

WCB Update

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Vol. 3, Issue 2 March, 2003

WCB acts on Return to Work

The WCB has appointed Randy Wolfe as its Return to Worker Manager, a new position coming on the heels of the board's first Return to Work seminar held last June.

The seminar provided direction for the new return to work initiatives. Several themes resulted from the seminar and many of those will require facilitation on behalf of the WCB. As a result, the board determined that it was necessary and appropriate to appoint an individual to be responsible for Return to Work as an organizational issue for the next 12 to 18 months.

While the scope of the Return to Work Manager's role is still under development, Wolfe already has an aggressive agenda.

"2003 is going to be a busy year in terms of incorporating our stakeholders' feedback to the WCB's role in Return to Work strategies," says Wolfe.



Randy Wolfe is the WCB's new Return to Work Manager.

"Not only will I work with staff to refine our own internal processes, but I will work closely with our stakeholders to better understand their issues," he says.

"We will also take a highly active role in communicating to our stakeholders to ensure that Return to Work is recognized and treated as a collaborative effort between the WCB, injured workers, employers, unions and healthcare providers."

Wolfe was one of the presenters during the March 18 follow-up to the June 2002 Modified/

Alternate Return to Work Seminar.

A series of strategies emanating from themes developed during the June seminar were discussed. These included a three-pronged approach to strengthening Return to Work – dialogue with stakeholders, education of stakeholders and internal WCB

processes and operational changes (which includes the Manager of Return to Work position).

As well, the WCB introduced the Return to Work Stakeholder Advisory Group, a standing committee featuring representatives from healthcare, labour and employers.

"This group represents a major dialogue initiative between the WCB and our key constituents," says Wolfe.

Please check the next Update for details on the March 18 seminar.

WCB announces latest recipients of Community Initiatives and Research Program funding



Three members of the WCB Board pose with three representatives of previous CIRP grant recipients. (l to r) Paula Keirstead (Board member representing public interest), Joan Embleton (Victor Mager Job Re-entry Program), Kerilyn Molinski (Workers of Tomorrow), Sharon Seabourne (Board member representing employers), Ray Starr (Vice President, Anokiwin Training Institute), Bob Sample (Board member representing workers).

After supporting initiatives to reduce the risk and impact of workplace injuries since 1997, the WCB announced the latest funding recipients of its Community Initiatives and Research Program (CIRP) on February 7 at the Victor Mager Adult Education and Job Re-entry Centre. Past and present grant recipients joined members of the WCB Board of Directors and staff for the announcement.

The CIRP provides up to \$1 million annually to fund projects focusing on accident and disease prevention, safety in the workplace, treatment of workplace injuries, support for injured workers and their families, and research into scientific, medical or other issues related to workers compensation.

“Simply put, the program exists so the WCB can proactively work with its partners in the

community to reduce both the risk and impact of occupational illnesses and injuries,” said WCB President and CEO Doug Sexsmith during the announcement, on behalf of Chairperson Wally Fox-Decent. “The CIRP benefits employers and workers by ultimately contributing to lower accident

rates, and contributing to the return of workers to health and work sooner.”

Sexsmith added that since the inception of the program, approximately 62 percent of all funding has supported workplace safety initiatives.

“Workplace safety has always been problematic for our students,” said Joan Embleton, Director of Adult Education Programs at Victor Mager Job Re-Entry Program – a 2001 CIRP funding recipient that helps young people, the under-employed and new Canadians re-enter the workforce. “However, with the help and guidance of the CIRP, we have a comprehensive workplace safety curriculum that has drawn praise and interest from our students, employers and other adult educators.”

With the 2002 grant recipients beginning their projects this year, the WCB is now accepting applications for the next round of CIRP funding.

Since 1997, the CIRP has provided grants to 69 innovative projects. For more information on the CIRP, log on to the WCB website at www.wcb.mb.ca.

Call for Proposals

The WCB of Manitoba has announced its funding priorities for the 2003 Community Initiatives and Research Program. Projects addressing aboriginal, literacy and gender issues in the context of occupational health and safety are being sought for Stage 1 of the general call for proposals.

The deadline for applications is April 25, 2003.

For more details and a copy of the Stage 1 application, contact **Janice Meszaros**, Manager, Community Initiatives and Research Program at (204) 954-4650, Fax (204) 954-4995, E-mail: jmeszaro@wcb.mb.ca or visit our web site at: www.wcb.mb.ca.

Easier Clearances Online

As summer draws near and outside work really takes off, many employers will be seeking clearance on the subcontractors they will work with in the coming months. While some employers require only the occasional clearance, the WCB recognizes that many employers can require clearance on as many as 750 subcontractors and firms.

“Clearances are a means of protecting yourself in business,” says Jan Scott, Director of Employer Services. “Clearances provides confirmation that a business, contractor or subcontractor is registered with the WCB and their accounts are up to date. A clearance ensures you will not be liable for their assessment costs or have your own assessment rates go up if one of their employees is ever in an accident.”

