

## No Increase in Average WCB Assessment Rates for 2012

The average WCB assessment rate in Manitoba will remain stable at \$1.50 next year, despite an unpredictable investment environment.

Manitoba employers will not see an increase in the average assessment rate in 2012. Instead, they will pay an average of \$1.50 per \$100 of their assessable payroll to the WCB for injury insurance coverage, including wage loss payments, medical benefits and rehabilitation services. The employer's own rate may be higher or lower than average, depending on their injury experience and the safety and health risk of their industry.

Last year, the WCB average assessment rate fell to \$1.50 from \$1.60 the year before. The rates had previously held steady at \$1.60 since 2008.

"Rate stability is possible because of significant reductions in the injury rate over the last decade and a focus on safe and timely return to meaningful employment for injured workers," says Doug Sexsmith, WCB



President and CEO. "This allows us to continue to offer a competitive advantage for Manitoba employers by keeping assessment rates low. The fact that most employers will either see a decrease in their rates or no increase tells us that our message of workplace safety is being heard, although there is still work to be done in that area."

"The best way for employers to reduce their premiums remains to prevent injuries and to return injured workers to meaningful work as soon as it's safe to do so," says Sexsmith.

### Your Link to Safety and Health Information

Get the latest workplace safety and health information delivered right to your inbox! Subscribe to the SAFE Manitoba and WCB e-newsletters for tips and news delivered right to you.

Sign up at [www.safemanitoba.com](http://www.safemanitoba.com) and [www.wcb.mb.ca](http://www.wcb.mb.ca).

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Overall, about 39 per cent of employers will pay lower WCB assessment rates in 2012, while 12 per cent will pay more and 49 per cent will not see a change in their rates. Those employers who had the largest declines in their injury experience benefited the most. In 2011, Manitoba had the second lowest workers compensation assessment rates in the country, a status that will likely stay the same in 2012.

## Ten Years in the Making

### WCB Prepares to Bid a Fond Farewell to President and CEO

After 10 years as President and CEO of the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba, Doug Sexsmith will retire from the role on January 6, 2012.

The WCB has undergone many changes and improvements during Sexsmith's long and successful tenure and we caught up with the outgoing President to gain his perspective on what he remembers most from the last 10 years.

"One of the initiatives I'm most proud of is the development of our prevention mandate," Sexsmith begins. "We've been building awareness with our SAFE Work public awareness campaigns and the reward has been a significant drop in injury rates. In fact, the provincial time loss injury rate fell from a high of 5.6 time loss injuries per 100 workers in 2000 to 3.3 in 2010. This is a drop of 41.1 per cent over the period."

In 2006, the provincial government enacted major legislative changes to modernize *The Workers Compensation Act*.

"Activities to support the implementation of the new Act included revising and creating

policies, upgrading computer systems, conducting training sessions for staff and creating communications strategies to keep our stakeholders informed. As a result of these changes, we also extended our coverage to thousands more employers and workers throughout Manitoba."

Sexsmith and his leadership team put considerable focus on strengthening operations as well.

"The biggest operational change for the WCB during my tenure has been the move to electronic file systems as part of the streamlining of our processes. These changes have been undertaken to make us more productive and to allow us to better serve our customers through key functions such as improved support for return to work and ongoing improvement to our support for employers.

"I'm also extremely proud to say that throughout my years at the WCB, we have emphasized strong fiscal management despite going through challenging economic times. Our financial position has allowed us to keep our rates among the lowest in the country."

Is there anything that hasn't changed?



"One thing that has remained consistent throughout my tenure has been our commitment to service excellence. Our staff see top notch service as their main priority. Additionally, we've expanded our service beyond Winnipeg with a satellite office in Thompson and a regional office opening in Brandon in the New Year.

"In the end, continuing to promote safe and healthy workplaces and providing compassionate and supportive service in the event of workplace injuries have been the highlights of the WCB's achievements over the last 10 years.

"That has been the greatest reward."

## Winston Maharaj Appointed President and CEO of the WCB

Winston Maharaj has been selected as the next President and CEO of the WCB.

Maharaj comes to the WCB from the Healthcare Employees Benefit Plans (HEB Manitoba) where he held the position of Chief Executive Officer from 2007 to the present. In this role, he was responsible for strategic and operational planning for the organization as well as being

the primary contact between HEB operations and the Board of Trustees.

"I'm excited to be joining an organization that plays such a vital role in helping injured workers and preventing workplace injuries, while at the same time, placing a high value on good management and service excellence," says Maharaj.

"We are pleased to be adding a leader of Winston Maharaj's calibre to the WCB management team," says Michael Werier, Chair of the WCB Board of Directors. "Concurrently, the Board acknowledges with sincere thanks Doug Sexsmith's 10 years of exemplary service."

## Personal Care Home Partners with WCB to Prevent Workplace Injuries

It was 2008 when David Driedger became Chief Executive Officer of the Steinbach-based HavenGroup and he quickly turned his attention to the Rest Haven Personal Care Home’s poor workplace injury performance.

