

# SAFE WORK is Good For Business

**WCB**   
Workers Compensation  
Board of Manitoba

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**SAFE  
WORK**

SPOT THE HAZARD  
ASSESS THE RISK  
FIND A SAFER WAY  
EVERYDAY



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# Best Practices from Manitoba Employers




**Senior  
Management  
Commitment**



**Effective  
Communication**



**Education  
and Training**



**Incident  
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Committee and  
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**Responsibility  
for Leadership in  
Safety and Health**



**Controlling  
Risk**



**Disability  
Management**

# Executive Summary

It makes good business sense to work safely and, to do this, you need a plan.

This booklet introduces ideas from a variety of successful Manitoba employers who benefit from having a safety culture. It provides information on what these employers said worked best for them, and may help you build or enhance your own safety culture.

The Workers Compensation Board (WCB) approached these employers to ask them why they chose to put so much effort into developing and maintaining a safety plan.

They explained that, in their experience, a safely run workplace has a positive impact on the bottom line through things like reduced WCB assessments, less need for overtime, and more efficient production. It also improves the workplace for all levels of staff by demonstrating the organization's commitment to protecting its workers.

We also asked the employers what they believe are the key components of their program.

We soon discovered that their plans contain common ideas centred on accident prevention and worker involvement. Their focus was to identify the hazards in their workplace and control them. Their overall success, however, really resulted from the combination of all the elements of their safety and health strategy working together.

It is important to note that each employer has a safety plan unique to them, even though they may be founded on the same principles. The plan that is right for you will also be unique. This is because it has to make sense for both management and labour in your organization if it is going to be effective and sustainable. What is important is being committed to making a positive difference in your own organization.

# Best Practices Highlights

Manitoba employers who have successful safety cultures within their organizations make deliberate, planned efforts to build and sustain such cultures. These are the common practices they have adopted to help ensure their organizations maintain a continuing focus on safety.

- **Senior management** is visibly **committed** to, and **supportive** of, **safety** and **disability management** initiatives.
- **Communications** about safety and disability management are regular, ongoing, effective, and are targeted **to everyone** in the organization.
- **Education** and **training** around safety and disability management are **mandatory** and **continuous** for all staff.
- A formal **Safety and Health Committee** with representation from labour and management is established and **supported** by senior executives.
- A safety and health **leader** is designated and **supported by management**, to help the organization understand their safety and health needs and fulfill their safety and health goals.
- Internal **incident investigations** are conducted immediately when accidents or near misses occur, to fully understand the cause and effect so that any **future incidents can be prevented**.
- Comprehensive **analysis of accident and incident statistics** is ongoing in order to **identify trends** and problem areas.
- Processes are developed to help **control risk** of accidents on an **ongoing basis** and address safety issues when they occur.
- A comprehensive **disability management and return to work plan** is implemented and maintained to deal with accidents when they occur and assist employees in **reducing the impact** of accidents and injuries by helping **workers return to work** sooner.

# Senior Management Commitment

Senior management **sets the tone and expectations** of an organization. Without their commitment and support, safety and disability management programs will have a limited effect.

## Suggestions From Manitoba Employers

- a** Senior management is proactive regarding safety and health for all staff.
- b** Management makes safety fun by using different activities to raise awareness and motivate staff to work safely.
- c** Management understands and accepts their responsibility and role.
- d** There is an annual budget for safety.
- e** Safety is on the agenda at every executive meeting.
- f** Management responds in a timely basis to safety concerns and addresses those concerns appropriately.
- g** There is a consistent consequence applied to all levels of the organization when safety policies and practices are not followed. This includes contracted individuals.
- h** Senior management adheres to the same safety standards as workers. Therefore, management uses personal protective equipment when at the worksite.
- i** Management understands that, through prevention and disability management, accident costs are in their control.
- j** Management understands that they can have an effect over WCB premium costs.
- k** Management develops a safety policy and confirms its commitment in writing.
- l** Management recognizes the importance of working with labour to establish the safety culture.

(Suggestions are not listed in order of priority.)

# Effective Communication

Everyone in the organization needs to have a **clear understanding** of the organization's approach to, and expectation for, safety and disability management. Safety information needs to be **regularly updated** and **reinforced** with all staff.

