

## **OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE ACTION PLAN:**

**An action plan focused on aligning the efforts of the Occupational Health and Safety System and partners toward Occupational Disease Prevention.**

### **Objective:**

To prevent hazardous exposures in Ontario workplaces in order to reduce the incidence and burden of occupational disease.

### **Occupational Disease Action Plan (ODAP) Development:**

The ODAP was developed by a Reference Group made up of representatives from the occupational health and safety system partners, including; Ministry of Labour (Prevention, Operations and Policy Divisions), Health and Safety Associations, Specialized Research Centres (Centre for Research Expertise in Occupational Disease and the Occupational Cancer Research Centre) and Workplace Safety and Insurance Board as well as the Ontario Lung Association, Public Health Ontario and the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care. The Reference Group is chaired by the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers. A number of Ministry of Labour advisory committees were also consulted in its development.

Over the course of several meetings, the Reference Group recognized that the general awareness of Occupational Disease incidence, consequence and capacity for prevention needs to be fostered among the system and workplace parties. In addition, given the broad scope and scale of Occupational Disease as an issue, some focus of effort would be required in order to make the Action Plan manageable and achievable. Thus the Reference Group undertook a preliminary exercise to focus the work of the plan around key hazards based on Need (capturing prevalence, severity & recognition as a hazard) and Impact (attainable and measurable outcomes plus the capacity and opportunity that exists for intervention).

This led the Reference Group to focus on noise, allergens and irritants leading to skin (e.g. dermatitis) and lung disease (e.g. asthma) and diesel engine exhaust for the first phase of the Plan. The Reference Group also agreed not to lose sight of emerging exposures (e.g. nanotechnology), where knowledge exchange and research may not yet be fully developed.

The Action Plan describes new initiatives upon which system partners can align. It will also support the important ongoing work by the system and its partners on other hazardous exposures (e.g. asbestos, silica). Opportunities to engage other partners and stakeholders on ODAP activities will be explored, plus the Plan's effectiveness and priorities will be reviewed annually, and adjustments may be made.

**The table below presents Action Plan activities generated by the Reference Group to address the current priorities of the Action Plan.**

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Approach	Activity Descriptions
<b>1.0 Intelligence and Decision Support</b>	1.1 Develop a strategy to embed “Occupation” and potentially other links to work into the Electronic Medical Record being led by e-Health Ontario and OntarioMD, to improve data on the relationship between work and health
	1.2 Develop a plan for obtaining occupational exposure baseline data from Ontario workplaces to focus and support action to prevent occupational disease. <i>A potential pilot project to collect and standardize workplace exposure measurements (e.g. air sampling)</i>
	1.3 Develop and use existing exposure and disease surveillance data (e.g. WSIB data, OCRC Occupational Disease Surveillance System Project) to inform priorities, better target prevention efforts and generate research questions
<b>2.0 Research and Data Management</b>	2.1 Conduct a jurisdictional scan to review occupational disease legislation, regulations and guidelines in other jurisdictions.
	2.2 Conduct a jurisdictional scan of prevention initiatives aimed at reducing workplace exposure to hazardous levels of noise, to explore potential prevention initiatives for Ontario
	2.3 Identify priority irritants and allergens for skin and lung disease to focus action plan activities (e.g. 2.6, 3.1)
	2.4 Identify what the current research reveals regarding emerging exposures to inform the health and safety prevention system; and develop future research questions (to fill knowledge gaps)
	2.5 Explore and evaluate workplace exposure assessment tools (for all priority exposures)
	2.6 Assess worker knowledge of allergens and irritants (skin and lung) to target awareness efforts (e.g. survey tool)
	2.7 Integrate Action Plan priorities into MOL Research Programs (e.g. Research Opportunities Program)
<b>3.0 Awareness</b>	3.1 Develop and implement a communications and marketing plan focusing on raising awareness of harm and prevention with respect to the priority exposures: noise and/or allergens and irritants and/or diesel hazards in the workplace, with an underlying theme of general occupational disease prevention. <b>Designated Activity under System Operational Planning for Fiscal Year 2017/18.</b>
	3.2 Target specific sectors to raise awareness of priority allergens and irritants (potential for focus on employers)
<b>4.0 Advisory and Support Services</b>	4.1 Deliver educational opportunities and resources to increase the health and safety knowledge of individuals within the health and safety system on priority exposures (Noise, Allergens & Irritants, and Diesel) and general occupational disease incidence and prevention (e.g. Occ-tober)
	4.2 Target advisory and support services to workplaces falling under the expanded noise regulation
	4.3 Target advisory and support services to the action plan priority exposures for specific sectors
<b>5.0 Education and Training</b>	5.1 Inventory and align system educational resources to promote occ. disease prevention. Initially focusing on the priorities of noise, allergens/irritants, diesel and general occ. disease awareness
	5.2 Identify any gaps and a process to develop new resources to address them and/or support ODAP and system partners’ ongoing occupational disease efforts.
	5.3 Review mandatory training initiatives and standards to identify opportunities to add or strengthen occupational disease prevention content.
	5.4 Inventory and align existing system training initiatives to promote occ. disease prevention, initially focusing on the priorities of noise, allergens/irritants, diesel and general occ. disease awareness.
	5.5 Identify any gaps and a process to develop new training initiatives or standards to address them and/or support ODAP and system partners’ ongoing occupational disease efforts.

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	5.6 Develop and deliver health care practitioner education on general and specific occupational disease topics (e.g. work-related asthma)
	5.7 Integrate awareness of occupational disease exposures (irritants and allergens- skin and lung) into career counselling and vocational services
	5.8 Provide/recommend tools to JHSC for health hazard identification and management (potential for building on activity 2.5)
<b>6.0 Enforcement and Monitoring</b>	6.1 Develop enforcement strategies for occupational disease priorities
<b>7.0 Programs</b>	7.1 Explore NIOSH’s “Buy Quiet” program and potential applicability for Ontario
	7.2 Explore the integration of occupational disease and priority exposures with WSIB on premium or prevention program projects (e.g. Workwell)
	7.3 Explore opportunities to incorporate occupational disease elements into Accreditation programs (e.g. assurance of controls, proper equipment/ventilation)
<b>8.0 Legislation and Regulations</b>	8.1 Review and consider opportunities for regulatory changes