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## New National Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in Canadian Workplaces

A new and complex Canadian Standards Association (CSA) Standard, which aims to encourage employers to achieve “psychological health and safety” in the workplace, may soon be impacting Canadian workplaces. Under the new Standard, policies, procedures, hazard identification, incident investigation, and monitoring activities may all be required, in addition to all of the existing steps being taken to develop and manage occupational health and safety systems.



The CSA, which develops standards for Canadian business, industry, government and consumers, released the draft Standard for a period of public consultation that ended on January 6, 2012. The final Standard, which is expected in early 2012, is intended to provide organizations with tools and guidance to achieve “measureable improvements in psychological health and safety” and prescribes specific steps for employers to take to develop and maintain psychologically healthy and safe workplaces. As currently drafted, the steps prescribed and obligations imposed are significantly broader than those currently imposed on employers under occupational health and safety and human rights legislation and the breadth of the Standard raises concerns about its viability for Canadian employers, particularly small businesses.

The Standard is part of global trend towards increased awareness of workplace psychological stress and an increasing willingness to compensate workers’ claims for damages that they suffer from such stress at work. This trend has resulted in the promulgation of workplace standards to address the causes of psychological stress and has prompted the International Labour Organization to recently publish a guide to workplace stress prevention.

You can find an overview and analysis of the proposed Standards [here](#).

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