

health Issues

...in the workplace

THIS NEWSLETTER IS PART OF THE WORKING TOWARD WELLNESS
WORKPLACE HEALTH PROMOTION PROGRAM



Remember
to *post this
newsletter*
to share
with your
employees.



BE ACTIVE, BE SAFE

Summer is finally here! This means we can get outside more often and enjoy our favourite summer time activities. Whether it's in-line skating, golfing, canoeing, camping, swimming, gardening, or zooming around on a personal watercraft, there are many activities to get you outside. However, we must remember that with each activity, accidents can occur. Yet, these are not all accidents. In most cases, 90% of unintentional injuries (often called accidents) are predictable and preventable. The problem for many of us is that we don't see the daily risks for injury and we often don't think about how we can manage those risks.

Together, we need to focus on protecting ourselves from risks that can result in injury. You are not alone if you are surprised to learn just how common and serious preventable injuries are. In fact, injuries are the leading cause of death for those aged 1-44 years. In Ontario, 2000 residents are injured daily. That means one person will be injured every minute of every day. Financially, injuries are a burden to all of us. Recent research has found that in Ontario, over three billion dollars in direct and indirect costs are being spent as a result of preventable injuries (e.g. falls, fires, drowning, car crashes, etc.). This emphasizes the need for all of us to play a role in encouraging, educating and supporting individuals to limit risks and play safely.

Although the amount of risk in our lives may feel overwhelming at times, we should not live in fear every time we step out the door. No matter what, there will be some risk in what we do within our environment. We need to educate ourselves and family members about the risks that are within our control, and how to take precautions to protect ourselves from them. All adults should lead by example, think about potential risks associated with the activity you are going to do and plan ahead to reduce everyone's risk of injury.

By identifying potential risks and preparing ourselves for them, we can minimize the possibility of being injured. Small things such as always wearing recommended safety gear, obeying the rules of the road and ensuring equipment is the proper size, is safe and is in good working condition can go a long way to promoting an active and safe summer for all of us!

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summer 2003

Working
TOWARD
Wellness
LIVE BETTER. LIVE LONGER.



inside

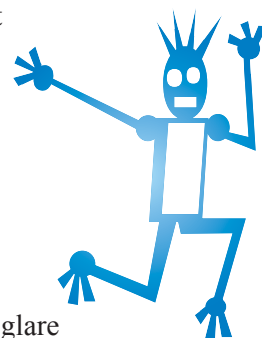


WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN SUNGLASSES

It is important to protect your eyes against damage from the sun. UVA and UVB rays can cause, or speed up the progress of several diseases of the eye. Most of the damage to the eyes from UV rays happens over a long period of time and cannot be reversed. In fact, there is some evidence that daily exposure to UV radiation in very bright sunlight over many years may increase the risk of developing cataracts.

There are a number of sunglasses on the market, but which ones are right for you? Before buying a pair, consider the type of activity you will be using them for as well as the following tips:

- Sunglasses should block both UVA and UVB rays.
- The degree of darkness or tint of the lenses will not protect your eyes from UV radiation.
- Buy sunglasses that are UV absorbent, blocking 99 to 100 percent of all UV light.
- Look for the words "blockage" and "absorption" rather than "protection" on the label.
- Some manufacturers' labels say UV absorption up to 400nm. This is the same thing as 100 percent UV absorption.
- Consider polarized lenses; they are designed to cut glare due to reflection.
- Sunglasses should be dark enough to reduce the glare but not so dark that they distort colours.



Things to keep in mind:

- Even if you are wearing 100 percent UV protection sunglasses, light can still enter from the sides of the glasses and reflect back into your eyes.
- The risk of sun damage is highest between 11:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m.
- If you wear contact lenses that offer UV protection, you still need to wear sunglasses.
- People who spend lots of time in the sun, without the proper protection, can develop photokeratitis. This can cause temporary loss of vision.

For more information check out Health Canada's website at www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/iyh/products/sunglasses.html



SUMMER BEACH WATER ADVISORIES

Summer's here and you want to take the family out for some well deserved rest and relaxation at the beach. Before heading off, there are a few things besides sun safety, fluids and a safe picnic that you need to take into consideration.

