



WCB update

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You told us...



"We expect that when our employees need coverage that it is processed in a timely manner."

— An employer with WCB coverage

Timely. Fast. Prompt. Quick. These are the words that employers use to describe their expectation of customer service from the WCB.

Each year, the WCB conducts a survey of a random sample of employers who have workers who filed a claim with the WCB in the previous year.

"Among the questions geared towards learning more about employers' needs and experiences in doing business with us, we ask the open-ended question 'What would you say is the main thing

that you expect in terms of service from the Workers Compensation Board," explains Alice Sayant, Associate Vice President, Healthcare and Customer Service.

"Far and away the most frequent response is that employers expect speed and promptness in dealing with and processing claims," says Sayant.

Becoming faster and more efficient at adjudicating and paying claims, without sacrificing the quality of decision-making, is the WCB's highest service improvement priority. The goal is, wherever possible, to provide injured workers with an uninterrupted income stream.

"When we can achieve this goal, it creates a win-win situation for all concerned," says Sayant.

Working toward this goal requires the WCB to:

- Streamline internal processes,
- Be more proactive at seeking out the information needed to make timely decisions, and
- Encourage timely reporting of claims.

As the WCB focuses on these areas, they can see good progress.

"Although further improvement is still needed," explains Sayant, "our measures – both internal process measures and external satisfaction measures – confirm that we are, indeed, improving the timeliness of our initial claims adjudication and payment."



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Ergonomic Studies in the Workplace

Sprains and strains are among the most common workplace injuries, accounting for more than half of all Workers Compensation Board time loss claims. These injuries to the musculoskeletal system can be costly for employers and workers, but through the use of ergonomics, the science of fitting work to the human body, they are largely preventable.

Many large firms now make regular use of ergonomists, either on staff or as advisers, to reduce the risk of these injuries. However, small business owners are often unaware of ergonomic problems or unable to gain access to ergonomic advice.

To meet these needs the MFL Occupational Health Centre (Centre) has created an Ergonomic Small Business Intervention and Evaluation Project. With financial support from the Workers Compensation Board's Community Initiatives and Research Program (CIRP), the Centre's ergonomist Andrew Dolhy will be leading an 18-month project intended to identify, investigate, and help solve ergonomic problems in small businesses.

The project, which is tentatively scheduled for completion in the fall of 2005, will also include a resource book of ergonomic interventions for small businesses.

Dolhy said he hopes to be working with 25-30 small businesses. "The project is open to businesses with fewer than 50 employees. The goal is to work with a number of companies from a variety of sectors."

The Online Accident Reporting System

Fast. Convenient. Electronic (no paper cuts).

When an employee is injured, the last thing on anyone's mind is paperwork. But as the employer, you need to provide the WCB with an accident report... and the sooner that report gets to the WCB, the sooner it can be processed and the worker can return to health and work.

The Online Accident Reporting System is a secure Internet application providing you with immediate access to WCB Accident Reporting, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These forms are completely electronic, easy to use and "smart" – as you fill out your information onscreen, your form changes according to your answers to make it even simpler!

The Online Accident Reporting System also alerts you to accidents in your workplace you might not otherwise be aware of. When the WCB hears about an accident from a worker or their healthcare provider, we begin an accident report for you. At the same time, we e-mail you about the injury, allowing you to monitor the situation so you can fill out the rest of the form yourself and ensure the accuracy of the information.

Faster, easier reporting – faster treatment – a faster return to work for the worker – it all starts with the WCB's Online Accident Reporting System.

For more information on how to register, please visit www.wcb.mb.ca.

Dolhy said the project would take a participatory approach to identifying and solving problems. The project would involve Dolhy doing an ergonomic assessment with an employer representative and a worker health and safety representative. These three would then identify the most effective and appropriate solutions to the issues.

The project also has an Intervention Fund that may be used to defray the cost of purchasing equipment. There is a perception that ergonomics is costly so this Intervention Fund will help overcome this issue.

Once the changes have been made, Dolhy would conduct a follow up study with the assistance of the employer and worker representative. The outcome of this project is to develop a book of before-and-after

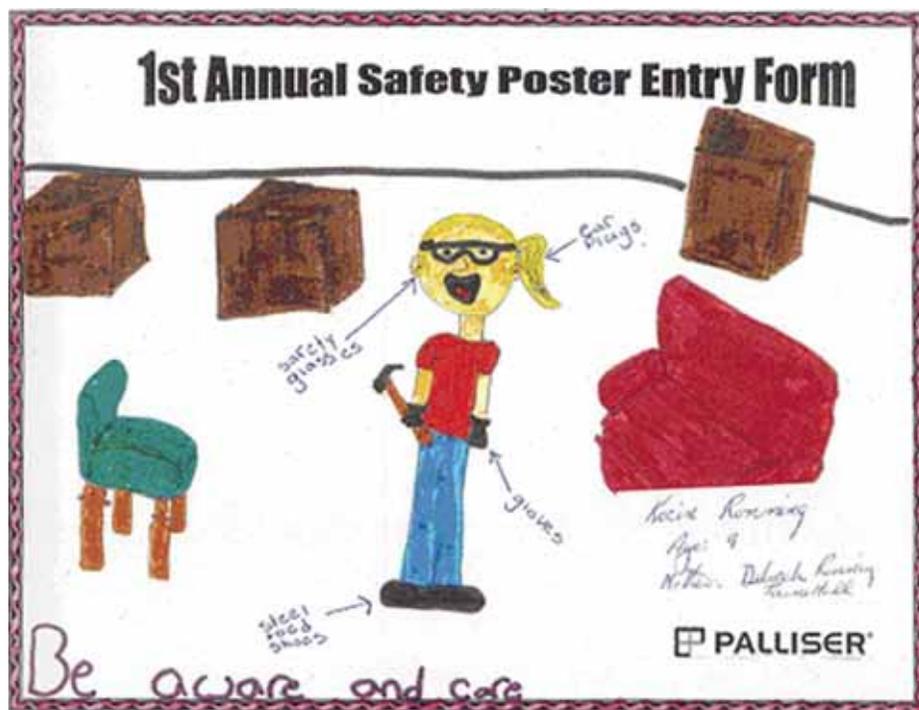
case studies indicating both costs and benefits. According to Dolhy, "Right now there is a lack of good case studies of ergonomic issues in small businesses." The Centre will also provide health and safety training to those involved with this project.

