

## PROFILE

### **Thrifty Stores Victoria, BC**

When one of Vancouver Island's major employers decided they needed to pay more attention to workplace safety they got down to business and hired occupational health and safety auditor, Glenn Barned. Five years into the job, Barned says Thrifty's now has a more comprehensive and detailed approach to training, monitoring and evaluating health and safety at its eighteen stores, warehouse and three office buildings. Recognition for their innovative and effective programs won the company a Canadian Society of Safety Engineering Award for Best Training/Orientation Program for Young and New Workers in 2003.

Barned explains that his first move was to increase occupational health and safety committee training. Says Barned, "It was important that committee members felt comfortable taking health and safety information and training forward to the employees in all our facilities." Another early step was the monitoring of existing health and safety programs and pinpointing problem areas, followed by the implementation of an ergonomic muscular skeletal injury prevention program.

An area of particular concern was young and new workers as approximately one third of Thrifty's employees are between the ages of 15 and 24. Working closely with the company's Human Resources department Barned developed age appropriate training guidelines for managers as well as the occupational health and safety committees.

Barned says he regularly receives positive feedback from staff regarding Thrifty's thorough approach to safety and training. And, notes Barned, "Training is paying off, both from a dollar perspective, and lost worker hours." Barned attributes Thrifty's ongoing commitment to employee training to its president, Milford Sorensen, whose favourite quote is, "We're not in the food business, we're in the people business", which says Barnard, includes our customers as well as our staff."