Weather conditions can negatively affect the water quality at beaches. The Windsor-Essex County Health Unit is responsible for monitoring 9 public bathing beaches in the area for E. coli contamination. The Health Unit determines if a beach is safe for swimming. A "WARNING UNSAFE FOR BATHING" sign is posted when there is more than 100 E. coli bacteria in 100 ml of water. If there is greater than 1000 E. coli bacteria in 100 ml of water, then an "ORDER CLOSED" sign is posted, as the risk to human health is significantly greater. The health risks associated with swimming in contaminated water include ear, eye and nose infections as well as gastrointestinal infections if the water is swallowed.

Weather conditions change from day to day and there is no guarantee that bacteria counts will remain the same as on the day samples were taken. Keep the following in mind, if the water is calm and clear it is a good indication that bacterial counts are low, while rough or cloudy water usually indicates higher counts.

For more information contact the Bathing Beach Information Hotline at 519-258-2146 x H2O (426) or log on to www.wechealthunit.org for weekly updates.

SUMMER CAMPFIRES

SUMMER CAMPFIRES

Recent research is showing an increase in the number of children with burns from campfires. Most burns are caused by embers from a fire rather than the actual flames, and most occur the morning after the campfire is put out.

To safely put out a fire and reduce the risk of a burn, try the following method:

- Use water to extinguish a fire. This leads to the fastest drop in temperature. Extinguish pit fires by dousing them with water, stir the ashes then pour more water over the site. Repeat this procedure until the fire is completely extinguished. Using water on a campfire also indicates a recent fire to alert anyone who might come across it later on.

Studies have shown that using sand is not effective. The area may still be very hot up to 8 hours later, hot enough to cause a serious burn after 1 second of contact. Also, using sand does not leave evidence of a fire, further increasing the chance that someone will get a burn that could have been prevented. Leaving a fire to burn itself out is dangerous as well since it takes a very long time to cool down.

This summer, after singing your favourite songs over the campfire and calling it a night, make sure the fire is out by using water to extinguish it!

For more information visit www.safete.com and click on Articles.



WORKING UP A SWEAT IN THE SUN

If you work, play or relax outside then you are often exposed to the sun's ultraviolet (UV) radiation, including UVA and UVB rays. UVA rays penetrate deep into the skin and contribute to wrinkling of the skin, premature aging and skin cancer. UVB rays are stronger than UVA. They primarily affect the skin's outer layers and are thought to be the primary cause of sunburn, skin aging and skin cancer. UVB rays tend to be more intense during the summer months, at higher altitudes and locations closer to the equator. UV radiation from the sun is highest in spring and summer from 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. For example, in the summertime at noon on a clear day a person can sunburn in as short a time as 15 minutes. While not the most common type of cancer, there are approximately 44,000 cases of skin cancer per year in Canada. Fortunately, skin cancer is almost always curable if detected and treated early.

To reduce exposure to the sun's UV rays, you can:

- Wear a wide brimmed hat that shades the face, ears and neck.
- Wear tightly woven clothing covering as much of the body as possible.
- Apply sunscreen with a Sun Protection Factor (SPF) of 15 or higher on all exposed skin at least 20 - 30 minutes before

going out into the sun. Check the print on the package to make sure the sunscreen filters out both UVA and UVB. Reapply every 2 hours.

- If you will be sweating or going to be in and out of the water, you may want to consider a waterproof sunscreen. At the very least, apply your regular sunscreen every 30 minutes or so.
- Take regular breaks from the sun in a cool shaded area.

Sunscreen and DEET

Sunscreen and insect repellent containing DEET may be used together. However, do not use products that combine insect repellents with a sunscreen or vice versa. Apply sunscreen first, wait at least 20 - 30 minutes and then apply the insect repellent right before going outside. Use a sunscreen that has an SPF of 30 or higher and apply more often than you normally would.

For more information contact Windsor-Essex County Health Unit at 258-2146 x 3100.





