



# WCB update

April 2008

## WCB Consults with Public on Extending Coverage

The Workers Compensation Board is consulting with the public regarding the addition of industries to Manitoba's workers compensation program.

"The Manitoba Government has asked us to do a broad consultation with our stakeholders before extending workers compensation coverage," says WCB Chairperson Tom Farrell. "It's important to us to know what's on the minds of our stakeholders before the government engages in a significant extension. As our customers, your views matter."

"We have made significant efforts to ensure that the public is well aware of the consultation process," adds Farrell. "We have sent out over 40,000 notices to employers, placed ads in papers across the province and made a consultation paper available on our website."

Why extend workers compensation coverage? Because even with the addition of related industries that came into effect on January 1, 2007, Manitoba has the lowest level of coverage of any Canadian workers compensation system. An extension of coverage would move Manitoba into

the mainstream, and help improve Manitoba's ability to attract and retain workers in a competitive labour market.

The types of workplaces with WCB coverage have remained basically the same since *The Workers Compensation Act* was first adopted in 1917. Since that time, many new industries with a range of potential health and safety problems have developed. Also, some occupational hazards, which can exist across a range of covered and uncovered industries, were unknown in 1917. Repetitive strain injury, for instance, can occur in both lower risk workplaces like offices and higher risk workplaces like construction and manufacturing.

Extending workers compensation to more industries would create a more level playing field for employers. An extension would reduce competitive disadvantages between covered and non-covered employers who compete against each other.

As well, costs associated with preventing, treating and compensating workplace injuries would be spread across a larger pool of employers. For example, since the WCB incurs costs for provincial workplace safety and health initiatives, those who are not part of the system enjoy the benefits of these initiatives without sharing the cost.



An extension of coverage would also benefit workers who are exposed to similar hazards by ensuring that they receive the same level of insurance. Continuity of coverage would be enhanced by providing workers with the ability to change jobs within Manitoba without losing WCB protection.

*Employers wanting to make a written submission on the extension of coverage are invited to do so by May 1, 2008. The WCB will then review submissions from all of its stakeholders and make a report to the Manitoba Government. All submissions will remain confidential. Visit the WCB website at [www.wcb.mb.ca](http://www.wcb.mb.ca) for more information or call (204) 954-4812 or toll-free 1-866-926-0709 if you have any questions about the process.*

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## WCB Funds New Projects to Help Keep Manitoba Workers Safe and Recover from Workplace Injuries Sooner

The WCB is committed to making workplaces safer across Manitoba. That's why they've been supporting community initiatives dedicated to enhancing workplace safety since 1997. This past February, the WCB announced the latest funding recipients of its Community Initiatives and Research Program (CIRP).

"The projects funded through the CIRP are good examples of the workplace safety movement spearheaded by SAFE Work and SAFE Manitoba," says WCB President and CEO Doug Sexsmith. "Manitoba has a diverse economy which requires a variety of innovative solutions to workplace safety hazards. The CIRP helps achieve this by proactively working with our partners in the community."

The 14 groups who received funding will conduct projects on the following:

- Identifying hazards and preventing injuries for young workers and/or persons with mental or physical disabilities;
- Increasing the knowledge, diagnosis and treatment of occupational disease such as fumes from welding;
- Analyzing the language, cultural and literacy needs of WCB clients, such as immigrant workers;
- Preventing workplace injuries or illnesses through innovative approaches;
- Examining the barriers and facilitators of return to work programs;

- Determining what increases Manitoba CEOs and other top management's commitment to workplace safety.

One of the new grant recipients is the I.H. Asper School of Business, which is developing the Young Worker Responses to Workplace Hazards project.

"In many ways, young workers are among the most vulnerable to on-the-job injuries and illnesses. Ultimately, we hope to contribute to reducing their vulnerability and in turn reduce the long-term social and economic costs that result from their workplace injuries," says Nick Turner, who is one of the project leaders. "We want to thank the WCB for helping us in our efforts to learn more about young peoples' responses to workplace hazards."

The CIRP provides up to \$1 million annually to fund projects focusing on injury 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. Since the inception of the program, more than 65 percent of the funding has supported workplace prevention, education and training initiatives.



Since the CIRP was launched by the WCB at the end of 1997, 122 innovative projects have been completed or are still in progress. The CIRP aims to enhance the understanding of workers' compensation issues and to minimize the human and financial impact of workplace injuries and disease.

