



@wsib is published bi-monthly by the Ontario Workplace Safety & Insurance Board. To have @wsib e-mailed to you, please [subscribe](#). If you have any questions about this issue, please e-mail the editor, Maura Murphy, at info@wsib.on.ca

QUICK NEWS...

New limits for hazardous substance exposure

As part of an annual review, the Ontario Ministry of Labour has proposed new and revised Occupational Exposure Limits (OELs) for 27 hazardous substances. OELs protect workers by restricting their exposure to over 700 hazardous workplace substances such as asbestos, benzene, and lead. The Ministry's deadline for stakeholder input into the [2006 OEL Review](#) is September 30th. @

2006 Value for Money Audit

Each year, the WSIB conducts a Value for Money Audit (VFMA) on one of the programs delivered under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act. The Permanent Disability Awards Program for Pre-1990 Claims has been selected as the focus of the 2006 VFMA. The audit will evaluate the cost, efficiency, and effectiveness of the program. The audit results should be available by September 2007. @

Premium rates

The average premium rate for employers will be unchanged in 2007. The WSIB Board of Directors has confirmed that the average premium rate for Schedule 1 employers will remain at \$2.26 per \$100 of insurable earnings. Finalized premium rates for all employer rate groups will be available on the WSIB website's [Premium Information](#) page. @

Prevention + Return to Work = Better Business

A message from Steven W. Mahoney, WSIB Chair

The WSIB's Board of Directors has finalized the premiums that employers in various industries will pay to support Ontario's workplace safety and insurance system in 2007. (See sidebar for more details.)

Claim costs and injury/illness frequency are the two key drivers in setting the amount the WSIB collects from employers. Premium rate increases and decreases are linked to injury frequency and average costs per claim for each rate group. Increases in either or both of these factors will generally push premium rates up.

In recent years, many Ontario employers have implemented accident prevention programs to reduce injury/illness frequency rates and help lower their WSIB premiums. Employers can also help lower their average costs per claim by initiating programs for safe, sustainable return to work (RTW).

The WSIB has introduced a number of measures to help employers improve health and safety and return to work outcomes, but we can't do it alone.

We continue to work in partnership with the Ministry of Labour, key external stakeholders, and the 14 [Health and Safety Associations \(HSAs\)](#) on initiatives that will focus on preventing injuries and illnesses, reducing workplace insurance and safety system costs, and creating a level playing field for safe companies. We're working with all stakeholders and partners to tackle the fact that poor health and safety performers account for a disproportionate cost to the workplace insurance system.

Individual workers and employers can make a difference by making their workplaces safer, collaborating on early and safe return to work programs, and sharing workplace health and safety knowledge and experience with other workers and employers in their industry. The HSAs will support these initiatives by providing occupational health and safety programs, training, and resources targeted to employers by industry sector.

For employers in rate groups where premiums have increased, WSIB Vice-President and Chief Actuary Rob Hinrichs has arranged Premium Rates Technical Sessions to explain the WSIB's rate setting methodology and the specific reasons for rate changes at the Rate Group level.

The employers and workers of this province deserve credit for the significant gains that contributed to the WSIB's ability to set preliminary 2007 premiums at 2006 rates for most industries. A lot of good work has been done, but we must and can do more. **The math is simple: fewer injuries and less time off work equal lower premium rates.** By working together to improve prevention and return to work outcomes, we can reduce the financial pressures on Ontario's workplace safety and insurance system. @



Driving Back to Work

Between 2000 and 2004, vehicle crashes were responsible for 199 work-related deaths, or 30% of total traumatic fatalities. On September 13, RoadSafe – the [Road Safety Partners of Ontario](#) – hosted “Driving Back to Work”, a media event aimed at bringing the road safety message to all those who commute to work daily or are required to drive as a regular part of their work. Visit www.roadsafe.ca for more information. @

WSIB pilots new service delivery models

The right service at the right time for the right outcome. That’s the motto for the project team coordinating the WSIB’s Return to Work (RTW)-Labour Market Re-entry (LMR) Demonstration Pilot. Selected teams in Hamilton and Toronto will demonstrate the effectiveness of different service delivery approaches on improving return to work and labour market re-entry outcomes.

Using evidence-based practice and current research, two new service delivery models, each with a focus on RTW and LMR have been developed. These models integrate RTW and LMR specialists into the service delivery teams where they can support adjudicators in applying evidence-informed practices such as early contact with the workplace parties, goal-setting, and collaborative case planning.

“Research findings about what works and what doesn’t seem to work in improving RTW outcomes are important.” says Jill Hutcheon, WSIB President and CEO. “We need to approach the research with a good understanding of our customers and the Ontario environment. We’ve chosen the demonstration teams to help refine evidence-informed practice to suit our specific mandate and context.”

More successful RTW and LMR outcomes help reduce the physical and financial impacts of a workplace injury/illness. They’re also a key lever in the cost, funding, and financial viability of the workplace safety and insurance system.

Details on the Demonstration Pilot will be available on the WSIB website in late September. For more information, contact John Mutch, Program Manager, RTW-LMR Branch at 416-344-4973 or via email: john_mutch@wsib.on.ca @

The first line of defense



Firefighters face a variety of occupational hazards. In addition to burns and falls, they are regularly exposed to the toxic fumes generated by fires of all types and sizes. The firefighter’s self-contained breathing apparatus (SCBA) and mask are the first line of defense against toxic exposures

Since 1990, the WSIB has allowed over 900 claims from firefighters for the toxic effects of smoke and chemical exposure at work. To help reduce and eventually

eliminate these kinds of illnesses and injuries, the WSIB has developed a campaign to inform, engage, and motivate firefighters to test and use their SCBAs and to fit and maintain their masks.

[Six posters](#) have been developed to support the campaign, each with important messages about the use of masks/SCBAs. The posters, which are available in English and French, will be mailed to fire halls across Ontario. @



WSIB Chair Steven W. Mahoney attended the International Firefighters Conference to kick off the firefighter poster campaign.

Did you know?

Award-winning programs and products from WSIB

The WSIB works hard to ensure that the programs and products we develop for our staff and clients are of the highest quality. This hard work was recognized recently when we received four awards from the [American Association of State Compensation Insurance Funds](#) for internal and external communication initiatives. The [Canadian Society for Training and Development](#) also recognized the WSIB for our internal Worker Sensitivity Workshop with an award for Training Excellence. @

Tony Culyer, Chief Scientist at the Institute for Work and Health, has begun a one-year appointment as the new Chair of the WSIB’s Research Advisory Council. Dr. Culyer is a health economist and professor of economics on leave from the University of York, England.

*On September 20, 2006, Ontario’s new **Centre for Health & Safety Innovation (CHSI)** opened in Mississauga. CHSI will provide resources for employers and workers looking for expertise*

and direction on how to make workplaces injury and illness-free. For further information call 905-219-0044 or 1-866-432-CHSI.

The WSIB and the Ministry of Labour have released [updated statistics](#) on workplace illnesses, injuries, and fatalities in Ontario between 1999 and 2005.

*Ontario workers can now obtain and submit [employment standards claims](#) at any of the 63 **ServiceOntario Centres** across the province. @*