BBQ

BBQ FOOD SAFETY

If you plan to BBQ at a picnic or enjoy a grilled meal in your own backyard, keep in mind a few facts about preparing and cooking meat to ensure food safety:

- Completely thaw meat and poultry before grilling so that it cooks evenly. Use the refrigerator for slow, safe thawing. If using the microwave for thawing be sure to grill the thawed food immediately.
- Marinade in the fridge, not on the counter or alongside the grill.
- Place uncooked and cooked food on separate plates to avoid contamination.
- Keep food in the fridge until there is room on the grill to minimize the time that food is left unrefrigerated before it gets cooked.
- For poultry, it should be cooked well and the temperature should reach 74° C/165° F or higher. Slice the meat to ensure there are no signs of pink.
- Be sure to cook hamburgers and other ground meat well. There should be no pink colour and any juices should be clear.
- Serve cooked meat and poultry immediately once cooked. These foods should not be left out of the refrigerator for more than one hour.

For more information on food safety contact the Public Health Inspection Intake Line, Windsor-Essex County Health Unit 255-2146.

SUMMER SMOG DAYS

When planning outdoor activities during the summer months, it is important to keep in mind the Air Quality Index or AQI. The AQI tells us about the quality of the air we can expect to breathe as we plan to enjoy our favourite summer activities.

Air quality forecasts fall into three categories:

1. 0-31 means *good* air quality
2. 32-49 is *moderate* air quality, and
3. Readings above 50 indicate *poor* air quality.

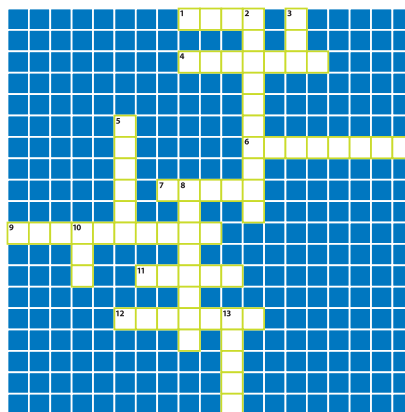
When a poor rating is predicted, a smog alert is issued. The Ministry of Environment will issue two types of smog alerts, a **Smog Watch** or **Smog Advisory**. If there is a 50% chance of a high smog day up to three days in advance, a Smog Watch is issued. A Smog Advisory is issued when there is a strong likelihood that a smog day is coming within the next 24 hours.

It is important to be prepared for Smog Advisory days. Outdoor activities in the afternoon and early evening should be avoided on Smog Advisory days. If possible, reschedule any outdoor activities for times during the day when the Smog Advisory is over. You may need to change your plans and if possible, conduct your activity indoors.

When a Smog Advisory is in effect, those who are active outdoors may experience an irritated throat, coughing or wheezing and difficulty breathing because of the poor air quality. The young, older adults and those who have lung (e.g. asthma) or heart conditions are especially at risk and should avoid outside activities during a Smog Advisory.

If you do have to be active outdoors during Smog Advisory days, there are several steps you can take to minimize the effects of smog on your health. Decrease the intensity of your activity, for example don't engage in strenuous activities that require you to take frequent deep breaths. Drink as much water as you can before, during and after your activity. Make sure you wear a hat and sunscreen. Take lots of breaks in a shady or air conditioned area. Try to avoid areas with high traffic congestion to reduce exposure to smog.

For a detailed explanation on how the AQI is measured and up-to-date air quality forecasts, visit the Air Quality Ontario website at www.airqualityontario.com



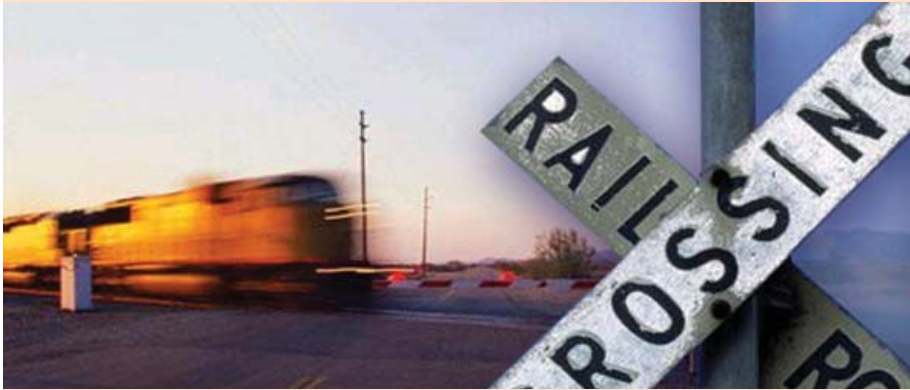
PICNIC FOOD SAFETY

Don't let your picnic end on a bad note. Follow these tips and enjoy the warm weather by eating outside.

