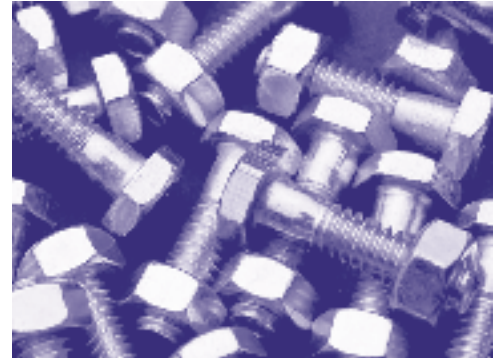


Working Together

On Prevention

Safety in the workplace affects you, whether you're a worker or employer. It affects many others as well -- your family, your friends, your doctor, your community. That's why the Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board has made the prevention of workplace injuries and illnesses its top priority. In May and June, we invite you to take part in our public consultation on how to make Yukon workplaces safer.

We want to hear from you on three topics: 1) prevention, 2) economic incentives, and 3) indoor air quality/environmental tobacco smoke. Later, in the fall, we will be talking to you about employers' assessment premiums.

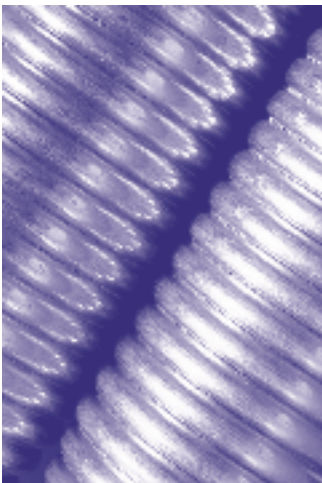


1. Let's talk prevention

The effect of workplace injuries in the Yukon is growing. In 1992, the average length of a claim for a worker injured severely enough to miss work was 35 days. Last year the average length was more than 100 days. The cost of those injuries is high, for workers and employers. There's the cost of lost production time, training a replacement employee, and repairing any damaged equipment. If you're a worker, an injury means a painful healing period and loss of income.

Thinking safely, acting safely

It isn't acceptable to view injuries as a necessary cost of doing business. Excellent employers understand the value of health and safety in the workplace. As a result, they usually have excellent safety records too. An effective safety management system is the right way to protect worker health and safety.



But what sort of system would work for the majority of Yukon employers, who have fewer than 20 workers each? There are various options, ranging from education and training to safety certification programs. Some of these measures might be linked to economic incentives, our next topic. The YWCHSB's goal is for all Yukon employers to have a safety management system in place by 2008.

How can employers, workers, and the YWCHSB work together to make this happen? We need to hear from you.

2. How can incentive programs help?

Incentive programs can play a key role in workplace injury prevention. If you're an employer, such programs reward your efforts in creating and maintaining a safe and healthy workplace. If you're a worker, you benefit from your employer's commitment to safety excellence.

Some type of incentive program is in place in every other jurisdiction in Canada except NWT/Nunavut, which plans to introduce one in 2006.

In the Yukon, the YWCHSB has gradually been reducing subsidies to employer assessment premiums since 2003. You've told us that you'd like to see incentive programs introduced before those subsidies end. That's why we need to talk about these programs now.

How do incentive programs work?

Some incentive programs in Canada are based on experience rating. Employers whose claims costs are below their industry average get a discount, while employers whose claims costs are higher than their industry average pay a penalty.



Other incentive programs are based on best management practices. Best practices may include safe return-to-work policies, prompt reporting of claims, and audited safety programs. Some incentive programs use a combination of experience rating and best practices.

As a small jurisdiction, the Yukon faces a special challenge. We can learn from other small jurisdictions, such as Prince Edward Island, Northwest Territories/Nunavut, and Newfoundland. Newfoundland, for example, uses a system that combines best practices and experience rating. Their program rewards good prevention and return-to-work practices. It also directly links workers' compensation costs to workplace practices and results.

What sort of program would work in the Yukon? How can it help us achieve our goal of safe and healthy workplaces? We need to know what you think.

3. What about indoor air quality and workplace smoking?

Second-hand smoke is a widely recognized workplace health issue. As an aspect of indoor air quality, it is an area of prevention that the Board is exploring as part of this consultation.

In the Yukon, there are some measures already in place that cover workplaces. The City of Whitehorse requires all places to which the public has access to be smoke free. Under Yukon government policy, all its workplaces and public places are also smoke free. In Dawson City, smoking is not permitted in places that provide service to anyone under 18 years of age.

Across Canada there are different approaches to this issue. Some provinces have passed legislation to control smoking. Many municipalities, as in the Yukon, have adopted no-smoking bylaws. Some allow designated smoking rooms; others do not.

Two workers' compensation boards in Canada have also taken steps to regulate smoking. In British Columbia, 85% of workplaces are smoke free. In Northwest Territories/Nunavut, all workplaces are smoke free, with designated smoking rooms allowed on a limited basis.

What do you think the YWCHSB's role ought to be on the issue of workplace smoking? Are regulations appropriate in the Yukon? Or do we look at other options instead, such as public awareness and education? We want to hear from you.

Please attend our consultation meetings

Working Together on Prevention

Tuesday, May 3

2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Presentation of Issues

Whitehorse City Council Chambers

Wednesday, May 11

2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Drop-in session for clarification, questions and answers
YWCHSB Training Room, 401 Strickland Street, Whitehorse

Tuesday, May 17

2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Feedback session for workers
YWCHSB Training Room, 401 Strickland Street, Whitehorse

Wednesday, May 18

2:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Feedback session for employers
YWCHSB Training Room, 401 Strickland Street, Whitehorse

Are you outside Whitehorse? Take part by teleconference.
To arrange, call 1-800-661-0443 by Thursday, April 28, and ask for Becky or Pauli.

*Detailed issues papers will be available on April 29 at our front desk at
401 Strickland Street, Whitehorse and at www.wcb.yk.ca.*

For more information, or to arrange a special meeting with your organization,
call 867-667-5645; e-mail: wcbconsultation@gov.yk.ca.

Deadline for final feedback: June 24, 2005.



**YUKON WORKERS'
COMPENSATION
HEALTH AND
SAFETY BOARD**