



WCB update

December 2006

Average Assessment Rate Remains Stable

The average assessment rate that Manitoba employers pay for their workers' compensation coverage will remain stable at \$1.68 effective January 1, 2007.

Manitoba employers will pay an average of \$1.68 per \$100.00 of their assessable payroll to the WCB for injury insurance coverage, including wage loss payments, medical benefits and rehabilitation services. An employer's actual rate may be lower or higher, depending on their firm's injury cost record, and their industry's safety risk.

"In total, about 64 percent of employers will see reductions in their WCB premium rates in 2007," says Doug Sexsmith, WCB President and CEO.

"Overall, Manitoba will have the third lowest average assessment rate in Canada."

Reducing injuries is crucial in our efforts to keep the assessment rate low.

There are a number of contributing factors that help the WCB maintain the current low rate. Safer workplaces and good investment returns are keeping WCB costs in check, while the gradual phase-out of the employer's maximum assessable earnings ceiling is continuing. The 2007 maximum assessable earnings will be set at \$71,000.

The workplace injury rate has fallen 21 percent in Manitoba since 2000. Sexsmith would like employers to consider what additional measures they can take in order to make their workers safer and in turn, reduce their compensation and business costs.

"Reducing injuries is crucial in our efforts to keep the assessment rate low," Sexsmith

says. "Every employer can be proactive and take steps to further lower their own rates by developing safer workplaces, formalizing health and safety procedures, and implementing more effective disability management and return to work programs."

Strong investment income is another key element in keeping rates low. 2006 WCB investment income was budgeted at approximately \$45 million, with actual investment income projected to be better than budget.

In addition to the firms that will see premium rates drop in 2007, 22 percent of firms will experience no change in their premium rate and 14 percent will see their premium rate rise. The WCB expects to collect about \$184 million in premiums from covered Manitoba employers in 2007.

In this Issue

| | |
|---|---|
| WCB Announces Vision, Mission and Values | 2 |
| Re-employment Obligations . . . | 3 |
| Reduced Rates for Accredited Construction Firms | 4 |

WCB Announces Vision, Mission and Values

The Workers Compensation Board recently announced a new vision statement, SAFE Work – A Way of Life, along with enhanced mission and values statements.

SAFE Work – a Way of Life reflects the desire of the WCB and its partners to foster a strong workplace safety and health culture in Manitoba through the SAFE Work initiative. This vision also acknowledges the WCB's new mandate set out in *The Workers Compensation Act* to promote safety and health in the workplace. This is in addition to preventing and reducing the occurrence of workplace injuries and disease and helping injured workers return as soon as safely possible to productive work.

"Our new mandate gives us a dual focus," says WCB Chairperson Tom Farrell. "Not only do we want to see workers who are healthy, we want to see them going to work in safe and healthy workplaces. Of course, we will continue to provide insurance and rehabilitation services, because even though work shouldn't hurt, we are still here to help."

The WCB's revamped mission statement says how the organization will carry out its vision. It refers to the work of the WCB and its partners with respect to preventing injuries

and illness, serving workers and employers, and efficiently using the resources entrusted to it. The mission statement was modernized to emphasize how important it is to provide good service to Manitobans.

The enhanced values statements describe the principles that guide the WCB in its work, helping the organization achieve its mission. The principles work within the four themes that provide a framework for how the WCB conducts business and organizes activities to meet the needs of Manitobans: prevention, recovery, service and stewardship.

"The ideas behind our revamped mission and values are ones we have embraced for quite a while now," says WCB President and CEO Doug Sexsmith. "That's how the WCB and our partners have been able to reduce the time loss injury rate by 21 percent since 2000."

The WCB has adapted its vision, mission and values to meet the challenges of working in the twenty-first century. The goal is safe and healthy workers in thriving and productive workplaces. This means preventing injuries and illness in the first place but if they do occur, ensuring a safe and quick return to health and work.

Vision

SAFE Work - A Way of Life

Mission

Working with its partners, the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba promotes safe and healthy workplaces, promotes recovery and return to work, provides compassionate and supportive compensation services for workers and employers, and ensures responsible financial stewardship.

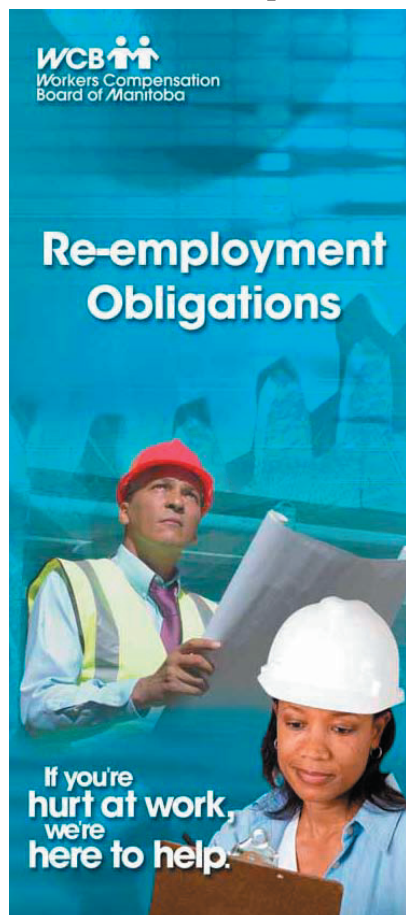
Values

We are committed to being a safe workplace that:

- Operates with fairness, integrity and respect
- Provides services that are fast, easy, caring, right and clear
- Strives for excellence
- Manages our resources efficiently and effectively
- Operates in an open and transparent manner
- Is accountable to the public and our partners
- Develops our staff and provides a supportive, innovative and creative environment
- Meets the diverse needs of our clients in a comfortable and welcoming way
- Provides a respectful and diverse workplace reflective of Manitoba
- Works collaboratively with our partners
- Is a valued member of the community

Preparing for 2007 Re-employment Obligations

On January 1, 2007, new re-employment obligations that apply to workers who are injured on or after this date will take effect. Employers who have 25 or more full-time or regular part-time workers will be required to re-employ injured workers who they employed for at least 12 continuous months before their injuries. To help Manitobans prepare for these re-employment obligations, the WCB has undertaken policy, information and education activities.



After consulting with stakeholders, the WCB developed *Return to Work with the Accident Employer (43.20.25)*, a policy describing the WCB's approach to working with the new legislation. The policy also describes the WCB's current approach to the return to work of injured workers through modified or alternate duties. This policy is available online at www.wcb.mb.ca.

The WCB also developed a *Re-employment Obligations* pamphlet to help workers

and employers more fully understand their responsibilities under the new legislation. The pamphlet is also available on the WCB website.

To ensure workplace disability management programs meet expectations set out in *The Workers Compensation Act* and WCB policy, WCB Return to Work Coordinator Kim Keating is leading an education and awareness initiative focusing on workplaces

with more than 25 workers, and employer and worker representative groups. For

details about the information sessions that are part of this initiative, call 954-4845 or toll free 1 (800) 362-3340, extension 4845.

In addition to these policy, information and education activities, the WCB continues to support workplaces in developing and enhancing their disability management and return to work programs. The WCB has also made numerous resources such as sample return to work program guides, evaluation forms, and tools used by other Manitoba employers available for download from the WCB website under Employers - Return to Work.

The WCB is committed to returning injured workers to safe and productive work. The WCB will assist all employers, whether or not they are affected by the new legislation, with returning injured workers to suitable work.

Dates to Remember



January 20, 2007 – The Quarterly Remittance for the fourth quarter of 2006 and payment must be received at the WCB for firms reporting on a quarterly basis.

February 28, 2007 – 2006/2007 Annual Workers Earnings Reports are due.

February 28, 2007 – 2006 Quarterly Reconciliation Forms are due.


**SAFE
WORK**
**S
A
F
E** SPOT THE HAZARD
ASSESS THE RISK
FIND A SAFER WAY
EVERYDAY

WCB Reduces Rates for Accredited Construction Firms

The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba has developed an important prevention initiative for construction firms. The WCB is offering a financial incentive to those firms that implement an accredited safety program, encouraging safety in their workplace.

The Incentive Plan in Construction is a pilot program that includes a five percent reduction in WCB assessment rates for construction firms that earn safety association accreditation, an important step in decreasing workplace injuries. The Manitoba Heavy Construction Association's Safety Health and Environment Program (SHEP) and the Construction Safety Association of Manitoba (CSAM) both offer safety accreditation.

"The Incentive Plan is the latest in a multi-faceted approach to fighting construction-related injuries in Manitoba," says WCB Chairperson Tom Farrell. "This program provides a real, tangible incentive to construction employers of all sizes to make safe work a way of life in their workplace."

Accreditation in a safety program is open to the more than 5,500 construction industry employers. They must

undergo rigorous safety training, develop a company safety manual, develop and implement an approved health and safety program and pass an independent safety audit.

This program provides a real, tangible incentive to construction employers of all sizes to make safe work a way of life in their workplace.

"We are pleased that the WCB is recognizing the commitment of accredited companies," says Kevin Skinner, Vice-President & District Manager of PCL Constructors Ltd. "We have a goal of zero incidents on our projects as safety is a high priority and a key element in the success of the company. Accreditation is a worthy standard for businesses, and we should all commit to raising the bar."

Large accredited employers like PCL Constructors Ltd. receive a Certificate of Recognition (COR) from their safety associations, while smaller employers receive either the

Small Employer Certificate of Recognition (SECOR), or the Small Business Safety Certificate (SBSC).

"An accredited safety program has been good for our business," explains Gord Lee, President of Nelson River Construction Inc. "By taking the guesswork out of workplace safety, we can help prevent injuries and save lives, while focusing on what we do best - construction."

In addition to maintaining accreditation, the employer must be in good standing with the WCB and maintain other standard criteria set by the WCB and the Workplace Safety and Health Division to participate in the incentive plan.

The three-year pilot program begins in January 2007. The initiative will be funded by a nominal increase in the surcharge paid by all construction employers in Manitoba. There will be no additional cost to employers in other industries.

Update is also available in a large print version.

Return undeliverable copies to:

WCB Communications, 333 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB R3C 4W3

Telephone: (204) 954-4760 Fax: (204) 954-4968

PM 40062754