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. Picnic pests | 9. Cook these well |
| 2. These are named after an Earl | 10. Short for barbeque |
| 3. Keeps everything cold | 11. Turns food over |
| 4. Picnic ground cover | 12. Sold at ball parks |
| 5. Keep food in this | 13. Place food on here to cook |
| 6. BBQ Briquettes | |
| 7. Makes your eyes water | |
| 8. Adds flavour to the meat | |



answers on back page



THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE TRACKS

In Windsor-Essex County there are many railway tracks and public crossings throughout residential areas. In 2002, 47 people were killed in Ontario at railway crossings and from trespassing on and around the tracks. There have been many safety measures put into place to help prevent train collisions, including warning signals and gates at public crossings. In most cases, the collision or injury at a railway crossing occurred when a motorist or pedestrian failed to follow the proper rules and preventive measures. By following the tips below, you can reduce your risk of a collision with a train.

Tips for Prevention

- Listen for warning bells and whistles. When approaching a railway crossing, turn off distracting fans, heaters or radios, open a window and make sure everyone is quiet in the car.
- Obey all signals. Don't try to cross or drive around a gate when it is closing or has closed. If you do get caught when the gate is closing, keep moving, until you are clear of the crossing.
- Keep a look out for another train on another track when crossing multiple tracks.
- If for some reason your vehicle stalls on the tracks, get out quickly (don't run) and move at least 30m away from the tracks. Move in the opposite direction the train is travelling to avoid being hit by debris. The momentum of the train will carry the vehicle forward if the train hits it.
- If you can't see clearly in either direction, do not attempt to cross the tracks until you are certain it is clear. If you are not sure remember to stop, look and listen!
- Walking or playing on train tracks or at rail yards is extremely dangerous and illegal. It can cost you your life or a fine up to \$10,000!
- Expect a train at any time on any track. When approaching train tracks in your vehicle, do not cross the tracks unless you are certain that you have time to clear them.
- Railway bridges should not be used for fishing or for shortcuts, as they are usually not wide enough for anything except a train.
- Many railroad companies post their emergency numbers on the back of railway crossing signs. Call if you have to!

PICNIC FOOD SAFETY

Picnics are a great way to get outside and enjoy the summer weather. But, if the food you take isn't handled safely, it could spell disaster by causing people to become ill. Hazardous foods are those in which food poisoning bacteria can grow rapidly unless proper heating or refrigeration is used. These foods include meats, fish, poultry, dairy products and eggs. To reduce the risk of food poisoning, be sure to follow these tips:

- Keep foods at the proper temperature, hot foods hot (60° C/140° F) and cold foods cold (5° C/40° F).
- Use an insulated cooler, not a picnic basket, so that potentially hazardous foods remain at the safe temperature.
- Pre-chill all foods in the refrigerator before packing the cooler. This helps the foods stay cold for as long as possible.
- Place ice packs on top of food items. Include frozen juice packs or other cold drinks to help keep temperatures inside the cooler cold.
- When outside, keep the cooler in the shade and open it as little as possible.
- Remove food just prior to serving and return all leftovers to the cooler immediately or discard them.
- Hand washing is also key to preventing food poisoning. Wash your hands before handling food if the picnic area has the facilities. Otherwise, take some moist towelettes or waterless hand sanitizer for wiping your hands.



ACTIVE LIVING FOR OLDER ADULTS

Statistics show that each year one third of all older adults experience a fall. Falls are among the most common and serious problem for those over 65. In fact, falls were the leading cause of all the injury admissions for older adults to Ontario hospitals in 2002. Injuries from falls are also associated with reduced functioning, early admission to long-term care facilities and increased death. In addition, to the serious health and social costs of falls, falls are costly. It is estimated in 2002, the direct and indirect costs associated with falls exceeded 1.2 billion dollars.

