



# WCB update

December 2010

## WCB Assessment Rate Drops Due to Prevention, Return to Work Initiatives

The average WCB assessment rate in Manitoba will drop from \$1.60 to \$1.50 effective January 1, 2011, due in large part to the reduced costs resulting from injury prevention and return to work initiatives. The rates had held steady at \$1.60 since 2008.

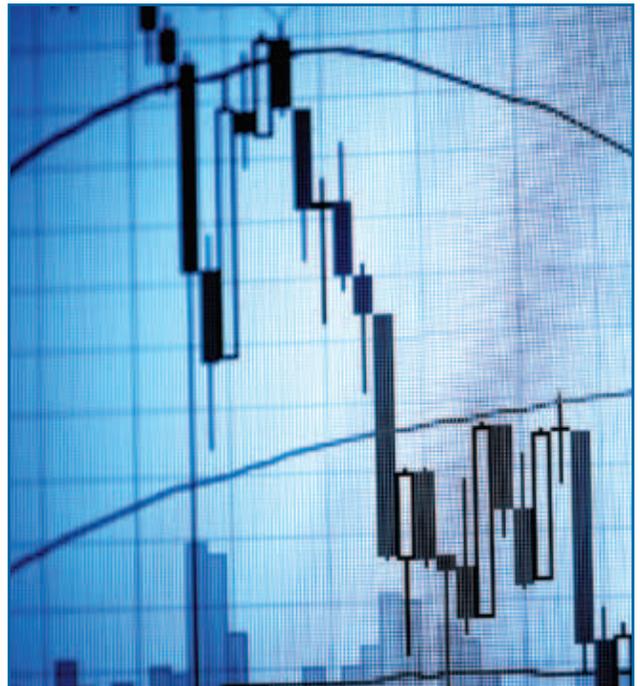
Manitoba employers will pay an average of \$1.50 per \$100.00 of their assessable payroll to the WCB for injury insurance coverage, including wage loss payments, medical benefits and rehabilitation services. That rate may be higher or lower, depending on the employer's injury experience and the safety and health risk of their industry.

"This represents a significant reduction in the average assessment rate and proof that Manitobans are getting the message about workplace safety," says Doug Sexsmith, WCB

President and CEO. "The injuries are decreasing, which allows us to continue to offer a competitive advantage for Manitoba employers by keeping assessment rates low."

Sexsmith adds that the average assessment rate the WCB sets is one of many factors that determine what an employer pays in premiums. "The best way for employers to reduce their premiums is to prevent injuries and to return injured workers to meaningful work as soon as it's safe to do so, which is what we see happening."

Overall, about 86 per cent of employers will pay lower WCB assessment rates in 2011, while 11 per cent will pay more and three per cent will not see a change in their rates. Those employers who had the largest declines in their injury experience benefited the most. Manitoba will have the second lowest workers compensation assessment rates in the country.



"Although most of our employers will see rate reductions, the fact that over one in 10 employers will pay more tells us that there is still room for improvement in injury prevention and return to work," adds Sexsmith.

The gradual increase in the maximum assessable earnings cap also continues, with the 2011 ceiling set at \$96,000.

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## WCB Opening New Office in Brandon

The WCB announced it will be opening a new location in Brandon, Manitoba, in early 2012. This office will service workers and employers located in Brandon and surrounding areas.

“This announcement reflects our government’s priority of ensuring Manitobans in all parts of the province have access to important institutions regardless of where they live,” says Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger. “Having the WCB right here in Brandon means workers and employers can receive face-to-face help on preventing injuries and returning workers to health and meaningful work in the event workplace injuries occur.”

The Brandon office is planned to provide initial adjudication of claims and case management functions. In addition, it will offer a range of services such as healthcare examinations, vocational rehabilitation and SAFE Work services as well as some assessment

services. Currently, customers travel to Winnipeg for these services or Winnipeg staff is required to travel to Brandon.

