

WCB Average Assessment Rates Drop Below a Dollar to Become the Lowest in Canada

The average WCB assessment rate in Manitoba will drop to \$0.95 from \$1.10 per \$100 of assessable payroll in 2018. With rates falling below a dollar, the WCB is able to offer Manitoba employers the lowest rate in the country.

Enhancements in return to work efforts and injury prevention, coupled with the WCB's strong financial reserves, have helped to make the rate decrease possible.

"We're proud to be able to offer Manitoba employers the lowest rate in Canada," says Winston Maharaj, WCB President and CEO. "The decrease in our rates tells us that both employers and workers are engaged in prevention and return to work."

Beginning January 1, 2018, 91 per cent of employers will see a decrease in their rates. Overall, employers will pay \$30 million less in premiums in 2018 compared to 2017.

"We've partnered with workplaces to make great strides this past year," says Maharaj. "As a result, the compensation system is costing employers less. That translates into greater savings and more value for the Manitoba economy."

In addition, over the past four years, surpluses due to higher than anticipated investment returns have resulted in the Board consistently having a funding position that is



above its target of 130%, even after factoring in the steady decreases in the annual average assessment rate. The Board is reviewing options for the disposition of the accumulated surplus beyond the reserve, including implementing a dividend to employers in the years to come.

Over the past ten years, Manitoba's time loss injury rate has dropped 30 per cent. Those employers who belong to an industry-based safety program are estimated to pay \$18 million less in WCB premiums in 2018 than they

paid in 2017, a savings of 18 per cent.

"There's a strong business case for injury prevention, and we're starting to see those benefits," says Maharaj. "Ultimately, employers first and foremost want to ensure their workers make it home safe at the end of the day. Improved health and safety in the workplace and strong return to work programs can assist in achieving that goal, as well as providing employers with lower rates."

For 2018, maximum assessable earnings remain capped at \$127,000.





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We're Working on Return to Work Plans



In October, the WCB ran our first-ever "Return to Work" campaign; an exciting next step in our continued promotion of Return to Work best practices to employers, workers and healthcare professionals.

There are a lot of benefits to a safe Return to Work program. A gradual return with modified duties can mean a better recovery for injured or ill workers. For employers, it means having that valued employee back sooner.

But a good Return to Work plan isn't developed in a vacuum. It's not "one size fits all"... because every workplace is different.

A Return to Work plan is built with the worker, employer, healthcare provider and the WCB to ensure things are done right, done safely and done with the worker's health in mind.

We offer a one day workshop for employers wanting to enhance or develop a Return to Work program. For more information, contact us at RTWProgramServices@wcb.mb.ca or call 1-855-954-4321, extension 4662.

Start planning for a Return to Work plan that works for your workplace. The WCB would be happy to help.

We have enclosed the poster "What to Expect from Return to Work" with this edition of the newsletter. You may wish to post this at your workplace to remind everyone of the elements of a good Return to Work plan.

Claim Information Readily Available

The WCB's recent service improvements include the Claim Transaction Statement that debuted in early November. Employers with active claims will now know up front what claim information is used to calculate future rates, along with additional cost categories and expanded transaction descriptions.

More detailed information on how to read the new Claim Transaction Statement is found at wcb.mb.ca/claim-transaction-statement.

Our improvements continued with the Claims Online application that includes many of same enhancements along with a claim status bar that lets you know if a claim is still being adjudicated, accepted or disallowed.

If you have not yet used the Claim Online application, try it out. Getting started takes a few minutes and you can learn a lot of important information about your active claims. Learn more at wcb.mb.ca/claims-online.

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