The good news is that there are many things that older adults can do to help prevent a fall. For example, regular physical activity can play a key role in preventing falls. A recent review in the British Medical Journal found that older adults who were physically active were 20% - 40% less likely to fall compared to individuals who were not active. In addition, physical activity can strengthen the leg, foot and ankle, improving balance and increasing bone mass. Physical activity may also postpone age-related causes of falling such as declining fitness and coordination. Being active can also increase one's confidence and sense of well-being.

Changes in physical activity levels or exercise programs, should be discussed with your doctor and make sure that they are aware of your total health picture. The summer is a great time to get outside and be active. Activities such as walking, gardening and hiking that require you to move your body against some resistance can help improve your fitness and prevent a fall. Keep in mind that if it's too hot outside you can always take your walking program inside to one of Windsor-Essex County's air-conditioned malls.

Call the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit for a copy of a mall-walking brochure, 258-2146 x 3100.



WEST NILE

TAKE A BITE OUT OF WEST NILE VIRUS

People who work and play outside, particularly between dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are more active, have a greater risk of being bitten by a mosquito. There is a lesser risk of being bitten by a mosquito if working indoors, but care should be taken to keep doors closed and screens in good repair. Here are a few simple steps that everyone can take to reduce the risk of West Nile Virus infection:

Be aware of mosquito breeding areas.

Mosquitoes breed in very small amounts of stagnant water. Be aware of and remove objects where water collects. Trouble spots include: wheel barrels, open garbage cans, old tires and low-lying areas around buildings and equipment. Stagnant water should be removed quickly, as mosquito larvae can hatch within seven days.

Use personal protective measures.

It is important to use personal protective measures when you are exposed to large populations of mosquitoes. Wear light coloured, loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts, long pants made of tightly woven materials, socks, shoes, a hat, and use insect repellents containing DEET. Keep repellents away from your eyes and mouth. Always wash your hands after applying repellent. If practical, wear a mosquito net over a hat to protect your head, face and neck. In hot conditions and where there is high risk, special suits of a mesh material with elasticized cuffs and attached hoods should be worn. Wearing high boots and taping or sealing the end of long pants is also useful to prevent mosquito bites.

"Fight the Bite!"

There are many insect repellents on the market. Choose one that contains no more than 30% DEET and follow directions on the package carefully. Children over 12 and adults should not apply DEET more than three times a day. For children 6 months to 2 years, use products containing no more than 10% DEET and apply only once a day. DEET should not be used on babies less than 6 months old.

Do not apply insect repellents to the hands or face and do not apply to the skin under clothes. Apply insect repellent in a well-ventilated area, avoid breathing mist from a spray-type repellent and do not use near food.

Keep in mind that when it is cooler, when there is brisk air movement or when there is strong sunlight, mosquitoes are less active.

For more information on West Nile Virus, the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit website at www.wehealthunit.org

WHAT'S GOING ON IN OUR COMMUNITY

Workplace Walking Group

Start a walking group at work. This is a great way to be active, rejuvenate and socialize with coworkers. Contact the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit, at 258-2146 x 3100 for information on how to start your own walking program at your workplace.

Point Pelee National Park - Parks Day

Free Admission to the park, learn the secrets of the park with a wildlife night hike starting at the Visitor's Centre. Pre-registration required.

Date: July 19, 2003

Contact Information: Call 322-2365 for more details

Essex Region Conservation Authority Fundraising Golf Tournament

Tee off to help protect this region's most significant natural resources. There are contests to be won and a sumptuous steak dinner to enjoy. See if you can drive the longest ball or place it closest to the pin. A hole in one will win you a prize. You need not worry about going home empty handed, there's a table prize for everyone.

- Golf, cart & dinner - \$150.00 per person
- Golf or dinner only - \$75.00 per person

Date: July 23, 2003

Location: Erie Shores Golf & Country Club

Time: 12:30 p.m. - shotgun start

Contact Information: Call 776-5209 x 358 to reserve

Canada South Coast Adventures Wild Women's Weekend!

Experience a 'we don't need no stinking maps' orienteering course. Learn archery skills and pick your own lunch on an 'edible wild' hike. Try sea kayaking on for size amongst other adventures. Must be a woman at least 18 years of age. Activity level: easy - moderate.

