



# WCB update

April 2007

## Day of Mourning Observed April 28

Last year, over 900 Canadians lost their lives as a result of workplace injury or disease. Tragically, many of these fatalities could have been avoided.

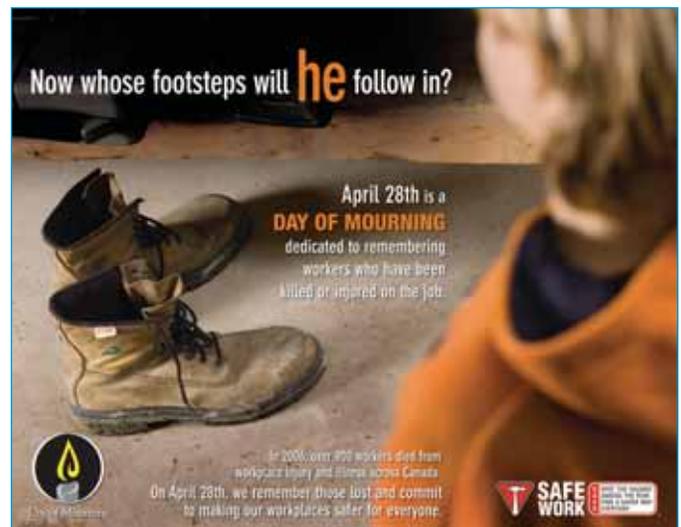
On April 28, more than 80 countries throughout the world will observe the Day of Mourning, an official day to recognize those who have suffered work-related injuries, illnesses and fatalities. It's an opportunity to reflect on the physical and emotional consequences caused by workplace injuries – consequences that ultimately touch us all.

Beyond the economic impact that affects businesses, workplace fatalities come with an immeasurable human cost. Children, spouses, parents and co-workers are all left to deal with the devastating loss inflicted by workplace injuries. It's a loss that happens far too often.

That's why the WCB is committed to prevention awareness and education. By providing access to information and educating employers and workers on safe practices, the WCB aims to reach its goal of reducing workplace injuries.

In observance of the Day of Mourning, the Canadian flag will fly at half-mast at Parliament Hill and at provincial legislatures throughout the country. In Winnipeg, the day will be commemorated with several events, one of which will be a Leader's Walk from the Union Centre Building down Broadway to the Legislative Building. The flag at the WCB building at 333 Broadway will be lowered to half-mast and a moment of silence will be observed.

Businesses are encouraged to get involved by declaring April 28 a Day of Mourning and to publicly renew their commitment to improve health and safety in the workplace.



Safety is everyone's responsibility and it starts with each of us. We must work together to stop the unnecessary suffering and costs that death and injury bring to our families, friends and communities. On April 28, let's come together to remember the thousands of workers we've lost – and to recognize the countless others that can still be saved.

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# 'Start Today' – Participate in NAOSH Week May 6 to 12

This year's North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week takes place from May 6 to 12 with the theme of 'Safety and Health: A Commitment for Life – Start Today'.

Sponsored by the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering (CSSE), NAOSH Week focuses on the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace. Employers are encouraged to develop safety activities in the workplace as a way to build prevention awareness among employees and the general public.

You can enter your company's events at [www.safemanitoba.com](http://www.safemanitoba.com) and be eligible to win in five categories, including best overall entry, most

innovative and best representation of theme. Winners will be presented with a NAOSH Week trophy at an awards ceremony and will be featured on the SAFE Manitoba website. The deadline to submit entries is **June 15, 2007**.

Your company can get started today by creating a team of interested people to begin planning. Discuss what your team would like to achieve, and how your events can tie in to your long-term strategies.

Here are some ideas that might get you started:

- Sponsor a safety poster contest for the children of all employees.

- Launch a recognition program that rewards suggestions which promote ongoing health and safety.
- Set up a safety demonstration focusing on the development of safe work habits.

