



WCB update

April 2010

WCB partners with Keystone Agricultural Producers in a pilot project to reduce work-related injuries in the agriculture industry

The WCB, in its ongoing efforts to make workplaces safer, has awarded Manitoba's Keystone Agricultural Producers (KAP) a grant to develop a pilot project that will provide occupational health and safety services to farmers and farm workers. The grant has been awarded via the WCB's Research and Workplace Innovation Program (RWIP), which 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.

"The WCB, through programs like this, helps its partners in the community to create innovative projects that reduce workplace injuries and disease and help workers recover from injuries," says Alice Sayant, WCB Vice President, Prevention, Assessments and Customer Service. "This project is an extremely timely one, as agriculture is now a WCB covered industry."



Alice Sayant, WCB Vice President of Prevention, Assessments and Customer Service, accepts a plaque recognizing the WCB for leadership in farm safety by Doug Chorney, Vice President of KAP.

The project will provide occupational health and safety services to individual farmers and farm workers while providing one-on-one safety and health education and health tests. Trained Farm Safety Specialists will conduct on-site farm safety reviews of potential hazards from machinery, livestock facilities and chemical storage and propose measures to mitigate these risks. The pilot is estimated to cost \$188,000 and will be undertaken over a two-year period.

"We are excited to be announcing this project during Canadian Agricultural Safety Week," says Yvonne Rideout, General Manager, KAP. "We believe

this project will greatly benefit the agricultural community in Manitoba and complement other government initiatives in the province, such as the Manitoba Safe Farms Check Program."

Through two streams of funding – workplace innovation and scientific research – the RWIP program upholds the highest standards of merit-based evaluation of grant applications. Projects should be limited to two years or less in duration, and require funding of \$100,000 or less each year. Those who may be eligible for workplace innovation funding include: Manitoba employers, industry associations, safety groups, unions, researchers or consultants working with employers or workers.

The deadline to submit your Notice of Intent for Scientific Research projects is June 1, 2010. Workplace Innovation projects do not require a Notice of Intent. The closing date for all applications is July 19, 2010. For more information, call Bruce Cielen at 954-4650, or 1-800-362-3340 extension 4650, or bcielen@wcb.mb.ca.

In this Issue

Top Two Errors in Reporting Workers' Earnings	2
Remembering Lost Lives on April 28	2
NAOSH Week May 2 to 8	3
Steps for Life Walk	3
New Online Videos Help Prevent Musculoskeletal Injuries	4

Top Two Errors in Reporting Workers' Earnings

Each year, the WCB conducts random audits of Manitoba firms to ensure that employers are assessed fairly and equitably. We've learned that many firms are confused about how to report earnings for family members of owners or for independent contractors. For the past five years, the top two errors identified through audits were incorrect reporting of these types of earnings.

When are family members considered workers?

In some cases, firms have not included the earnings of family members of directors, sole proprietors or partners when they report their workers' earnings.

In 2006, the *Workers Compensation Act* was changed to ensure that the earnings of family members who work for a firm are included in the overall workers' assessable earnings reported on an annual or quarterly basis. Family members include children, spouses or other members of the family, regardless of whether they reside with the owner. The only exception to the legislated requirement is farm family members who may purchase coverage specifically for family members.

When is an independent contractor an employer or a worker?

The WCB determines through policy whether a firm is considered an employer, an independent contractor, or a worker of the firm that hires it. If a firm is designated as an employer or an independent contractor, it is able to obtain workers compensation coverage. If a firm is considered to be a worker of the principal or firm that hires it, then the principal is required to purchase workers compensation coverage on behalf of the firm.

Generally, if a firm does not pay the annual minimum amount of earnings to workers in a year (\$20,137 in 2010), it must meet certain business criteria to support that it is an independent contractor. If it cannot meet the criteria, it may be considered a worker of any principal that hires it. In certain contract-based industries (e.g. construction, trucking, logging, janitorial), independent contractors may still be considered workers of the principal that hires them if the independent contractors decide not to obtain Special Coverage.

For more details, visit www.wcb.mb.ca and click on About WCB > Policy Manual > WCB Policy 35.10.50, Status of Workers, Independent Contractors & Employers. You can also contact the WCB's Assessment Services Department at 954-4505 or toll free 1-800-362-3340, extension 4505. The WCB is governed by the *Workers Compensation Act* and its policies, and does not take into consideration rulings or determinations made by other agencies or organizations.

If you're unsure whether a contractor you've hired has obtained its own workers compensation coverage, you can check its status through the WCB's online Clearance system. Clearances can be obtained through any of the following methods:

- Visit the Online Directory at www.wcb.mb.ca
- Use the Automated Phone and Fax Back Service (requires firm numbers) by calling 954-4988 in Winnipeg, or 1-800-362-3340 ext. 4988 toll free
- Register your own Interactive Online List by calling 954-4803 in Winnipeg, or 1-866-751-9245 toll free.

Remembering Lost Lives on April 28

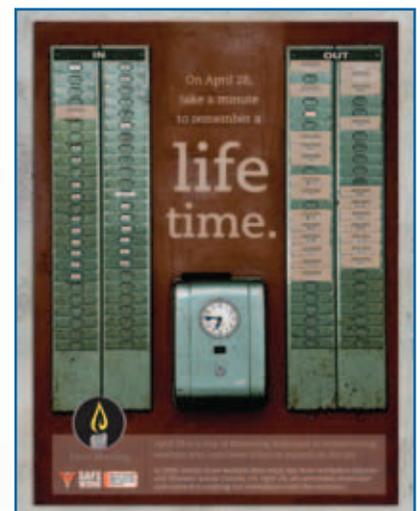
On April 28, 80 countries worldwide will take a moment to remember those who have suffered work-related injuries, illnesses and fatalities with a Day of Mourning.

