

# Occupational Health and Safety Act: more responsibilities

This act and its regulations cover safety in the work place in Ontario. Some regulations apply to all workplaces, including your office. Others apply to other work situations to which you may be exposed. There is an entire series of regulations that apply to construction projects. Many of these apply to representatives of architectural firms while on site. It is recommended that architectural firms be familiar with the act and with regulations that apply not only to construction, but also to their own practices.

The Act and Regulations can be accessed at [www.e-laws.gov.on.ca](http://www.e-laws.gov.on.ca)

A valuable source of information is the Construction Safety Association of Ontario at 416.674.2726 / 800.781.2726 or [www.csao.org](http://www.csao.org). They offer information, training and other assistance.

Some regulations applicable to most architectural firms include:

## 1. **Fall Protection**

- a. Training for all employees visiting construction sites
- b. Employer to have and retain records of training

## 2. **WHMIS (Workplace Hazardous Materials Information Systems)**

- a. Annual training and certification of workers who work with or in proximity to a controlled product
- b. Applies to construction sites in general – architectural staff included
- c. Applies to other workplace conditions, including some office situations (i.e. use of ammonia)

## 3. **Designated substances**

- a. List of designated substances present on site intended for construction must be prepared and issued with tender documents (list by owner, inclusion by party issuing tenders)
- b. Architects are responsible for advice given or as a result of certification under the Act

## 4. **Protective Clothing, Equipment, Devices**

- a. As required on construction site, other situations

## 5. **Joint Health and Safety Committee**

- a. Applies to any workplace of 20 or more workers.

There are many other requirements related to workplace conditions and construction. Make your firm more aware of your responsibilities.