NAOSH Week is a great way to engage your employees and have fun while promoting a safe workplace. For more information, visit [www.naosh.ca](http://www.naosh.ca) or [www.safemanitoba.com](http://www.safemanitoba.com).



## Reminder to Employers

The legislation concerning the obligation to re-employ workers injured in the course of their employment took effect for injuries that occur on or after January 1, 2007.

The major points of the legislation are as follows:

- It applies to employers who have 25 or more full-time or regular part-time workers;
- The worker must have 12 continuous months of employment prior to the date of injury;

- Employers must accommodate injured workers up to point of reasonable accommodation; and
- Nothing in the legislation prevents an employer from laying off or terminating workers for reasons unrelated to the compensable injury.

Re-employment legislation is intended to return workers to their original positions in the workplace or ones that resemble, as closely as possible, the positions they held at the time of their injuries.

If the WCB determines that an employer has not met their re-employment obligations, an administrative penalty may be applied.

More information on the re-employment obligations, including the section of the WCB act, the policy, and the penalty regulation, can be found at [www.wcb.mb.ca](http://www.wcb.mb.ca)

If you would like to obtain more information on the legislation and/or have someone come out to do a presentation at your business, please contact Kim Keating at 954-4845 or at [kkeating@wcb.mb.ca](mailto:kkeating@wcb.mb.ca).

# WCB Funds New Prevention Projects and Announces Priorities for 2007

In its ongoing efforts to make Manitoba workplaces safer, the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB) has announced the latest funding recipients of its Community Initiatives and Research Program (CIRP). These eight groups will conduct projects that focus on preventing workplace injuries/illnesses, returning injured workers to health and work, or promoting the special needs of workers suffering from occupational diseases.

The CIRP provides up to \$1 million annually to fund projects focusing on injury and disease prevention, safety in the workplace, treatment of workplace injuries, support for injured workers and their families, and research into scientific, medical or other issues related to workers compensation. Since the inception of the program, approximately 67 percent of the funding has supported workplace prevention, education and training initiatives.

“The CIRP proactively helps develop a culture of safety in Manitoba,” says WCB President and CEO Doug Sexsmith. “With the support of the WCB, our partners in the community are developing several innovative methods to make our workplaces safer.”

Sexsmith adds that the projects funded through the CIRP are good examples of the workplace safety movement spearheaded by SAFE Work and SAFE Manitoba. “At the WCB, we believe that SAFE Work should be a way of life.”

One of the new grant recipients is Safety Services Manitoba, who along

with the International Centre of Winnipeg, is developing the Manitoba Immigrants’ Safety Initiative.

“Immigrant workers and their employers have unique safety issues, and with the help of the WCB, we intend to provide the resources needed to make the workplace safer for those workers,” says Mike Waite, Executive Director of Safety Services Manitoba.

A past grant recipient, Red River College has seen their Occupational Health and Safety Certificate Program grow since they first began in 2005. Currently, 100 percent of their graduates have already found jobs in Manitoba.

“We have been able to provide Manitoba workplaces with Health and Safety Practitioners who have the knowledge and skills necessary to help make workplaces safer,” says RaeAnn Thibeault, the Dean of Red Rivers’ School of Continuing and Distance Education.

Since the CIRP was launched by the WCB at the end of 1997, 108 innovative projects have been



Donna McTaggart Carlson, Occupational Health and Safety Certificate Program Graduate, and Frank Richards, Instructor

completed or are still in progress. The CIRP aims to enhance the understanding of workers’ compensation issues and to minimize the human and financial impact of workplace injuries and disease.

The WCB has also released its priorities for the 2007 CIRP funding. The WCB will accept funding requests for projects that apply innovative approaches to preventing workplace injuries or illnesses; identify hazards and prevent injuries for at-risk youth and/or persons with mental or physical disabilities; examine the barriers and facilitators of return to work programs; or increase the knowledge of occupational diseases, their diagnosis and treatment. Any additional applications that address the mandate of the CIRP will also be considered.

