



WCB update

December 2007

Average Assessment Rates Drop in Manitoba

\$1.60 per \$100.00 of Payroll a Competitive Manitoba Advantage

The average assessment rate that Manitoba employers pay for their workers' compensation coverage will drop nearly 5 percent from \$1.68 to \$1.60 effective January 1, 2008.

On average, Manitoba employers will pay \$1.60 per \$100.00 of their assessable payroll to the WCB for injury insurance coverage, which includes wage loss payments, medical benefits and rehabilitation services. That rate may be higher or lower, depending on the employer's injury experience and the safety and health risk of their industry.

"Thanks to a number of factors like healthy investment returns and safer workplaces, we're able to continue to provide among the lowest rates in the

country," says Doug Sexsmith, WCB President and CEO. "A strong financial position and good results allow us to offer a competitive advantage to Manitoba employers."

Overall, about 85 percent of employers will experience lower WCB premium rates in 2008. About a third of firms will receive a decrease in their assessment rate of 10 percent or more.

The average assessment rate is falling at the same time injured workers are receiving improved benefits as a result of recent amendments to the Workers Compensation Act.

The gradual increase of the maximum assessable earnings cap for the purpose of employer premiums also continues, with the 2008 ceiling set at \$77,000.

While the workplace injury rate in Manitoba has fallen 22 percent from 2000 to 2006, there are additional



measures that employers can take to make their workplaces safer and in turn, lower their workers' compensation and business costs.

“Creating safer workplaces and preventing injuries is critical to keeping the assessment rates low.”

"Creating safer workplaces and preventing injuries is critical to keeping the assessment rates low and keeping workers safe, healthy and on the job," Sexsmith says. "When employers formalize health and safety procedures and implement effective

disability management and return to work programs, they pay lower premiums. It's that simple."

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Centralized Information through Manitoba Business Links

Manitoba Business Links (the “Hub”) is an initiative of the provincial government designed to help simplify businesses’ dealings with government and its departments. It’s a database that consists of more than 105,000 registered Manitoba companies.

As part of the initiative, in which the WCB of Manitoba has agreed to be a participating partner, businesses will be assigned a 9-digit national Business Number (BN). The number will be used as a single identifier to achieve the concept of “One Business, One Number”.

The WCB has begun collecting the 9-digit BN from employers. If you

have a BN, you will need to provide this information on the WCB form you receive at the beginning of 2008.

While still in its early stages, the goal of Manitoba Business Links is to help centralize and streamline information so that it can be shared among participating government programs. This means that eventually, you will only need to update information, such as address changes, with one government program.

For more information on Manitoba Business Links, call (204) 945-0514, e-mail onenumber@gov.mb.ca or visit www.gov.mb.ca and click on ‘Business’.

WCB Establishes Rate Model Policy

After consulting with its stakeholders, the WCB introduced a new method to establish employer assessment rates in 2001. That new method, referred to as the WCB’s Rate Setting Model, is now WCB policy. It’s founded on the following principles:

To promote injury prevention

To promote effective workplace disability management programs

To be fair

To maintain financial soundness

Policy 31.05.05, Rate Setting for the General Body of Employers (Employers in Class E), sets out the principles and features of the Rate Setting Model. It incorporates the foundation of the Rate Setting Model from 2001 and the enhancements implemented in consultation subsequently.

You can view the WCB policy manual online at www.wcb.mb.ca.

Reporting Workers Earnings: What to Include

Employers are routinely required to provide workers earnings information to the WCB. Many employers question what should be included when submitting workers earnings.

In general, if the earnings are taxable by Canada Revenue Agency, the earnings should be included in the amount you report to the WCB. A more comprehensive explanation is included in the completion guide the WCB sends with your form to report workers earnings.



Remember to include the earnings of all of your workers – even if they work casually, on a part-time basis or in an administrative role. Amounts paid to the **family members** of business owners/directors should also be reported to the WCB. In some cases, the earnings of contract labour are assessable; contact the WCB for details.

If you’re still unsure of how to report earnings to the WCB, please call 954-4567 or toll-free at 1-800-362-3340, extension 4567.

Opportunity to Provide Work Experience to Occupational Health and Safety Students

The Occupational Health and Safety Certificate (OHSC) program, offered through Red River College (RRC), is an 8-month program with fourteen courses that provides students with the knowledge and skills essential to reducing the risk of occupational injury and disease in Manitoba workplaces.

The program prepares students to work in a variety of industrial, business and educational settings. It's currently

offered on both a full-time and part-time basis with some courses available through distance education. In November, 20 students commenced the full-time program, which concludes in June 2008. Graduates of the program are in high demand and quickly obtain full-time employment.

