

# REPORT HAZARDS

**It's the Law**



## **Unsafe workplaces hurt patients, too.**

Ontario is facing a severe nursing shortage  
– we cannot afford to lose nurses who are  
injured or become ill on the job.

When you're not safe, neither are your  
patients, clients and residents.



[www.ona.org/OHS](http://www.ona.org/OHS)

Whether it's spilled water on the floor, gaps in infection control practices, concerns about potential workplace violence, staffing shortages or a faulty patient lift device, registered nurses and allied health professionals encounter workplace hazards on each and every shift.

## You **Are** Protected

You have a legal right to work in a safe and healthy workplace. It's the law.

The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* (OHSA) gives you the right to know, the right to participate, and the right to refuse unsafe work. The *Act* is very specific: It outlines your employers' and managers' responsibilities including their duty to take every precaution reasonable to protect workers.

**The *Act* also requires that you report hazards to your employer or manager.**

If you don't report, not only are you violating the law, but your employer is not held accountable to correct the hazards.

Finally, the *Act* sets out how the law is enforced when there are violations.

**Fact: In 2013, Ontario's health care sector workers had the highest number of lost-time injuries related to workplace violence and exposures.**

**Health care also ranked in the top three sectors for musculoskeletal disorders and falls.**

# TAKE ACTION:

## Report ALL Hazards



### If you see a workplace hazard:

- ✓ Report it to your manager. The law gives you no choice – you must report workplace hazards. Do so in writing so you have proof that you complied with the law. It's your managers' and your employers' legal responsibility to act on it.
- ✓ If the issue is not resolved quickly, tell a member of your Joint Health and Safety Committee (JHSC) and your Bargaining Unit President (BUP). The JHSC/Union should escalate unresolved concerns to senior management. If the risk is imminent, the JHSC/Union should call the Ministry of Labour.
- ✓ The JHSC can investigate the hazard and make recommendations to your employer.
- ✓ When hazards are not resolved, ONA can call the Ministry of Labour and an inspector should investigate, inspect the workplace, and issue orders or lay charges.
- ✓ **Remember: if you are in immediate danger from the threat of violence, call the police.**

# ONA Supports

The Ontario Nurses' Association supports members who have health and safety issues in many ways:

We have negotiated health and safety language in our collective agreements to ensure workers are protected from hazards.

We take important health and safety messages to the government to get policy changes implemented. In partnership with our labour allies, we pressured the government for violence and harassment legislation.

We have many resources for our members including in-house health and safety experts, website resources and our Bargaining Unit Presidents who can help you with your health and safety concerns.

We provide targeted member education programs about health and safety, the internal responsibility system (IRS), and much more.

## Resources



Visit **[www.ona.org/ohs](http://www.ona.org/ohs)** for health and safety information and resources.

Our health and safety section provides specific information on a host of issues including biological hazards, chemical issues, workplace violence issues, musculoskeletal disorders, needle safety and much more.



**Ontario Nurses' Association**  
**Occupational Health & Safety Team**