“David asked me to contact the WCB to see what we could do in our organization to better understand our injury performance and ultimately lower our WCB rate,” explains HavenGroup’s Director of Finance, Emily Lessard.

Shortly after that first contact, Lessard received a call from SAFE Work Coordinator Kim Keating who offered to work with Rest Haven as part of the SAFE Work Partners in Prevention Program.

“The Partners in Prevention Program is a free consultation service where a SAFE Work Coordinator goes into the workplace to assess the current safety, prevention and return to work programs and make recommendations for improvements,” says Kim Keating.

“I wasn’t aware of the program,” Lessard acknowledges, “but then David and I met with Kim and

Doug Sexsmith, President and CEO of the WCB, and we established a formal agreement between our two organizations.”

Over the next five months, Lessard and Keating worked closely to establish a HavenGroup project team, review existing documentation such as health and safety policies and incident reports, interview select staff members, conduct a staff safety climate survey and generally observe the environment and facility.

“Over 80 per cent of the personal care home staff participated in the survey,” Keating says. “Combine that with the commitment of the leadership team, the organization’s low staff turnover and a consistent message and I knew that this consultation would have very positive results!”

Keating presented a report that included recommendations ranging from the development of safety and health policies and the implementation of staff training and awareness to correcting issues with equipment, procedures and the physical building.

“To date, our organization has nearly completed or met all of the recommendations and we expect that by March 31, 2012, all will be met,” Lessard explains proudly.

Since partnering with the WCB’s Partners in Prevention Program, the Rest Haven Personal Care Home has reduced employee injuries, developed an in-house disability management program, reduced the duration and number of WCB claims and reduced their WCB assessment rate.

“The Partners in Prevention Program has been so beneficial to us,” Lessard concludes. “It provided HavenGroup with the necessary tools and resources to improve our safety environment and Kim was a pleasure to work with! I would highly recommend the program to any employer seeking to provide a safe work environment for their employees.”

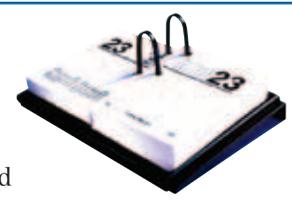
For more information on the SAFE Work Partners in Prevention Program, call 954-4501 or toll free 1-800-362-3340.

### Brandon Regional Office Opening Soon

In early 2012, the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba will be opening a Regional Office in Brandon to better serve the Westman region.

We’ll be there for injured workers and employers, helping people return to work quickly and safely. 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.

## Dates to Remember



**January 20, 2012** – The Quarterly Remittance and payment for the fourth quarter of 2011 must be received at the WCB for firms reporting on a quarterly basis. The remittance form is attached to your November statement.

**February 28, 2012** – 2011/2012 Annual Payroll Form and 2011 Quarterly Reconciliation Forms are due.

**February 27-29, 2012** – Phone service extended from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. If you have any questions, please call 954-4505 or toll free at 1-800-362-3340.



## Maintaining Personal Coverage Now Easier Than Ever

Based on our ongoing evaluation of service and feedback received from employers, the WCB recently made improvements to the Personal (Special) Coverage insurance package available to business owners operating in Manitoba.

In July, in addition to introducing a guaranteed minimum benefit level for holders of Personal Coverage, the WCB significantly streamlined the Personal Coverage annual renewal process.

“We have found that most Personal Coverage accounts maintain their level of coverage from year to year, so asking them to confirm what they made in the previous year and then reconfirm what level of coverage they want in the coming year seemed unnecessary,” explains Bob Craddock, Director of Assessment Services.

For individuals who have Personal Coverage but no worker payroll to report, they no longer need to complete the Annual Payroll Form. Instead, they will receive a statement early in January outlining their rate, the amount of coverage we are carrying forward on their behalf and payment options available to them. Payment on their account by January 31 will ensure their insurance coverage continues without interruption.

Employers with Personal Coverage can still change their coverage level to better reflect their earnings at any point during the year.

For more information about coverage available to business owners, please visit the Employer tab on the WCB website at [www.wcb.mb.ca](http://www.wcb.mb.ca) or call us at 954-4505 (toll free at 1-800-362-3340).

## SAFE Work Needs Your Voice

SAFE Work has launched its newest prevention campaign – and it wants Manitoba’s help to make an impact on workplace injuries.

SAFE Work Needs Your Voice – seen now on billboards, television and online – promotes awareness of SAFE Work to the general public and encourages workers to participate in workplace safety.

The spot shows workers within their bubbles, portrayed by being encased in glass cubes. After noticing a newer

worker who isn’t being safe, one worker “breaks out” of his routine to prevent an impending injury to a co-worker.

SAFE Work Needs Your Voice is a call to action for Manitobans to break through the barriers and actively participate in their workplace safety culture.

To view the SAFE Work Needs Your Voice commercial, visit [safemanitoba.com/your\\_voice.aspx](http://safemanitoba.com/your_voice.aspx).



**Correction:** In the October 2011 edition of *Update*, we incorrectly listed the threshold for providing cost relief as \$10,510. In fact, the threshold at January 1, 2011 is \$10,750. We regret any confusion this may have caused.

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

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