



# Ontario's electrical safety record improves, workers still at risk

## *Occupational Electrical-Related Fatality Rate Troubling, says Electrical Safety Authority*

MISSISSAUGA, ON Nov. 19, 2014— Despite a 33 per cent drop in electrical fatalities in the last five years, Ontarians continue to be injured and killed in electrical incidents, according to a report released today by the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA). The report notes electrical-related fatalities on the job continue to outpace non-occupational deaths, and this gap is increasing.

“Workers are not changing their behavior toward electrical risk at the same rate as other Ontarians,” says Scott Saint, Chief Public Safety Officer with ESA. “Our research shows that occupational electrical-related fatalities exceed non-occupational deaths by a ratio of close to 3 to 1. Last year it was 2 to 1. This increase is concerning.”

Electrical trade workers in particular are at risk. They continue to be critically injured on the job when working on energized electrical panels or ballasts/347 volt lighting. Research conducted by the ESA reveals electrical trade workers accounted for a quarter of occupational electrical-related deaths in the last ten years.

“Workers are trained to work safely and conduct a site hazard assessment of each job they’re working on, but investigations show that in many cases, don’t carry out the correct safety actions,” adds Saint. “We need to understand why they skip critical safety steps and then find ways to change workers’ behaviour.”

Powerline contact continues to be an area of concern, accounting for almost half of all electrical-related fatalities in the past ten years. Each year, three people die and five are critically injured due to contact with overhead powerlines.

While there has been a decline over the past few years in rates of electrical-related injuries and fatalities, 2013 was a particularly tragic year. There were nine electrical-related fatalities in 2013, a significant increase from two electrical-related fatalities in 2012. There were also nine deaths from electrical-related fires in 2013 compared to five in 2012.

“2013 was a devastating year for 18 people and their families,” continues Saint. “This reinforces to all of us in the safety system that there is still more work to be done. We must continue our efforts to prevent another life from being lost.”

The annual Ontario Electrical Safety Report has been produced by the ESA for over a decade and provides a comprehensive assessment of electrical fatalities and incidents in Ontario. Based on information from various sources, including investigations and root-cause analysis, the data allow ESA to direct resources where they are needed and where safety challenges are greatest.

### **About the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA)**

The Electrical Safety Authority's (ESA) role is to enhance public electrical safety in Ontario. As an

administrative authority acting on behalf of the Government of Ontario, ESA is responsible for administering specific regulations related to the Ontario Electrical Safety Code, the licensing of Electrical Contractors and Master Electricians, electricity distribution system safety, and electrical product safety. ESA works extensively with stakeholders throughout the province on education, training and promotion to foster electrical safety across the province. More information on the Electrical Safety Authority can be found at [www.esasafe.com](http://www.esasafe.com), through Twitter @HomeandSafety and on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/ElectricalSafetyAuthority](http://www.facebook.com/ElectricalSafetyAuthority)

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