

# WCB UPDATE

June 2021

## WCB distributes \$71 million in surplus funds to Manitoba employers

For the third year in a row, the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB) is distributing surplus funds to employers, whose premiums fund the workers compensation system. By continuing to invest in injury prevention and return to work programs, the WCB is pleased to once again provide financial relief to employers after a challenging year for all Manitobans.

“COVID-19 has had a significant impact on businesses across the province and we want to do our part to provide some measure of relief to employers,” said Richard Deacon, President and CEO of WCB. “Following our mandate to serve Manitobans, we are pleased to once again give money back to employers and help support their recovery efforts after what has been a very difficult year.”

In May, eligible employers received a credit based on 40 per cent of their 2020 premium. To be eligible for the refund, employers must have fulfilled their payroll reporting responsibilities for 2020 and owed a WCB premium in 2020. Employers



who have not yet reported their 2020 payroll still have time to submit their information to receive the surplus distribution.

“We’re very proud of the work we have done to increase efficiencies in our system over the last several years, while still maintaining the lowest average assessment rate in Canada,” says Deacon. “Thanks to sound financial investments, we are pleased to return \$71 million in surplus funds to Manitoba

employers and help improve their bottom line at a time when many need it most.”

The WCB maintains a reserve fund to ensure the long-term sustainability of the workers compensation system, reduce any rate variability and protect Manitoba’s workforce. Determined annually by the Board of Directors, the distribution of surplus funds allows the WCB to distribute funds that have accumulated beyond the necessary reserve level and

work towards maintaining the WCB’s funding target.

“The Manitoba government is focused on protecting Manitobans from the impacts of COVID-19 and providing relief to businesses during this uncertain economic time,” said Finance Minister Scott Fielding. “We continue to work across government and with our partners to find ways to help employers that need it.”



# 2020 Annual Report Highlights Impact of COVID-19 and Funds Returned to Employers

The WCB's 2020 Annual Report and Five Year Plan was tabled in the Manitoba Legislature on May 10. The report highlights the impact the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the organization, initiatives implemented to maintain customer service levels for employers and injured workers and financial relief efforts for employers.

"The WCB faced the challenges wrought by the pandemic with resilience and fortitude, ensuring customer service remained a top priority while the majority of our staff worked remotely," said Richard Deacon, President and CEO of the WCB. "The WCB offered employers financial respite by extending payment terms and suspending late payment penalties and, although our premium revenues decreased,



## 2020 ANNUAL REPORT



our reserve fund allowed us to once again offer a surplus distribution of \$36 million to employers."

While the trend of fewer

injuries continued last year, an uptick in COVID-19 claims offset the decrease. By the end of 2020, the WCB reported the time loss injury

rate at 2.5\* per 100 full time workers (2.3\* if COVID-19 claims were excluded).

"Employers continued to make workplace safety a priority, including the process of becoming SAFE Work Certified," said Deacon. "I'm pleased that \$6 million in prevention rebates were distributed to 1,086 SAFE Work Certified employers in 2020."

The prudent financial stewardship that has guided the WCB over the last number of years allowed it to withstand the financial uncertainty the pandemic created. The WCB ended 2020 with an operating surplus of \$73 million as a result of strong investment returns and reduced claim costs. The WCB fund reserve was 143.7 per cent, well above the 130 per cent funding target.

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## Campaign asks drivers to help keep workers and workplaces safe

The 2021 SAFE Roads campaign officially launched on May 18, reminding motorists to lower their speed, pay attention, and drive with extra caution as the summer construction season brings more workers to Manitoba roadways.

“The SAFE Roads campaign is not only an important workplace injury prevention and awareness initiative, it’s a means to help workers be safe while they are on the job,” said Ron Schuler, Minister of Infrastructure. “As this campaign highlights, we all have the right to a safe workplace, especially our province’s construction workers, firefighters, police officers, paramedics and utility workers working on or alongside the road.”

The theme of this year’s campaign is Keep Your Road Rage off The Road. Campaign messaging will be shared through social media, radio ads and other media featuring construction workers, emergency responders and others who make their living on and near roadways.

Richard Deacon, President and CEO of WCB Manitoba, said the annual SAFE Roads campaign plays a vital role in the overall effort to reduce the number of workplace injuries and illnesses in Manitoba.

“Building a culture of health and safety for all Manitobans is our priority,” said Deacon. “Through our support



of SAFE Roads, we’re helping to raise awareness that SAFE Work applies at any workplace in Manitoba, especially those working on our roadways.”

Mayor Brian Bowman reminded drivers that for many workers, the road is the workplace.

“The annual SAFE Roads campaign provides a great opportunity to remind motorists to use caution when encountering workers or emergency services personnel on or around our roadways,” Bowman said. “For the safety of all, I’m asking Winnipeggers to be aware and please slow down.”

The annual SAFE Roads campaign has led to increased awareness among drivers of the need to protect the safety and health of Manitoba workers, according to Chris Lorenc, President of the Manitoba Heavy Construction

Association and Chair of the SAFE Roads Committee.

“Construction workers are on the job alongside traffic every day, working to repair streets or fixing water and sewer lines – all essential public services. They deserve to be safe, to return home to their families at the end of each day,” he said.

### About SAFE Roads

Established in 2004, the SAFE Roads vision is to educate motorists and the general public to practise respectful and safe driving practices to protect the safety of construction, utility, emergency services personnel, equipment operators and all those who work in or adjacent to our province’s roadways.

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Return undeliverable copies to:  
WCB Communications, 333 Broadway, Winnipeg, MB R3C 4W3  
Telephone: (204) 954-4760 Fax: (204) 954-4968

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