

May 3, 2001

North American Occupational Safety and Health Safety Week is from May 6-12

The Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is reminding employers and workers that "*prevention is the cure*" during North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week. "*Prevention is the cure*" is the Canadian Society of Safety Engineers promotional theme for the week.

"The consequences of workplace injuries are tragic, expensive and time-consuming. And the vast majority are 100% preventable," says Rob McClure, the Director of Occupational Health and Safety at the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board (WCHSB).

According to WCHSB claim statistics, in the last decade there have been 21 workplace fatalities and over 12,000 workplace injuries in the Yukon. This works out to over 23 work-related injuries a week.

According to McClure, if every Yukon workplace put in place a prevention plan the injury rate would drop significantly. "No supervisor or manager plans to have their workers hurt on the job. But by not having a prevention plan in place, they are doing exactly that. Organizations plan for business continuity, for adequate cash flow and for production efficiency. We are saying that they should also plan for prevention."

The WCHSB helps businesses develop their prevention plan. "We encourage employers to call us and find out how we can help them prevent injuries," says McClure. The training and information that the WCHSB offers covers a wide range: from health hazards in painting and carpentry to landscaping safety.

One of the key concerns of the WCHSB is raising employers awareness of the hazards faced by young workers. According to statistics gathered by compensation boards across Canada,

workers aged 15 to 24 are one third more likely to be injured on the job. In particular, males in this age group are at a much higher risk of workplace injury.

"Many young and new workers will be entering the workforce this summer. We are asking employers to take special care to train these workers in proper safety procedures. Approximately a third of workers' compensation claims happen in the first six months of employment," McClure adds.

This year the Board is distributing two new guides—one for employers and one for parents—that outline why young workers are at higher risk for workplace injury and what employers and parents can do to lower this risk. Copies can be obtained by contacting the WCHSB.

For more information please contact:

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Looking for Story Ideas for North American Occupational Safety and Health Week?

"Young Workers: Who's keeping them safe now?"

Rob McClure is the manager of the WCHSB's education and development unit and the acting Director of Occupational Health and Safety. This year, the WCHSB will be distributing two new guides to employers and parents. The guides outline why young workers are at a much higher risk for workplace injury and provide suggestions on how to lower the risk. Rob can speak to the importance of the young worker issue and give parents, employers and co-workers concrete tips on how to *"keep them safe."*

Rob is available from May 7-11 for interviews.

Tel: (867) 667-3726

Changing Workplaces: Violence and blood-borne diseases are emerging concerns "

Did you know that needle stick injuries can be effectively treated if the patient receives medical care in the first two hours? Blood-borne diseases and violence are emerging issues in the workplace. Every year, Yukon hospitality workers come in contact with syringes and other potentially contaminated vehicles of diseases such as hepatitis and Aids. Across Canada, and even in the Yukon there have been cases of service-industry workers being assaulted on the job. **Richard Zral** is the WCHSB's Prevention Consultant. He can speak to these two emerging issues and what workers and employers can do to minimize the risk for injury and illness.

Richard is available May 7-11 for interviews.

Tel: (867) 667-3424

"Is your business complying with the First Aid Regulations?"

Coleman Sinclair is one of the WCHSB's Safety Officers. Last year, his unit inspected over 360 workplaces. At many work sites, Safety Officers found a lack of first aid provisions and staff. This spring, the Safety and Compliance Unit did a mass-mailing to all Yukon employers reminding them of what the OHS regulations require in terms of first aid on the job. Coleman can explain to your audience what the first aid requirements are for a typical Yukon business of 10 employees and under.

Coleman is available Monday, May 7, Tuesday, May 8 and Friday, May 11 for interviews.

Tel: (867) 667-5450