



COVERAGE FOR CONTRACT WORKERS

Under *The Workers Compensation Act*, the Workers Compensation Board has the responsibility to provide compensation coverage for workers in most industries in Manitoba. This can include individuals who work on a contract basis in mandatory industries.

In the case of contract services, the WCB must determine if they are employers, independent contractors or your workers using a business test. If they are deemed your workers, you need to report the labour portion of their contract payments (excluding GST) as worker's payroll.

What are my responsibilities if I hire contract workers?

- 1) To provide compensation coverage for sub-contractors and their workers who do not qualify for their own compensation coverage.
- 2) To ensure qualifying sub-contractors and any workers they employ are registered, and in good standing with the WCB.

What industries does this apply to?

If your business is engaged in a contract-based industry (such as construction, trucking, logging, janitorial, oil and gas wells, tow trucks, etc.), service providers hired on contract that add value to your products or services will be deemed your workers if they are not registered with the WCB as an employer or independent contractor with personal coverage.

If your business is not in a contract-based industry as described above, and you engage service providers on a contract basis, you need to contact the WCB to determine whether they are an independent business or if they are a worker for whom you should be including earnings in your payroll calculations.

What is the business test?

Generally, if the individual employs workers over the annual minimum earnings level of \$24,710 in 2019, or works primarily within their own business establishment, they will not be considered your worker.

If they do not meet the above criteria, as determined by the WCB, the WCB will use the independent business test to determine their status. The following are examples of factors used:

- Employs workers



- Has multiple customers
- Owns or leases a major piece of equipment
- Controls their work and payment schedule.

If they don't meet this test, they are your worker regardless of the industry you conduct business in.

If you operate a business in a contract-based industry (as described earlier), and the WCB determines that your sub-contractor passes the business test, they then have the option of purchasing Personal Coverage. However, if they do not purchase Personal Coverage in this case, they, and their workers, will be deemed your worker(s).

If you operate a business in a non-contract-based industry, and the WCB determines that your contractor is independent, they will not be deemed your worker. They have the option of applying for Personal Coverage and must cover any workers they have if they are operating in a mandatory industry.

How and when can I determine my contractor's status with the WCB?

You can determine this by obtaining a clearance from the WCB Clearance Request System before hiring the contractor. Otherwise, you may be liable for the assessment for any individuals or firms considered to be your workers.

The WCB Clearance Request System operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The system can be accessed in two different ways:

1. **Online Directory:** You can search a comprehensive list of businesses by account number, company or trade style name and immediately see their standing with the WCB. Enter as many names or account numbers as you want and get immediate information on each one. The Online Directory is available at www.wcb.mb.ca.
2. **Interactive Online List:** Using a secure Internet connection, registered users can create customized, interactive lists of firms and sub-contractors. If a company's status changes, the Clearance Request System will automatically flag the company's name in your file and email you about the change in status the next business day. To register, call (204) 954-4803 or toll free in Canada 1-866-751-9245.

Note: If you see the status "deemed worker", or if you cannot find your contractor in the system, and you are in a non-contract based industry, you will need to contact the WCB to verify their status.



Please also note: You should obtain a clearance before making final payment on any contract because if the sub-contractor owes the WCB money, you will be liable to withhold the assessment on the labour portion of the contract.

Sometimes final decisions on contracts are made outside of regular business hours. If a sub-contractor tells me that he has compensation coverage and I find out later that he did not, can I hold him financially responsible?

No, you cannot. *The Workers Compensation Act* states that contractors are not to deduct monies to offset WCB premiums.

Therefore, it is in your best interest to delay any final decisions until you have verified the sub-contractor's status with the WCB.

If a firm is deemed my worker, am I assessed on the entire contract value?

It depends. The WCB only charges you premiums based on the amount of the labour portion of the contract.

The WCB has a schedule that provides standard labour percentages based on the type of work being performed that can be applied to establish the amount of labour in contracts where the price includes materials and/or equipment. You can obtain a copy of the Assessment Schedule for Contract Labour at www.wcb.mb.ca under Employers, or by calling the WCB to request a copy.

For further information on contract workers, contact the Assessment Services Division at (204) 954-4505 or toll-free in Canada and the United States 1-855-954-4321 or fax (204) 954-4900 or toll-free in Canada 1-866-245-0796.

This publication is provided for general information. It is not intended to be legal advice, and should not be relied on as such. For more specific information, see *The Workers Compensation Act and Regulations and WCB Policies*. These documents are available on the WCB website at wcb.mb.ca.