“The new WCB office is recognition of Brandon’s importance as a regional centre and is just one more advantage for employers and workers in this area to access more direct service,” says Shari Decter Hirst, Mayor of Brandon.

“As the second largest community in Manitoba and with many major employers located in and around the city, we feel Brandon is the perfect location to offer these services,” agrees Doug Sexsmith, WCB President and CEO.

The WCB is developing a comprehensive transition plan in order to minimize disruption to its

stakeholders during the transition period and maintain its commitment to service excellence.

The WCB currently has two offices, a head office in Winnipeg and a small satellite office in Thompson that provides initial adjudication of claims and case management services.



*Doug Sexsmith, WCB President & CEO and Manitoba Premier Greg Selinger say a few words at the press conference in Brandon. Photo courtesy of Colin Corneau/Brandon Sun.*

## Redesigned WCB Website Coming in First Quarter of 2011

The WCB’s vision is to make its website the “go to” place for information and services on such areas as injury prevention, return to work, rates, policies and benefits among those who seek these items online. The first step in achieving that vision was to modernize our website and ensure the information we provide is what our customers want.

To accomplish this goal we are in the process of creating a website with the following new and improved features:

- improved accessibility for those with disabilities that also provides the benefit of quick and efficient site downloading for all site visitors
- page takeovers so specific promotional content can be delivered
- interactive elements such as slideshows that feature current initiatives at the WCB
- multimedia capability such as video
- a more robust search engine that includes numeric information searches and content recommendations which may not be intuitively related to the initial search.

These are just some of the features to be included in the site. The redesigned site is scheduled to be formally launched in the first quarter of 2011. Stay tuned for more information about the project’s progress.

### Improving Service to Employers

A new internal registration system was launched at the WCB on November 22, 2010. This system will help make operations in the Assessment Services Department more efficient, and will ultimately lead to more timely service for employers.

## WCB Supports Program Studying Ergonomic Issues with Older Workers

Manitoba's workforce is aging. The 'baby boom' population is now having an effect on the age distribution of workers. It is expected by the year 2011, the working population over the age of 45 will grow to 41 per cent, compared to 29 per cent in 1991.

In our ongoing efforts to make workplaces safer, the WCB is supporting A. Dolhy Ergonomics Inc. to provide ergonomic case studies in small businesses regarding jobs that may affect older workers. This grant was awarded through our Community Initiatives and Research Program (CIRP).

The funding will support the development of 40 case studies of ergonomic interventions for older workers employed by small businesses. The case studies will be based on actual workplace assessments. These case studies will quantify risk reduction and job accommodation benefits using cost benefit analysis and increase awareness of workplace health and safety issues related to older workers. The project will provide concrete recommendations concerning ergonomic standards and guidelines for older workers. Employers will be eligible for financial support to offset the costs of workplace accommodations recommended by the program ergonomist.

A. Dolhy Ergonomics Inc. is looking for small businesses, with less than 50 employees, who may have potential ergonomic issues affecting older workers. If you are interested in participating in this ergonomic service, please contact Andrew Dolhy at [dolhy@mts.net](mailto:dolhy@mts.net) or call (204) 299-9132.

"There are physically demanding jobs that affect all workers, however, we

are seeing a slight increase in older worker injuries beyond demographic or employment explanations," says Andrew Dolhy, a certified professional ergonomist for 15 years. "The goal of this project is to visit with small workplaces, identify jobs that may affect older workers, assess the risk of injury, and find a safer way to perform the work."

Taking over for the CIRP last year, the Research and Workplace Innovation Program (RWIP) makes available

\$1 million each year to fund high quality scientific research and programs that develop, implement or evaluate innovative, practical, shop floor solutions for improving workplace health and safety.

For more information about the Community Initiatives and Research Program or Research and Workplace Innovation Program, contact Bruce Cielen at 954-4650 or [bcielen@wcb.mb.ca](mailto:bcielen@wcb.mb.ca) or visit [www.wcb.mb.ca](http://www.wcb.mb.ca).

