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Enforcement stepped up for highrise construction safety

Inspections focus on ensuring worker safety

Calgary... A number of highrise construction incidents over the last year have prompted the province to increase inspections at commercial construction sites.

“I strongly recommend that employers and workers on commercial construction sites ensure they fully understand occupational health and safety law and apply it where they work,” said Thomas Lukaszuk, Minister of Employment and Immigration, responsible for Occupational Health and Safety (OHS). “Those who don’t should know that my officers are en route and I have instructed them not to hesitate to shut an operation down if workers’ lives are at risk.”

The increased inspections, now underway and continuing at least through to the end of October, are over and above regular inspections. They will focus on commercial construction projects five storeys and higher in major urban centres and smaller commercial projects throughout other areas of the province. All aspects of OHS law will be enforced, including the safe securing of construction material.

“It’s no surprise that highrise safety infractions, including falling hazards and loose construction material are a concern, not only to Alberta’s workers, but also to pedestrians,” said Lukaszuk, who promises to release the results of this campaign later this year. “While a strong majority of employers respect the law and care for the well-being of their workers, it only takes one incident to change lives forever - and it simply has to stop.”

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