Dolhy said, "We would only identify workplaces in the case studies if we had their permission."

Established in 1997, the CIRP funds projects on accident and disease prevention, safety in the workplace, treatment of workplace injuries, services for injured workers and scientific, medical or other issues related to workers' compensation.

If you have a workplace that maybe interested in participating, contact Andrew Dolhy at 949-0811.

Palliser Safety Week



Palliser's Corporate Safety and Health Division, in cooperation with all other divisions in the organization and through staff volunteer efforts organize events that reinforce the necessity for safety in the workplace while having fun with the concepts.

One of the events held was a Powered Lift Truck Safety Rodeo. Focused on powered lift trucks, forklifts and pallet jacks, the rodeo kicked off with divisional trials and playoffs and will culminate in a corporate inter-company challenge in the Fall.

"We all recognize that safety has to be a mind set that we carry throughout our daily lives and at Palliser, we recognize that the safety of staff is critical to their families so we reinforce this by sponsoring a poster contest for the children of staff," says Copen.

The contest is open to Tenderfoots (four to seven year olds) and Big Foots (eight to eleven year olds) and prizes are awarded for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place within each of the divisions. The winning posters form the basis for a safety poster communication initiative in all the plants.

Palliser's commitment to the safety of all who work there continues to be a priority year round and is demonstrated through their concerted efforts to raise awareness through engaging events.

NAOSH Week, which ran from May 2nd to May 8th this year, focuses the attention of employers, employees and the general public, and all partners in occupational safety and health, on the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace and at home.

Palliser Furniture, Canada's leading home furniture manufacturer and a leading manufacturer in Manitoba, sees this week as a kick-off point for their safety campaign that runs until September each year,

continuing the education process through fun events designed to raise awareness among all their staff.

"The number one imperative for safety and prevention of injuries is awareness," says Stephen Copen, Director, Safety and Health for Palliser Furniture Ltd.

"Awareness within our senior management team, awareness of our supervisors and awareness of our workers of where we are and where we want to go in terms of safety is key," explains Copen.

Dates to Remember



July 20 – The Quarterly Payroll Remittance for the second quarter of 2004 and accompanying payment must be received at the WCB by this date.



SAFE Work and the Supervisor – Your Responsibilities

The first few days on a new job are particularly important for new or young workers. Statistics show that the majority of serious incidents occur during a worker's first year on the job. Do you, as an employer or a supervisor, know what you must do to prevent those from happening?

What is a supervisor?

Supervisors are known by many names – lead hand, charge hand, foreman, team leader, etc. But for the purposes of ensuring the safety and health of workers, *The Workplace Safety and Health Act (WSH Act)* has added a definition that applies, no matter what the title might be. And along with the definition, there are specific legal responsibilities.

The *WSH Act* says that a supervisor is someone who is:

- In charge of a workplace
- In charge of or has authority over a worker

Supervisors are in the best position to implement management's policies, they are pivotal to the success of a company and safety and health is a large part of that responsibility.

Do Workers Look to Supervisors for Information?

A national study by Ipsos Reid in 2003 determined that the person most relied on for training and direction concerning safety and health is a worker's immediate

supervisor. In addition, the *WSH Act* requires an employer to ensure that all workers are competently supervised and trained to deal with the hazards of the workplace. Many times, that task falls to the supervisor.

What Must a Supervisor Do – Legal Responsibilities

For workers under his/her supervision, a supervisor has a legal obligation to ensure that:

- all precautions are taken to protect the safety and health of those workers
- workers perform their work in accordance with procedures and safety and health laws
- workers use all devices and wear all personal protective equipment as required
- workers are advised of the safety and health risks for the area in which they are working. And if they move to another area or different activity, workers must be trained before they begin the new work.

What's the Employer's Role in Effective Supervision?

- Training – An employer has to ensure supervisors are

competent (combination of education, experience, knowledge) and that supervisors themselves receive adequate training and education. The specific skills and knowledge required to be an effective supervisor should be taught in order to not only increase comfort level but to ensure they are equipped to train other workers on safe work procedures for the tasks they supervise.

- Strong safety and health policies will support supervisors in their work. It is critical that a company have a strong safety and health policy to support the supervisor's work and that supervisors fully understand and put into practice the company's policies and procedures
- Senior management commitment is something that supervisors have to know is there if it is expected that training and safety and health policies will be effective. Top level management need to take the time to make safety and health visible in the organization and show that they are serious when it comes to the safety and health of workers.

Update is also available in a large print version.

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