The last six weeks of the program involves practical work placement experience. Employers interested in

providing a work placement opportunity for an OHSC student are encouraged to contact Brigitte Mulvihill, Program Facilitator, at 632-3983 or by e-mail at bmulvihi@rrc.mb.ca. RRC can also deliver these program courses to employees in your workplace.

For more information on the certificate program, visit <http://me.rrc.mb.ca/catalogue>

WCB Thompson Office Moves to New Location

The WCB of Manitoba's northern regional office in Thompson moved to its new office in the city's New Town Square on October 22.

"We're committed to providing exemplary service to our customers in northern Manitoba," says WCB President and CEO Doug Sexsmith. "The new office's layout and location will improve accessibility and privacy for injured workers and other visitors, while offering an efficient and secure work environment for our staff."

The new WCB of Manitoba's Thompson office can be reached at this address:

WCB of Manitoba
#4-90 Thompson Drive
Thompson, Manitoba
R8N 1Y9

WCB Honours Recipients at the Manitoba Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards

The WCB values diversity, both in the community and in the workforce. As part of their commitment to collaborating with community partners, the WCB was proud to be a sponsor of the 2007 Manitoba Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards.

On October 18, fourteen Aboriginal youth were honoured at the gala event in various categories – from athletic to academic to personal achievement. The WCB sponsored two Manitoba Aboriginal Youth Achievement Awards

in the categories of Artistic Performer and Artistic Visual.

"We're committed to building a diverse workforce, one that's reflective of our increasingly diverse environment," says Doug Sexsmith, WCB President and CEO. "Aboriginal people represent a growing part of our workforce and our customer base. By supporting this initiative, we're helping to invest in our youth and build our future workforce."

Dates to Remember

January 20, 2008 – The Quarterly Remittance for the fourth quarter of 2007 and payment must be received at the WCB for firms reporting on a quarterly basis.

February 29, 2008 – 2007/2008 Annual Workers Earnings Reports are due.

February 29, 2008 – 2007 Quarterly Reconciliation Forms are due.



SAFE Work Clothing Drive Brings Work Clothes to Less Fortunate

The WCB of Manitoba has partnered with Mark's Work Wearhouse and Siloam Mission to collect safety apparel for Winnipeggers who can't afford it.

Mark's Work Wearhouse encouraged customers to drop off their previously worn safety and work apparel at any Winnipeg Mark's location. The first donations were shipped to Siloam Mission on November 5, where they will be distributed to Winnipeggers who want to work, but are unable to afford proper safety clothing.

"Everyone has the right to be safe and healthy at work," says WCB Chairperson Tom Farrell. "People should be able to enter the workforce without worrying whether they will be

as well-protected as their co-workers. No one should be reluctant to pursue employment because they don't have enough money for safe and warm clothing."

Siloam Mission is a Christian humanitarian agency that has been serving Winnipeg's less fortunate for over 20 years. Every day, Siloam is visited by up to 500 people – that's one quarter of Winnipeg's estimated homeless population.

"Our patrons face challenges and obstacles that many of us in society simply don't consider," says Siloam Mission CEO John Mohan. "For the poor and homeless who are moving forward in life and looking for work,



Siloam Mission CEO John Mohan (front, far right) and Stefano Grande, Downtown Biz Executive Director (back, 3rd from left) pose at the SAFE Work clothing drive with patrons of Siloam's MOST program.

proper work clothing is important to helping them get the jobs they need."

Siloam's MOST (Mission: Off the Streets Team) program, a partnership with the Downtown Winnipeg BIZ, will benefit greatly from the donations. MOST patrons work on downtown beautification projects as a way to prepare for their eventual return to the workforce.

Take Our Kids to SAFE Work Day Offers Opportunity for Safety and Prevention Awareness

Workplace safety and health was the message behind this year's Take Our Kids to Work Day, where more than 13,000 young Manitobans job-shadowed parents and other adults in most industries.

"In order for safety to become a priority for the workers of tomorrow, they must be aware of the importance of workplace safety today," says Tom Farrell, Chairperson of the WCB, who was invited to speak to Grade 9 students as part of the University of Manitoba's Take Our Kids to Work Day program. "In fact, this event should

be considered 'Take Our Kids to SAFE Work Day' around our province."

SAFE Work's most recent focus on young workers includes a fall public awareness campaign emphasizing the importance of workplace safety training and a web/radio contest featuring real

life SAFE Work stories from youth.

Take Our Kids to Work is organized by the Learning Partnership, a national non-profit group dedicated to creating learning and career opportunities through collaboration with education, business and community organizations.

Update is also available in a large print version.

Return undeliverable copies to:

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