



# WCB update

September 2006

## WCB Coverage Extended

On August 10, 2006, the provincial government announced that the number of industries covered by the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) would be extended effective January 1, 2007.

The extension of coverage follows a comprehensive public review of *The Workers Compensation Act* which recommended that coverage of workplaces be extended after consultation with affected industries.

The WCB undertook extensive consultations including public information sessions in Winnipeg,

Brandon and Thompson, and sent 8,000 consultation packages to stakeholders across Manitoba.

These industries are also presently covered by most other workers compensation boards across Canada.



The industries to be covered effective January 1, 2007 are:

- outside window cleaning;
- aviation and air transport including the operation of an aircraft, provision of air transport services and the operation of an airline;
- mushroom plants;
- taxidermy;
- testing laboratories including product manufacturing, development and testing;
- landscape architecture and design, landscaping and yard maintenance;
- exploration and prospecting including assaying, archeological, environmental, geological, geophysical or mapping services;
- land surveying, and
- property management.

“We are committed to gradually extending WCB coverage starting with the industries where it makes the most sense,” said Labour and Immigration Minister Nancy Allan. “We believe that this is an important and reasonable first step that will move Manitoba towards the Canadian mainstream.”

The industries that will be covered effective January 1, 2007 are similar to those already covered by the WCB in terms of the nature of work and kinds of hazards faced by workers.

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## SAFE Hospitality - Manitoba's Restaurant Safety Program

Each year in Manitoba, the hospitality industry experiences on average 26,000 days lost from work due to injury, resulting in over \$1.6 million in related Workers Compensation Board (WCB) costs paid to healthcare professionals for services and workers for lost wages.

In an effort to reduce these numbers, the Manitoba Restaurant and Food Services Association developed Manitoba's Restaurant Safety Program.



As of February 2006, the program was renamed SAFE Hospitality and became available through the Manitoba Tourism Education Council (MTEC).

SAFE Hospitality is aimed at helping owner/operators, management and workers access the resources and training they need to work safely. The mandate of SAFE Hospitality is to promote safety awareness and legislative compliance

throughout the industry along with safety and health initiatives, with the ultimate goal of injury prevention.

MTEC offers many training programs and education for employers and workers in the hospitality industry so it was a natural fit for the organization to add safety training to its list of services.

"Many restaurant operators would like to offer more safety and health training in their workplaces, but they are unsure where to find the resources. This program is a great tool for businesses because it offers the resources they need," said SAFE Hospitality Director Sarrah Hayter.

The program can help businesses prevent

workplace injuries and the emotional and physical costs of those injuries to workers. It can also reduce WCB claim costs, saving money in the long term.

"All restaurants and food service establishments are welcome to contact SAFE Hospitality, whether they are looking to upgrade their safety programs, or are just starting out and looking to develop a program. SAFE Hospitality will visit workplaces,

identify areas for improvement and help businesses implement those improvements," said Hayter.

The SAFE Hospitality program offers consulting services that include assistance with legislative compliance and help with self assessments (such as job hazard analysis and workplace inspection). Also available is a video lending library as well as many SAFE Work procedure flysheets and posters, all of which businesses in the hospitality industry are welcome to use.

For more information about the SAFE Hospitality program, call 694-7233 (in Winnipeg) or 1 (800) 820-6832 and visit [www.safehospitality.com](http://www.safehospitality.com) for resources and training schedules.

### Coverage Extended

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"Manitoba has the lowest level of WCB-covered workers in the country at approximately 70 per cent of the Manitoba workforce," said WCB President and CEO Doug Sexsmith. "With this extension of coverage, over 7,000 additional workers will now receive workers compensation coverage and benefits."

No new industries have been covered by the WCB since the 1960s. This extension of coverage represents about 1,150 employers. Sixty-seven percent of those employers already have voluntary coverage and will not see any changes.



# The Sound of Silence - Some Facts on Hearing Loss

Hearing, once lost, is gone for good. And hearing loss is on the rise in Manitoba's workplaces. Workers Compensation Board (WCB) costs for hearing loss claims have doubled in the past four years.