General contractors or any firm hiring for the purposes of construction, transportation or logging must get clearance on all of their subcontractors. It can take time and resources for employers to monitor the status of their sub-contractors, and ensure that status hasn't changed prior to issuing payment for their services.

“For employers who have a large number of subcontractors and firms to monitor, registering to become an Interactive Online user allows them to keep their work to a minimum,” explains Scott. “Once you enter the information about the subcontractors you use, the system automatically alerts you to any changes in their status so you don't need to continue to

request clearance on the same firm.”

Companies who have to monitor the status of many subcontractors can obtain clearance information 24 hours a day, 7 days a week for any number of subcontractors without the administrative burden. In fact, once they have established who they wish clearance for, the firms will be informed by the WCB if the status of any firms on their list changes.

Interactive Online List

Using a secure Internet connection, registered users can create customized, interactive lists of firms and sub-contractors. The Interactive Online list allows you to create lists that you customize based on your criteria. Perhaps you prefer one list of all the subcontractors and firms you work with. Or maybe you would rather group them by project. How you customize your lists remains up to you.

Once the subcontractors are selected, you are immediately provided with their status with the WCB. If a company's status changes, the WCB's Clearance Request System automatically flags the company's name in your file and emails you about the change in status the next business day.

Anyone can register to use this service by calling 954-4803 (in Winnipeg) or 1-866-751-9245 (toll-free outside Winnipeg). If you wish to obtain information about the WCB's other clearance services, please visit the WCB website at www.wcb.mb.ca for more detailed information.

WCB adopts Secure E-mail for personal/health related information

The WCB will be adopting a new service initiative designed to make communicating with us safer than ever before – **Secure E-mail**.

Secure E-mail protects the privacy of your incoming and outgoing e-mails to the WCB. Secure E-mail does this by using an electronic “certificate” that you install on your computer. Your certificate allows you to exchange encrypted e-mail messages with the WCB, ensuring that any personal or health-related information is kept secure.

Secure E-mail is also the **only** way you will be able to communicate personal or health-related information with the WCB through the internet. The Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FIPPA) and The Personal Health Information Act (PHIA) **do not allow** personal or personal health information to be sent unprotected through cyberspace.

If you plan on sending or receiving personal or health-related information with the WCB this way, you will need to install a Secure E-mail certificate. You can have your I.T. department create one for you, or you can purchase a Secure E-mail certificate over the internet. Simply type “secure e-mail” in any search engine and choose a product that is best for you.

Secure E-mail ensures privacy, is easy to use, and is the only way to exchange personal or health-related information through the internet with the WCB.

For more information, call the WCB at 954- 4261.

Customer focus drives out service enhancements

The WCB is now calling, faxing and emailing employers for accident information when we learn about an accident first from injured workers or healthcare providers.

Previously, we mailed a request for an accident report to employers when we learned of an accident to obtain the necessary information. But now we are taking a more proactive approach by communicating with employers through their preferred channel.

"We are undertaking this effort for two reasons," explains Don Paul, Vice President of Rehabilitation and Compensation. "One, to improve customer service by ensuring we are communicating with employers in their preferred manner; and two, to proactively pursue the information instead of waiting for it to come to us. This allows us to minimize the impact of workplace injuries by reducing the amount of time it takes to gather the necessary information to make a decision about the claim."

"With customer service as a primary focus of the WCB, implementation of these changes will help us meet our clients' expectations for faster and enhanced services. These changes represent WCB's continued commitment to work towards being the most efficient and customer-focused workers compensation board anywhere," explains Paul.

If you would like the WCB to notify you as soon as we learn about an accident in your

workplace, please call the Claim Information Centre at 954-4100 or toll free at 1-800-362-3340 to provide them with your claims contact information.

Timely reporting of workers earnings crucial

As an employer, you help fund our workers' compensation system. However, without timely reporting of workers earnings, the payment of compensation to injured workers is compromised.

Employers can be charged penalties if their workers' earnings information is submitted late. Employers who report workers' earnings annually may also be affected by interest charges. For more information on penalties and interest charges, log on to www.wcb.mb.ca and go to the Employer Services section. If you do not have Internet access, contact us at **954-4567** or toll free at **1-800-362-3340**.

Important dates for employers

You must report workers' earnings to the WCB by the dates below, even if you haven't received a form requesting you to do so.

For those reporting annually

- Feb. 28 – Annual Workers Earnings Reports **were** due.
- Firms owing more than \$500.00 automatically qualify to pay their assessment in three installments.
- 1st Installment is due 30 days from date of the initial Account Statement.
- 2nd Installment due Aug. 31.
- 3rd Installment due Oct. 31.

For those reporting quarterly

- Feb. 28– Annual Statement for Quarterly Firms Reconciliation Form **were** due.
- Payment of the assessment, and the completed top portions of the Quarterly Remittance form and Account Statement must be at the WCB by these dates:
- Apr. 20/03 - 1st Quarter of 03
- July 20/03 - 2nd Quarter of 03
- Oct. 20/03 - 3rd Quarter of 03
- Jan. 20/04 - 4th Quarter of 03

Publication Number: 1742957