

# Acoustical Association Ontario

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*Provincial in scope ...*

*Provincial in outlook*

## *Mandatory WSIB Coverage*



The amendment to the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act under Bill 119, became effective on January 1, 2012. A huge component of Bill 119 requires mandatory workers' compensation coverage to independent operators and some other individuals carrying on business in construction. The legislation provides a one year period from January 1, 2012 to December 31, 2012 to allow independent operators and some other individuals carrying on business in construction to voluntarily pre-register with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) before the requirements relating to mandatory coverage come into force. During this one-year pre-registration period premiums will not be charged by the Board. The requirement to

pay premiums will come into force on January 1, 2013, which is also when coverage begins.

According to a press release from the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB), "the new rules will improve health and safety in the construction sector and ensure everyone is paying their fair share under the collective liability system."

Beginning in 2013, independent operators, executive officers and partners in a partnership working in construction who have no workers will need to have WSIB coverage. Individuals can choose to pre-register now for coverage that will take effect in 2013. Executive officers, partners and sole proprietors who are already registered with the WSIB, and those who have WSIB optional insurance do not have to pre-register.

## *MSD Safety Blitz*



Ontario

Members are advised that the Ontario Ministry of Labour (MOL) will be conducting a Safety Blitz, across Ontario, on Musculoskeletal Disorders (MSDs). The blitz, the third of its kind, will concentrate on the hazards involving manual material handling that can lead to MSCs. MSDs are injuries of the muscles, nerves, tendons, ligaments, joints, cartilage, or spinal discs and are caused by the forceful exertion, awkward body positions, hand-arm and whole-body vibration, contact stress, and repetitive tasks. The Ministry of Labour (MOL) reported that in 2009 claims for MSDs accounted for 44% of all lost-time injuries costing the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) \$112 million. Ministry inspectors will target workplaces in the construction, health care, industrial and mining sectors.

## *The Mathews Dinsdale Minute*



This space is usually reserved for the Mathews Minute. I have chosen to take this "moment" to reflect on my friendship with a person close to many of us.

She was my tennis partner in countless AAO Conference tournaments. In truth she carried our team. Not just as a result of her skill, but because of her determination, her ability to not take herself too seriously, her ability to be able to see humour in tense moments (not that these matches were TV worthy), and because she was always open and supportive. She was a genuine inspiration to those who believe age is just a number. The lives of those who knew Margaret Upton are enriched because of her.

*Joe Liberman*

 mathews  
dinsdale Workplace Law Spoken Here

## *Building Intentions Down in 2011*



The Ontario Construction Secretariat's latest review of the value of ICI building intentions showed a drop of 12.5% by the fourth quarter of 2011 reflecting a slightly quieter level of construction than was experienced in 2010. But with \$8.7 billion dollars of issued permits to the fourth quarter of 2011 the level of ICI construction activity has been relatively strong.

Within the sector, industrial building intentions declined by 13% during the first nine months of 2011. However, the decline was mainly concentrated in the transportation/utilities segment, while permits for factories and plants moved higher.

Geographically, industrial building intentions saw great growth in Southwestern and Central Ontario despite difficulties in the manufacturing and export sectors of the Ontario economy. Northern Ontario lead the industrial sector with permits way up as a result of buoyed mining activity. In contrast, Toronto and Eastern Ontario showed significant declines and weakness in the industrial sector. OCS notes in its report, however, that "not all work in what could reasonably be considered part of the industrial sector is picked up by the permit data. As such, the level of 'industrial' work being undertaken or on the books is perhaps being understated." To get a fuller picture, we look to our project information.

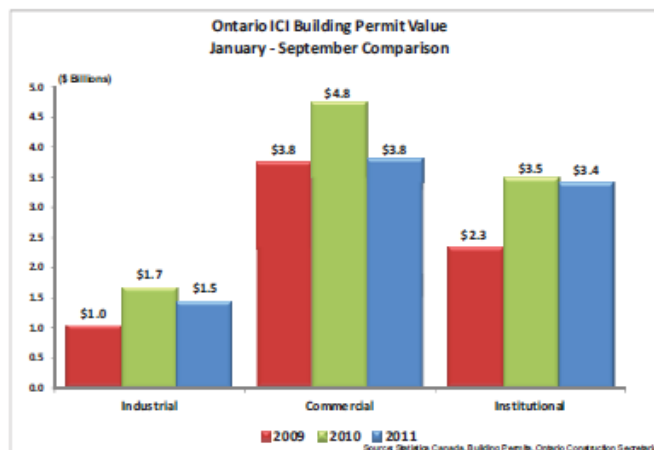
On the Commercial side, permit values came in at \$3.8 billion in the January—June 2011 period and sat 20% lower than the same period in 2010. This decline was broad based, showing declines for hotels/restaurants, office buildings, retail buildings, recreational centres and commercial warehouses. Values were higher for the relatively smaller categories of service centres (i.e. gasoline stations) and commercial laboratories.

As 2011 unfolded, it became clear that the year was beginning to look economically weak caused by the "problems in Greece, Italy and the broader European Union, a U.S. debt downgrade, double-dip recession talk and wildly gyrating financial markets." This increased level of uncertainty created a lack of confidence and as a consequence sidelined commercial builders. All five regions of the province (Northern, Eastern, Southwestern, Central and the Greater Toronto Area) showed declines in commercial permit issued

Interestingly though, OCS reported that the Toronto region experienced a modest drop in issued commercial permits,

even though the region had significant declining vacancy rates. OCS surmised that the "downtown Toronto core is undergoing what some are calling an "urban renaissance" whereby large companies such as Coca Cola and Google are moving their offices to the core, in the hopes of finding and retaining young employees. This should fuel both construction and renovation work in the region."

Institutional permit values were only slightly lower during the period and came in at \$3.4 billion through September. But this was against a record level that was achieved in 2010. The continued strength in the Institution sector was concentrated, of course, in hospitals and schools as well as government buildings and was mainly centred in Toronto. Toward the later part of the year, the value of institutional permits cooled significantly as building intentions for hospitals, schools and government buildings wound down. OCS maintains that "with such a significant level of building intentions issued in the first quarter, the expectation would be that investment activity throughout the year would be strong. Indeed, when looking at Statistics Canada's institutional investment data - which takes permit values, which are recorded in only one period, and allocates them over multiple quarters if they are significant in size - one sees that institutional investment increased steadily throughout the year." OCS further noted that the federal government pushed out the infrastructure stimulus deadline from March 31st to October 31st, which was also a source of strength for institutional investment.



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