The annual observance of this day serves as a reminder to employers and workers alike to do everything possible to ensure that their workplaces are safe and healthy. The Day of Mourning is as much a day to remember lost lives as it is to protect the living.

The number of injuries and fatalities that occur in the workplace every year is higher than most people would imagine. In 2009, nearly three workers died each day from a workplace injury or illness across Canada.

Through education and prevention efforts, the WCB is committed to reaching its goal of reducing workplace injuries and building a culture of safety and health throughout Manitoba.

The WCB will recognize the Day of Mourning on April 28 by lowering its flag to half-mast and observing a moment of silence. A Leaders' Walk will also be held, beginning at the Union Centre on Broadway and concluding at the Manitoba Legislature.



NAOSH Week May 2 to 8

This year's North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week takes place from May 2 to 8 with the theme of 'Safety and Health: A Commitment for Life – How Safe Are You?'

Sponsored by the Canadian Society of Safety Engineering (CSSE), NAOSH Week focuses on the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace. Employers are encouraged to develop safety activities in the workplace as a way to build prevention awareness among employees and the general public.

Over the week, businesses in Manitoba will promote and celebrate efforts that consciously work towards safety at work, safety at home and safety at play - for all Manitobans.

Many businesses already have their events in place, but it's not too late to become involved. If your workplace has an eye on safety, you may consider:

- sponsoring a safety poster contest for employees' children
- creating a company safety calendar with reminders and tips
- hosting a family safety fair or picnic
- launching a recognition program to reward health and safety suggestions
- setting up a demonstration.

You can enter your company's events at www.safemanitoba.com and be eligible to win in five categories, including best overall entry, most innovative and best representation of theme. Watch safemanitoba.com for further details.

For more information on NAOSH, visit www.naosh.ca or www.csse.org.



Steps for Life Walk

On Sunday, May 2, more than 3,500 Canadians will kick off NAOSH Week by gathering across Canada to walk for families of workplace tragedies. Last year, nearly \$160,000 was raised for families impacted by workplace fatalities, life-altering injuries and occupational disease.

The 5 km walk takes place at Kildonan Park. Registration begins at 10 a.m. and the walk kicks off at 11 a.m. Cost is \$20 per person, or you can register a team of 10 for \$150. All proceeds will support the Threads of Life Family Support program, which helps families impacted by workplace tragedy.

For more information or to register online, visit www.stepsforlife.ca or www.threadsoflife.ca.

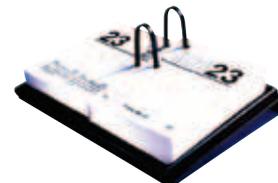


Team members from Morris Industries in Minnedosa, Manitoba recently celebrated their commitment to workplace safety. Employees were provided with a safety award that included the WCB's SAFE Work logo and Morris Industries' "We hear you" tagline, both important philosophies in the organization's goal of making safety a visible priority.

Thanks to the dedication and engagement among staff, Morris Industries recently achieved 300 days without a loss time incident.

Morris Industries has been in business since 1929, and is a worldwide manufacturer and distributor of agricultural equipment that includes air drills, air carts, air seeders and hay haulers.

Dates to Remember



Quarterly Billing Firms:

April 20, 2010 – The Quarterly Remittance for the first quarter of 2010 **and** payment must be received at the WCB by this date for firms reporting on a quarterly basis.

Annual Billing Firms:

April 30, 2010 – Firms who have not submitted their completed Annual Workers' Earnings Report (AWER) prior to this date will be arbitrarily assessed (their actual 2009 and estimated 2010 earnings will be determined by the WCB). In addition, they will be charged a late filing penalty equal to 10 percent of the premium generated on the arbitrarily assessed amount for 2010. Voluntarily registered firms that have not submitted their AWER will have their coverage cancelled.

WCB
update



New Online Videos Help Prevent Musculoskeletal Injuries

Many Manitobans don't believe musculoskeletal injuries (MSIs) are serious injuries. But when it comes to things like back pain, knee problems and ankle sprains, these 'little' injuries can end up having a huge impact on your life – both at work and at home.

That's why the WCB, in partnership with the province's Workplace Safety and Health division, decided to target this area of injury as part of their latest SAFE Work public awareness campaign.

In addition to the television commercials that have been airing for the past several months, there are many prevention materials available at www.safemanitoba.com. Most recently, a series of videos have been developed and are now available online.

The videos focus on real-life workplace scenarios with tips to help you protect yourself, your co-workers or your workforce from sprains, strains and tears. They include:

- **One-person transfer**, which demonstrates what to keep in mind when doing a one person minimal assist sit-to-stand transfer;
- **Two-person transfer**, which reminds you of important steps when doing a two person minimal assist sit-to-stand transfer; and
- **Building a better workstation**, where you can learn simple steps to improve your workspace and lessen your risk for injuries.



You can also download other useful resources, including a prevention guide for employers and joint committees, a guide to understanding MSI risks for workers, a brochure with helpful prevention tips and much more.

These injuries are 100% preventable – and preventing them is everyone's responsibility. From employers

providing training to workers identifying when a task is causing pain, it's up to all of us to work together to prevent sprains, strains and tears from happening in our workplaces.

Visit www.safemanitoba.com to learn how you can make SAFE Work a way of life today.

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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