



Taking Action...

for a healthy
and safe workplace

September 2004 Update

Saskatchewan Labour is committed to protecting the health and safety of Saskatchewan workers. The *Action Plan for Healthy and Safe Workplaces* contains five proven education and enforcement strategies.

The goal is to improve workplace health and safety. The initial target is a 20% reduction of time-loss injuries over the next four years. There was a modest improvement in 2003 as there were 300 fewer time-loss injuries than in the previous year. This is an encouraging sign as the number of injuries had been increasing in recent years, but we still have a long way to go to make Saskatchewan a really healthy and safe place to work. In 2003, the Workers' Compensation Board recorded almost 15,000 time-loss injuries.

Since launching the Action Plan in September 2003, Saskatchewan Labour has stepped up its education and enforcement initiatives to reduce workplace injuries and illnesses.

This **Action Update** provides a quick sketch of some of the key initiatives of Saskatchewan Labour and its partners in making Saskatchewan a safer, healthier place to work.

1. Taking Responsibility

Safe and healthy workplaces don't just happen. Committing to good health and safety work practices is the key. Everyone shares the responsibility for health and safety in the workplace. Those with the most authority to take action have the most responsibility.

- As of March 2004, there were 4,056 Occupational Health Committees of employer and worker representatives striving to identify and reduce workplace hazards.
- In 2003-04, Saskatchewan Labour provided 170 training courses to nearly 4,000 workplace committee members, with an increased number of courses to be delivered in 2004-05.
- **To help start or enhance your workplace occupational health committee, check out the fall 2004 training schedule.**

2. Meeting Standards

Health and safety standards are based on practical experience. Every workplace is expected to meet them. Your workplace is no exception. Protect yourself, your workplace and the people in it by learning the legal standards that apply to you and how to meet them.

- In 2003-04, Saskatchewan Labour conducted over 3,200 workplace inspections, up nearly 8% from the previous year, with initiatives underway to conduct 4,500 inspections in 2004-05.
- To enhance resources for investigations and prosecutions, Saskatchewan Labour and the WCB have finalized an agreement with Justice for the dedication of a full time prosecutor. It is part of a two year pilot project and he will split his time evenly between OHS and WCB. We anticipate an increase in the number of prosecutions.
- The Occupational Health and Safety Council, a provincial advisory group to the Minister of Labour, is conducting a comprehensive review of provincial occupational health and safety legislation. The Council, representing workers and employers, is reviewing over 100 submissions from stakeholders and will be making recommendations on updating workplace standards in 2005.
- **To find out what standards apply to your work or workplace, check out the legislated regulations.**



**Saskatchewan
Labour**
Occupational Health
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3. Getting Help

Every workplace has hazards with the potential to cause injury or illness. Every workplace also has a legal obligation to reduce or eliminate those hazards before a tragedy occurs. Anytime you are unsure about the danger from a hazard, or how to manage it, it's up to you to find out what to do.

- Each year, the occupational hygiene, radiation safety and toxicology units provide some 4,000 services, such as assessing exposure to chemical and biological substances, analysis of air samples, testing of equipment and ergonomic assessments, to help workplaces identify and control a wide range of hazards.
- **To get advice on specific technical issues, check out our publications.**
- A provincial advisory group from labour, industry, government and post-secondary organizations identified the need for more training in OHS. With sector development funds from Saskatchewan Learning and Saskatchewan Labour, SIAST has developed a made-in-Saskatchewan nine-week *Applied Certificate for Occupational Health and Safety Practitioners*. The first offering of the program is scheduled for November 2004.
- **To find out more about this new training opportunity, check out further information on the website or contact SIAST at 306-933-8025.**

4. Reaching New Workers

New and young workers are the future of Saskatchewan. Yet, workers under 25 years of age are much more likely to be injured on the job than older, more experienced workers. Every workplace is legally responsible for making sure new workers know how to do a job safely.

- Saskatchewan Labour, in partnership with SIAST staff, is developing a module called *Working in Saskatchewan: An introduction to safe, fair and cooperative workplaces* for use in SIAST programs. The materials address the generic health and safety knowledge all SIAST students will need to be productive workers, employers and supervisors in Saskatchewan workplaces. As well, the materials also address program, industry and occupation specific health and safety concerns and issues through the inclusion of a program-specific supplement.
- Saskatchewan Labour's *Ready For Work* is a comprehensive program of health and safety and labour standards activities and resources developed in partnership with Saskatchewan Learning. *Ready for Work* is part of the CORE curricula for Career and Work Exploration in grades 10, 11 and 12. In 2003-04, Saskatchewan Labour delivered orientation in the *Ready for Work* program to 140 teachers through 9 workshops.
- **To find out more about Ready For Work, visit our [Ready for Work website](#). To get information about teachers' workshops, call us toll-free at 1-877-419-3510.**

5. Increasing Awareness

Reducing workplace injury and illness requires that health and safety be part of each and every workplace activity. Using best work practices and protecting each other builds strong workplaces . . . and improves the bottom line.

- There are now more than 1,000 health and safety articles on the WorkSafe website. This increasingly popular website, developed by Saskatchewan WCB and Saskatchewan Labour as part of the WorkSafe Saskatchewan partnership, receives over 7,000 inquiries per month.
- The **WorkSafe Saskatchewan** program is using television, radio, newspaper and billboard messages to increase awareness of the importance of workplace safety and to provide practical advice on how to be safer and healthier at work.
- **To find out more about what you can do about health and safety, check out the information on the website.**

For more information about taking action on workplace health and safety, contact the:

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