



# WCB update

December 2008

## Average Assessment Rates Among Lowest in Canada

*Rates remain stable at \$1.60 per \$100.00 of payroll*

Manitoba will continue to have among the lowest average assessment rates in Canada after the WCB announced that the average rate will remain stable at \$1.60 effective January 1, 2009.

Manitoba employers will pay an average of \$1.60 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.

"Our rates are the third lowest in the country, and continue to be a competitive advantage for Manitoba employers," says Doug Sexsmith, WCB President and CEO. "In 2007, we enjoyed the best investment returns of any Canadian WCB. Although recent investment returns have been weak in

Canada and around the world, strong reserves and decreasing injury rates have contributed to stable premium rates."

Sexsmith adds that employers can reduce assessment rates by improving health and safety at their workplaces and improving return to work programs.



“ We provide Manitoba employers with a competitive advantage by having the third lowest assessment rates in Canada. ”

"By making their workplaces safer, employers are not only helping to lower their workers' compensation and business costs, but they're also investing in the welfare of their workers," says Sexsmith. "Our focus is on building a culture of health and safety, and by working together with our partners, we can continue to make safety a priority."

Overall, about 42 per cent of employers will experience lower WCB premium rates in 2009.

The gradual increase of the maximum assessable earnings cap also continues, with the 2009 ceiling set at \$83,000.

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## Reporting Workers Earnings: What to Include

Employers are required to provide workers' earnings information to the WCB.

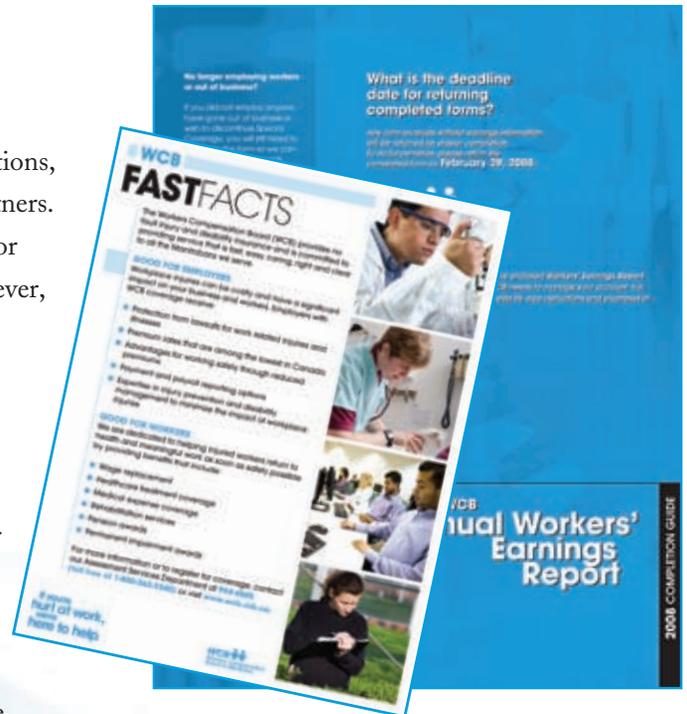
When reporting earnings to the WCB, you need to include earnings for all workers in your organization regardless of the number of hours they work, the structure of their pay, or the type of work they do. In general, if the earnings, allowances or benefits are taxable by Canada Revenue Agency, they should 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 you are calculating workers' earnings, 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 WCB 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. The information is under the "Employer" and "Current" headings within the current Annual Workers' Earnings Report Completion Guide.

If you're still unsure of how to report earnings to the WCB, please call 954-4567 or toll free at 1-800-362-3340, extension 4567.



## Research Funds Available to Employers Through New RWIP Program

The WCB has consulted with its stakeholders about the Community Initiatives and Research Program (CIRP), which has supported over 100 projects focusing on reducing the incidence and impact of workplace injuries since 1997. As a result, a new program, the Research and Workplace Innovation Program (RWIP), will replace the CIRP beginning in 2009.

The RWIP will make 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.

Through two streams of funding – scientific research and workplace innovation – the program will continue to uphold the highest standards of merit-based evaluation of grant applications, including peer review of scientific research, diligent project

monitoring and relevance to covered workers and employers. Projects should be limited to two years or less in duration, and require funding of \$100,000 or less each year.

WCB-covered employers who meet RWIP criteria may be eligible for workplace innovation funding.

The new program will issue its first call for proposals in May 2009. For more information, call Krista Breckman at 954-4335 or check out the WCB website at [http://www.wcb.mb.ca/about\\_wcb/community\\_initiatives.html](http://www.wcb.mb.ca/about_wcb/community_initiatives.html).

# WCB Reaches Out to Newly Covered Employers

As part of the WCB's initiative to welcome employers from industries that were added to those currently requiring workers compensation coverage, we have added information to the WCB website and conducted information sessions across the province for newly covered employers in November. The WCB will continue reaching out to newly covered employers to make sure they have the information they need and make preparations to ensure that every covered employer and injured worker receives the same high level of service that we currently provide.