## Reporting Your Payroll: What to Include

When reporting payroll to the WCB, you need to include earnings for all workers in your organization regardless of the number of hours they work, the structure of their pay, or the type of work they do. In general, if the earnings, allowances or benefits are taxable by Canada Revenue Agency, they should be included in the amount you report to the WCB. As well, the earnings of contract labour are often assessable; to determine if this applies to you, contact the WCB for details.

When providing payroll information, do not include the earnings of

directors of corporations, sole proprietors or partners. Coverage is available for these individuals however it must be purchased separately. If you need more information, please view the Personal Coverage Fact Sheet in the Publications section of our website located at [www.wcb.mb.ca](http://www.wcb.mb.ca).

A more comprehensive explanation of workers' earnings can be found on our website at [http://www.wcb.mb.ca/employers/annual\\_form\\_completion\\_help.html](http://www.wcb.mb.ca/employers/annual_form_completion_help.html).

If you are still unsure of how to report payroll to the WCB, please call 954-4505 or toll-free at 1-800-362-3340, extension 4505.

## Dates to Remember



**January 20, 2011** – The Quarterly Remittance for the fourth quarter of 2010 and payment must be received at the WCB for firms reporting on a quarterly basis.

**February 28, 2011** – 2010/2011 Annual Payroll Form (previously known as the Annual Workers Earnings Report) is due.

**February 28, 2011** – 2010 Quarterly Reconciliation Forms are due.

Phone service will be extended from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. February 21 – 28, 2011. If you have any questions, please call 954-4567 or toll free 1-800-362-3340 for assistance from our Assessments staff.



## Take Our Kids to 'SAFE' Work Day

Grade nine students throughout Manitoba had the opportunity to trade in their textbooks in exchange for some workplace safety training as part of Take Our Kids to Work Day on November 3. This one-day job shadowing experience offered students the chance to see what the WCB is all about with either a parent, relative or sponsor.

"We put the 'SAFE' in Take Our Kids to Work Day to emphasize our commitment to workplace safety and health," says Doug Sexsmith, WCB President and CEO. "Our hope is that parents and employers will not only discuss safety issues with their children, but also set an example for them through their own safe work practices."

As part of Take Our Kids to Work Day, 20 grade nine students had a

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chance to live a day in the life of a WCB employee. They started the day learning about the WCB, took a tour of the Broadway building, reviewed 'A Safe Student Resource Handbook' with Safe Workers of Tomorrow and completed a fun and interactive safety quiz. Students were then able to spend the afternoon with their parent or sponsor, watching them in action as they carried out their daily duties.

SAFE Work is an injury and illness prevention strategy developed by WCB and the Workplace Safety and Health Division. There are a number of SAFE Work resources and training programs available for youth online at [www.SAFEManitoba.com](http://www.SAFEManitoba.com).

Take Our Kids to Work Day 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.

Whether you're on your job site or just away from your desk, check out these safety tips and resources that travel with you!

### New Regulation Information:

Find out the latest news on changing Regulations – all the information is right at your fingertips!

Have any questions about the site? Email [info@safemanitoba.com](mailto:info@safemanitoba.com) for more information!

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

## The Great Debate

Are ALL workplace injuries preventable? Are any injuries unavoidable? We encourage you to voice your opinion and join 'The SAFE Work Debate.' Over the next three months, you will get a chance to share your thoughts and debate your point with other Manitobans.

Visit [www.SafeWorkDebate.com](http://www.SafeWorkDebate.com) to vote for your chance to **win a flat screen TV**. Take part in live forums, discussions and respond to scenarios that provoke both the logical and emotional sides of the debate. You will also find links to our Facebook and Twitter Pages, where the debating continues.

Are ALL workplace injuries preventable? What do you think?