## Suggestions From Manitoba Employers

- a** The message comes clearly from senior management but is developed in conjunction with the safety and health committee.
- b** The safety message is explained upon hiring and continually reinforced throughout the employee's career with the organization.
- c** If a union is present it is committed to the message along with the safety and health committee and management.
- d** The right people receive the right information (staff, union representatives, safety and health committee, management team, etc.).
- e** Everyone in the organization receives the same message, including sub-contractors.
- f** A safety and disability management policy is implemented and consistently communicated to all staff and management.
- g** A safety and health program manual is developed and updated as necessary and all staff and management have access to a copy.
- h** The employee and supervisor sign off when safety training is complete to confirm that they understand the company's safety and health goals and practices.
- i** Several media are used to communicate the message – seminars, newsletter, weekly meetings, posters, etc.
- j** Communication includes participation and feedback from staff at all levels.
- k** Communication messages and methods are evaluated to determine effectiveness.

(Suggestions are not listed in order of priority.)

# Education and Training

Education and training are the cornerstones of a safety culture. **Management, line supervisors, and workers need the training** required to create a safe working environment and know what to do if an accident does occur.

## Suggestions From Manitoba Employers

Education and training components include:

- a** using safety procedures when performing tasks
- b** using personal protective equipment
- c** learning to identify hazards
- d** providing a safety orientation for new staff, including job specific training, and safety refreshers for current staff
- e** understanding emergency evacuation
- f** knowing what to do when an accident occurs
- g** learning how to complete accident forms
- h** retraining existing staff when they are transferred to a new job
- i** retraining staff annually and more frequently if required
- j** understanding responsibilities and roles in safety for safety & health committee, employees, union representatives, management, etc.
- k** understanding responsibilities and roles in disability management
- l** understanding and expecting consequences for departing from safety procedures (employees, management and contracted individuals).

(Suggestions are not listed in order of priority.)



# Safety & Health Committee and Safety Representatives

Effective Safety and Health Committees are made up of management and labour representatives. **Joint representation** and **participation** is necessary to **understand different views** and reach the **best solution** for both parties.

## Suggestions From Manitoba Employers

- a** Workers and management form the Safety and Health Committee.
- b** Workers are encouraged to be involved in the safety and health goals of the organization. As a result, each staff member is aware of how they can raise an issue with the committee.
- c** The role of the Safety and Health Committee is clear to both committee members and all staff. This includes but is not limited to the following:
  - conducting inspections and investigations
  - identifying safety concerns
  - reviewing policies and practices
  - analyzing statistics
  - recommending improvements
  - posting of Safety and Health Committee meeting minutes.
- d** Workers know who is on the Safety and Health Committee. (Post names and/or photos in workplaces.)
- e** Meeting results are shared with senior management, management responds in a timely basis and addresses concerns appropriately.
- f** Regular meetings are held at least monthly and as needed.
- g** Where a Safety and Health Committee is not present or required by Manitoba law, an employer should choose to designate an individual to be a safety representative. The safety representative would have the same roles as the Safety and Health Committee.

(Suggestions are not listed in order of priority.)

# Responsibility for Leadership in Safety and Health

Having an **individual** co-ordinate the safety and health responsibilities will allow the organization to ensure that safety and health remain a strategic priority. This safety leader has **direct access to**, and the **support of**, the **senior management**.

## Suggestions From Manitoba Employers

- a** Everyone in the organization is responsible for safety and health. The safety leader co-ordinates this effort.
- b** The safety leader works closely with line management and supervisors to ensure they understand their responsibilities under the Workplace Safety and Health Act and the expectations of their own organization.
- c** The safety leader is empowered to stop production if required.
- d** The safety leader has the support of, and direct access to the most senior management responsible for Manitoba operations.
- e** The leader fully understands the safety requirements and needs of the organization.
- f** The safety leader develops, implements and monitors effectiveness of a safety and health program in conjunction with the Safety and Health Committee.
- g** The safety leader is a resource for obtaining information about safety and disability management.
- h** The safety leader regularly evaluates the program on an ongoing basis to ensure it is current and evolves with the needs of the firm

(Suggestions are not listed in order of priority.)

# Incident Investigations

It is important to develop a standard practice of **investigating the facts** of each incident in a timely manner in order to better understand the cause and **prevent a recurrence**.

## Suggestions From Manitoba Employers

- a** The intent is to prevent injury in the future and not to find blame.
- b** The safety leader is in charge of the investigation with the participation of the Safety and Health Committee.
- c** There is a documented, standard process to follow.
- d** Part of the process is to ensure someone is designated responsible to implement recommendations in a timely fashion.
- e** Information and any resulting preventative measures from the investigation that is relevant to safety and health will be shared with staff.
- f** Near-miss incidents are also reported and investigated.

(Suggestions are not listed in order of priority.)

# Tracking and Analysis of Accidents and Incidents

Trends and **problem areas** can be identified by recording the details and impacts of accidents. Proactive prevention and disability management practices are supported through highlighting the human and financial costs of accidents. **Including incidents that do not result in injury** or damage is critical, as they are often a **warning of future accidents/trends**. All information is provided to senior management and the Safety and Health Committee.