For more details about extension of coverage, visit the Newly Covered Industries section of the WCB website located at [www.wcb.mb.ca](http://www.wcb.mb.ca).



**REGISTRATION IS EASY. AND REQUIRED.**

Workers compensation coverage extends to new industries, including agriculture, effective **January 1, 2009**. Employers in newly covered industries employing workers must register with the WCB by this date.

**REGISTRATION OPTIONS**  
Visit [www.wcb.mb.ca](http://www.wcb.mb.ca) and complete the pre-registration questionnaire or call **954-4565** (toll free **1-800-362-3340**).

A list of newly covered industries is available at [www.wcb.mb.ca](http://www.wcb.mb.ca).

If you're hurt at work, we're here to help.



# Opportunity to Enhance Aboriginal Workplace Safety

The MFL Occupational Health Centre, Inc. (MFLOHC) is looking for workplaces to participate in Sharing Circles to help enhance safety and health among Aboriginal workers.

Funded by the WCB's Community Initiatives and Research Program (CIRP), the purpose of the MFLOHC's *Wings of Change* project is to assist joint health and safety committees in rural workplaces to build safe work environments by using Sharing Circles and traditional Aboriginal teachings. This project will create a bridge between Aboriginal culture and Workplace Safety and Health committees. The project seeks to better engage Aboriginal workers with non-Aboriginal workers when dealing with workplace health and safety issues.

Priority for participation in the project will be given to workplaces with

both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal employees outside the city of Winnipeg. Workplaces will ideally have an established workplace safety and health committee, but if they don't, those with at least 20 or more employees will also be considered.

If you're interested in participating, please contact Janice Greene at 926-7907, toll free at 1-888-843-1229 or by e-mail at [aweop@mflohc.mb.ca](mailto:aweop@mflohc.mb.ca).

You can also take advantage of a Spirit Toolkit, which has been developed as part of the project. It includes such resources as a healthy workplace fact sheet, a Medicine Wheel puzzle and game, The Power of One Storytelling CD for sharing circle guides and much more. The Spirit Toolkit is available from the MFLOHC upon request and information is also available at [www.mflohc.mb.ca](http://www.mflohc.mb.ca) under Ningwanuk Meshquajese – Wings of Change.

# Dates to Remember



**January 20, 2009** – The Quarterly Remittance for the fourth quarter of 2008 and payment must be received at the WCB for firms reporting on a quarterly basis.

**February 28, 2009** – 2008/2009 Annual Workers Earnings Reports are due.

**February 28, 2009** – 2008 Quarterly Reconciliation Forms are due.

Phone service will be extended from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. February 23 to 27, 2009. If you have any questions, please call 954-4567 or toll free 1-800-362-3340 and our Assessments staff will be pleased to help.



## Never Too Early to Learn About Workplace Safety

**TAKE OUR KIDS TO WORK™** *provides opportunity for safety and prevention awareness*

Grade nine students throughout Manitoba had an opportunity to learn about workplace safety as part of Take Our Kids to Work Day, a national initiative which takes place annually on November 5. This one-day job-shadowing experience offers students the chance to spend a day at work with a parent, friend, relative or sponsor.

“Training is critical. It’s never too early to start teaching tomorrow’s workforce about the importance of workplace safety,” says Peter Bjornson, Minister of Education, Citizenship and Youth. “Our youth represent our future leaders and employers, and it’s key that they understand their rights and responsibilities when it comes to safety.”

As part of Take Our Kids to Work Day, nearly 50 grade nine students job-shadowed staff at StandardAero, where they received workplace safety training and completed a safety quiz. An iPod Touch was randomly awarded to one student, mirroring SAFE Work’s recent ad campaign that directs youth online to experience workplace safety solutions through SAFE Work webisodes.

“We’ve put the SAFE in Take Our Kids to Work Day to emphasize our commitment to workplace safety and health,” says WCB Chairperson Tom Farrell. “Our hope is that parents and employers will not only discuss safety issues with their children and young workers, but also set an example for them through their own safe work practices.”



*A StandardAero staff member shows a grade nine student the importance of working safely on the shop floor during Take Our Kids to Work Day.*

Safety and health is an integral part of the workplace culture at StandardAero, a key focus that representatives stressed to the visiting students.

“At StandardAero, workplace safety is part of all that we do, and it becomes especially important during Take Our Kids to Work Day,” says Nelson Barrett, Senior Vice-President of Services at StandardAero. “It’s up to us – as employers, co-workers, industry leaders and parents – to teach young

workers that there’s no such thing as a ‘stupid question’ when it comes to workplace safety.”

SAFE Work is an injury and illness prevention strategy developed by the WCB and the province’s Workplace Safety and Health Division. There are a number of resources and training programs aimed specifically at youth to help assist in reducing workplace injuries available at [www.safemanitoba.com](http://www.safemanitoba.com).

**Update is also available in a large print version.**

Return undeliverable copies to:

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