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## Dates to Remember

**February 28, 2007** - Annual Workers Earnings Reports (AWER) were due. Please submit your completed AWER if you have not done so already. A 5 percent late filing penalty applies to firms that submit their AWER between March 1 and April 29.

**April 20, 2007** - The Quarterly Remittance for the first quarter of 2007 and payment must be received at the WCB by this date for firms reporting on a quarterly basis.

**April 30, 2007** - Firms required to register with the WCB that have not submitted their completed AWER prior to this date will be arbitrarily assessed and the late filing penalty will increase to 10 percent. Voluntarily registered firms that have not renewed their registration may have their registration cancelled.



# WCB, WSHD Unveil First Ever Report on Illnesses and Injuries in the Manitoba Construction Sector

The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB) and the Government of Manitoba's Workplace Safety and Health Division (WSHD) have unveiled the first ever *Injuries and Illnesses in the Manitoba Construction Sector* report, drawing attention to the need for increased injury prevention activity in this sector.

The report provides a comprehensive review of injuries and illnesses in Manitoba's construction sector for the period 2000 through 2005. Though the time loss injury rate for the province decreased by 21 percent from 2000 to 2005, the time loss injury rate for the construction sector decreased by only four percent for that same period of time. The time loss injury rate for the construction sector has been on the rise since 2004.

"Strong activity in Manitoba's construction sector means more workers are entering this area of our workforce each day," says Minister of Labour and Immigration Nancy Allan. "This means we must remain diligent and re-visit our responsibilities on a daily basis in order to protect all workers' safety and health on the job."

The WCB and WSHD are taking action to address the injury increase in the construction sector.

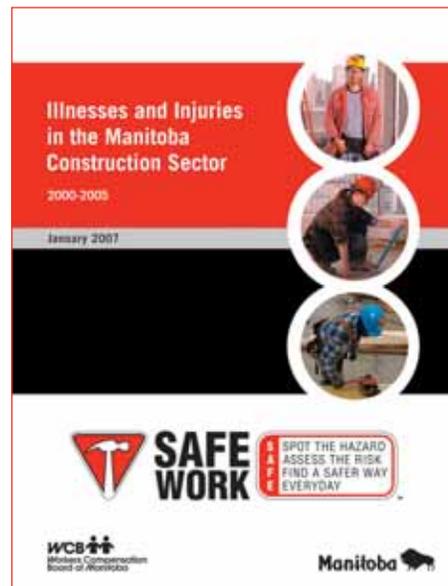
WSHD have added Safety and Health Officers to increase the number of

construction site inspections. To strengthen prevention efforts in the construction sector, workplace safety and health regulations have been modernized so they provide clear direction for all workplace parties in specific areas such as confined space entry and fall protection.

construction firms that earn safety association accreditation. Safety accreditation is offered by the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association's Safety Health and Environment Program (SHEP) and the Construction Safety Association of Manitoba (CSAM).

"At the WCB, we say if you're hurt at work, we're here to help," says WCB Chairperson Tom Farrell. "The fact is, though, we are here to help you not get hurt at work. That's why we've put our money where our mouth is with the Incentive Plan. We want safety to be an important part of being competitive in the construction sector."

SAFE Work partners in construction are also doing their part to reduce injuries in this sector. The report was unveiled at the Manitoba Construction Conference on February 6, Canada's second largest safety, health and environment conference, co-hosted by SHEP and CSAM. The conference is just one part of the construction industry's effort to meet the need for increased education and training, a key component of injury prevention, for workers and employers in the construction sector.



The WCB teamed up with industry safety associations to create the SAFE on Site outreach program to deliver more safety messages at construction sites. The WCB also put in place the Incentive Plan in Construction, a pilot program that includes a five percent reduction in WCB assessment rates for

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