Currently, 90% of WCB hearing loss clients are older males. The numbers for younger men (those in their 40's and 50's) are now starting to rise due in part to improvements in hearing aid technology as well as public awareness campaigns which have made the wearing of such devices more acceptable.

Unfortunately, contrary to many people's belief, hearing aids do not restore normal hearing the way eyeglasses do with vision. Hearing aids magnify sounds so that what remains of a person's hearing capability can still allow them to function at a normal level. Hearing aids, despite recent and impressive technological advances, are still just a mechanical substitute for a wonderful and complicated natural ability.

"Noise-induced hearing loss is often preventable," said WCB Ear, Nose and Throat Consultant Dr. M. Mina. "There are hearing preservation techniques everyone can use."

Some of these techniques include reducing the length of exposure to the noise source, having regular hearing tests if frequently exposed to a noisy environment and most importantly, *consistently* wearing hearing protection whether at work or play.

Listening to two hours of music at a rock concert is about the same, in terms of decibel level, as listening to a power saw for two hours.

Employers and workers have started to realize that using hearing preservation techniques is a valuable practice. Using these techniques result in less worry, a better quality of life that extends far beyond the workplace, and less expense for everyone.

"Employers must provide hearing protection but workers must use it," said Dr. Mina. "Hearing preservation is everyone's responsibility."



## Dates to Remember



**October 20, 2006** - The Quarterly Remittance for the third quarter of 2006 and payment must be received at the WCB for firms reporting on a quarterly basis.

**October 31, 2006** - The third installment must be received at the WCB for firms reporting on an annual basis and paying in installments.


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## NAOSH Contest Winners Celebrated at Awards Ceremony

NAOSH (North American Occupational Safety and Health) Week had a special meaning for Manitoba in 2006: it was the first year the province participated in the annual NAOSH Awards.

Local companies submitted programs they devised to promote workplace safety and health throughout their organizations to NAOSH Awards judges representing the Workers Compensation Board (WCB), Construction Safety Association of Manitoba and the Canadian Society of Safety Engineers – Manitoba chapter. Entries were rated on creativity, originality, support of the NAOSH concept and lasting influence.

“We established these criteria to encourage campaigns that would have a memorable impact on safety attitudes and would include employees in the process,” said Allayne Porco, one of the judges and WCB SAFE Work Team Manager.

The NAOSH Awards ceremony was held on August 26. Awards were presented for Best Overall Campaign and Most Innovative Campaign among others.

Best Overall Campaign winner Manitoba Hydro used newsletter articles, staff-developed

posters, newspaper ads, a Safety Appreciation BBQ, and a staffed display that toured five company locations in their campaign. The campaign had input from 40 workplace safety and health committees.



Construction Safety Association of Manitoba's Sean Scott presents Kitchen Craft Cabinetry's Brian Fisher-Smith with a NAOSH award

“This is the first time we’ve taken our campaign to such a level,” said Manitoba Hydro Corporate Safety Officer Ron Zimmer. “It shows the importance Manitoba Hydro places on health and safety and that we’re putting solid effort behind our stated goals.”

Most Innovative Campaign winner Kitchen Craft Cabinetry took their cue from the TV series “Survivor”. Departmental teams

or “tribes” were scored on such areas as recordable injury rate, weekly inspections, housekeeping audits, return to work program ideas and injury prevention efforts. The winning team was declared “Survivors of Zero

Island” in honour of the company’s zero injury philosophy.

“We wanted the campaign to be fun,” said Kitchen Craft Safety Officer Brian Fisher-Smith. “It’s great to be recognized by our peers and have an award to show our parent company.”

Honourable mention awards went to Red River College, 17 Wing Winnipeg and Pollard

Banknote. The final award, in appreciation of outstanding support, went to Allayne Porco who acknowledged the partnerships built with SAFE Work stakeholders.

The WCB looks forward to growing NAOSH Week in Manitoba and working with its partner organizations to further the cause of workplace safety and health.

### Update is also available in a large print version.

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