## Suggestions From Manitoba Employers

Information that may be useful to track:

- a** cause of the accident/incident
- b** number of accidents/incidents – frequency
- c** injured body part
- d** date of accident/incident
- e** time of day the accident/incident occurred
- f** day of week the accident/incident occurred
- g** age of injured workers
- h** WCB assessment rates
- i** claim costs – severity
- j** cost to repair or replace equipment
- k** impact/cost on productivity – loss of staff, retraining, down time on equipment or department, loss of product/profit
- l** area of the plant where accident/incident occur
- m** training for replacement employees
- n** length of service of worker involved in accident/incident
- o** training received.

(Suggestions are not listed in order of priority.)

# Controlling Risk

It is important for employers to recognize that many **risks** in the workplace **can be controlled or eliminated**. This is a key step in preventing injuries.

## Suggestions From Manitoba Employers

- a** Review the statistical safety data to determine where extra focus in accident prevention measures and/or risk management is needed.
- b** Ensure employees understand that working safely is their personal responsibility.
- c** The Safety and Health Committee should establish a regular routine of monitoring/assessing the work area, equipment, work procedures, etc.
- d** Define housekeeping standards and assign responsibilities for maintaining the standards in all work areas.
- e** Ensure every worker knows how to respond to an emergency situation, i.e. natural gas explosion or chemical spill.
- f** Establish a screening process when hiring new individuals to ensure applicants have the necessary qualifications and abilities to perform the job. (Check with a human resource professional to determine the legally accepted method to assess an individual's physical capabilities.)
- g** Implement a safety orientation for new staff and safety refreshers for current staff.
- h** Provide staff changing jobs within the organization a safety orientation as it relates to their new job.
- i** Create an environment to assess and manage risks on an ongoing basis.
- j** When an accident/incident occurs, correct or modify unsafe practices/conditions to maximize safety.
- k** Establish action for not adhering to safety procedures and apply it to all levels of staff including contracted persons.

(Suggestions are not listed in order of priority.)

# Disability Management

Having a disability management **program in place before an accident happens** can minimize the human and financial costs of a workplace injury. Disability management programs allow employers to act quickly upon notification of an injury to support the worker and reduce the impact of the injury to both the employee and the organization. Both employer and employee understand in advance what they need to do and what options may be available that **respect physical limitations**. Disability management is a partnership between employees and employer supported by healthcare professionals and the WCB.

## Suggestions From Manitoba Employers

- a** Provide timely and suitable health care when an accident occurs.
- b** Find out who is the WCB case manager assigned to your firm.
- c** Provide your WCB case manager with information about your disability management plan (i.e. plant tour, list of modified duty positions).
- d** Know the physical requirement of each position in your organization.
- e** Pro-actively educate all members of your organization about your organization's approach to disability management and the expectations and responsibilities of persons involved.
- f** Educate employees on how to report an accident promptly to the employer and the Workers Compensation Board.
- g** Ensure employees know who to report their accident to in your organization.
- h** Have a designated person in your organization to deal with accidents when an injury occurs.
- i** Ensure the designated person and employees understand their role and responsibilities in disability management.
- j** Immediately provide information to the injured worker's physician about available modified duties or options available to help your worker return to work.
- k** Ensure both you and the employees have an understanding of how and when to complete accident forms.
- l** To help the worker recover as soon as possible and return to work, consider modifying pre-accident jobs, providing alternate positions that respect physical limitations, and/or reducing work hours.
- m** Maintain regular contact with injured employees to stay updated about progress, quickly identify and resolve issues and keep the worker involved with the workplace.
- n** Monitor when employees return to work to assess how employees are coping and ensure health care restrictions are followed.
- o** Provide visible support to injured or ill workers regardless of whether WCB responsibility has been determined or not.

(Suggestions are not listed in order of priority.)

# Safety and Health Program Self Assessment Tool

- How does your safety and health program measure up against the best practices?
- Is there room for improvement?
- What changes could make things better?
- Who should follow up?

Please use this matrix to assess where your organization fits.

Best Practice	Does your program include some of the suggested ideas?	Could your processes be improved?	Is action required?
Senior Management Commitment			
Effective Communications			
Education and Training			
Active Safety and Health Committee			
Responsibility for Leadership in Safety and Health			
Incident Investigations			
Tracking and Analysis of Accidents and Incidents			
Controlling Risk			
Disability Management			

**Other things you might want to consider.**

- What improvements should be our priority?
- Do we need any external resources?
- How should we evaluate our progress?
- What action is required?



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