be careful 100 times than to be killed once." - Mark Twain**