Date: August 15- 17, 2003

Location: Holiday Beach Conservation Area, Amherstburg

Contact Information: Call 776-5209 x 352 for more details

Terry Fox Run

A non-competitive event where people get together as individuals, families and groups to raise money for cancer research in Terry's name. Show up at least 1/2 hour before the start time to be involved in the official start.

Date: September 14, 2003

Location: LaSalle Municipal Building 5950 Malden Road

Time: 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Contact Information: <http://www.terryfoxrun.org>

Wheel chair accessible and inline skating included

Healthy Choices Healthy Beginnings

The choices you make before pregnancy can affect your baby's health - as well as your own. Find out what you can do NOW for a healthy start on your future pregnancy.

Date: September 23rd & 30th, 2003

Time: 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Location: 1005 Ouellette Ave, Windsor, ON

Contact Information: Call early to register 258-2146 x 1349

Lungs are for Life Bike Trek

This is a two-day weekend pledged event that will begin in Windsor and will proceed on a scenic route through the county, with the day's final destination in Leamington. Registration is \$75 and a minimum of \$350 in pledges. All proceeds go to The Lung Association.

Date: October 4, 2003

Location: Windsor to Leamington

Contact Information: (519) 256-3433, ask for Donna

Work-Life Balance Workshop

Chatham-Kent Public Health Services is hosting a Workplace Wellness Workshop with keynote speaker Dr. Linda Duxbury. Dr. Duxbury will be presenting on Work-Life Balance.

Date: Thursday, October 16, 2003

Contact Information: 519-352-7270



Don't get caught with a hot lunch in the summer!

If you take your lunch to work, the summer heat can cause many foods to become unsafe to eat. This could happen during the time it takes for you to get to work, while you're at work, before break times and before it's time to eat.

As a general rule of thumb, potentially hazardous foods should not be left un-chilled for more than about 1 hour in total. Once you get to work, it's best to put your lunch in a refrigerator to keep your food at a safe temperature until it's time to eat.



Interested in bringing wellness to your workplace? The Working Toward Wellness Program offers consultation and support to help workplaces start and maintain a wellness program that works.

For more information call 258-2146 x 3100.

Look for the next Working Toward Wellness Workplace initiative, Healthy Habits - Fall 2003!

**Working
TOW>RD
Wellness**
LIVE BETTER. LIVE LONGER.



WEBSITE SUPPORT

Sun Safety

Environment Canada UV Index and Sun Protection
www.msc-smc.ec.gc.ca/education/uvindex/index_e.html

The Canadian Dermatology Association
www.dermatology.ca

The Weather Network - Check out what your area's UV index is!
www.theweathernetwork.com/features/uv/

Protect your pet from the summer sun!
www.topekahumaneshelter.org/petinfo/summer.htm

West Nile Virus

Windsor-Essex County Health Unit
www.wechealthunit.org

Health Canada Handout
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pmra-arla/english/pdf/pnotes/deet-e.pdf

Sunglasses

Health Canada
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/feature/summer/air_sun/sunsafety.html

Health Canada
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/iyh/products/sunglasses.html

Summer Food Safety

Health Canada - click on Summer
www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/feature/summer/food_drink/index.html

National Institute of Nutrition
www.nin.ca/public_html/Consumer/food_safety.html

Summer Campfires

Get Safe!
www.getsafenow.com/Smoke_Signals.htm

Freeman River
www.freemanriver.com/Camping_Tips/fire_safety.htm

Train Safety

Operation Lifesaver Canada
www.operationlifesaver.ca/sample/main.htm

CN Police - click on Community then CN Police
www.cn.ca

Air Quality

Environment Canada, click on Clean Air
www.ec.gc.ca/envhome.html

The Lung Association
www.lung.ca

1. Ants • 2. Sandwiches • 3. Ice • 4. Blanket • 5. Cooler • 6. Charcoal • 7. Smoke
8. Marinade • 9. Hamburgers • 10. BBQ • 11. Tongs • 12. Hotdogs • 13. Grill

Do you have suggestions for future topics?

Please submit your ideas to Meghan Toews

E-mail: mtoews@wechealthunit.org

Phone: 519-258-2146 x 3100 Fax: 519-776-6102