For more information, visit [www.wcb.mb.ca](http://www.wcb.mb.ca) and click on 'Community Initiatives' under 'About WCB'.

### Make WCB Payments Electronically

Did you know you can make WCB payments electronically? Even better, you can pay any time you wish using your financial institution's Internet or telephone banking options. Interested? More details are available online at [www.wcb.mb.ca](http://www.wcb.mb.ca) in the Employers section.

## Day of Mourning Observed April 28

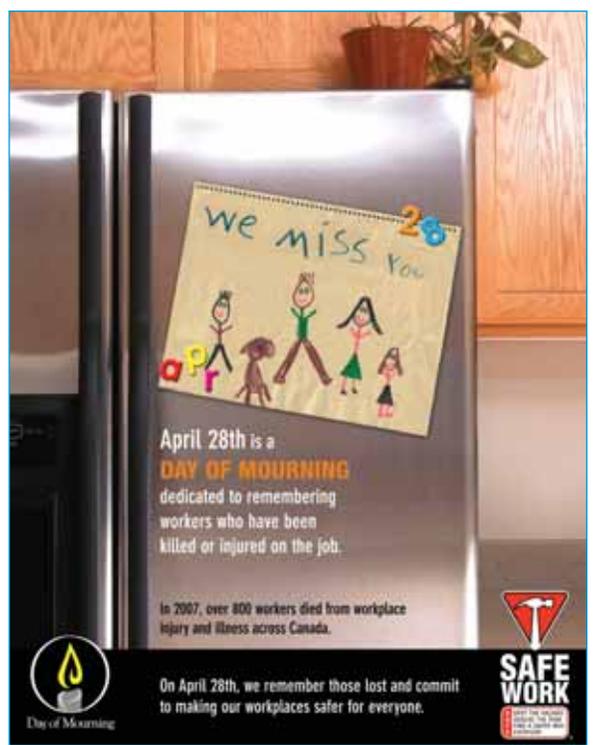
April 28 is the annual day that has been officially set aside internationally to recognize those who have suffered work-related injuries, illnesses and fatalities.

Many people may not be aware of the prevalence of workplace injuries and fatalities. In 2007, over 800 Canadians lost their lives as a result of a work-related injury or illness. The loss of life and health in the workplace is a tragedy because it need not occur.

The WCB is committed to reaching its goal of reducing workplace injuries by providing access to information and educating employers and workers on safe work practices. Safe work should simply be a way of life.

Though the Day of Mourning mainly serves to remember the workers we've lost, it can also serve to strengthen the resolve to implement safe working conditions. Employers are thus encouraged to get involved by publicly committing to improve their workplace health and safety.

The Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba will recognize the Day of Mourning on April 28 by lowering its flag to half-mast and observing a moment of silence.



## NAOSH Week 2008 is May 4 – 10

North American Occupational Safety and Health (NAOSH) Week is an excellent opportunity for employers to focus on the importance of preventing injury and illness in the workplace and raising understanding and awareness of safety and health issues.

By starting today, even with small steps, employers can help to make a difference on the safety and health front.

To find out more about NAOSH Week, go to [www.naosh.ca](http://www.naosh.ca) or [www.csse.org](http://www.csse.org).



This year's NAOSH Week theme is "Start Today! Live It Every Day!" Workplaces can play an active role in NAOSH Week by implementing some of the following suggestions:

- Launching a recognition program for safety suggestions that are put into use;
- Conducting training sessions for employees;
- Launching a "new worker" orientation manual.

## Dates to Remember

**February 29, 2008** – Annual Workers Earnings Reports (AWER) were due. Please submit your completed AWER if you have not done so already. A five percent late filing penalty applies to firms that submit their AWER between March 1 and April 29.

**April 20, 2008** – The Quarterly Remittance for the first quarter of 2008 and payment must be received at the WCB by this date for firms reporting on a quarterly basis.

**April 30, 2008** – Firms required to register with the WCB but who have not submitted their completed AWER prior to this date will be arbitrarily assessed and the late filing penalty will increase to 10 percent. Voluntarily registered firms that have not renewed their registration may have their registration cancelled.





## Newest SAFE Work Ad Takes Graphic Look at Critical Need for Workplace Safety

There's no such thing as an accident. That's the message behind the most recent SAFE Work television ad campaign.

Developed in partnership with the WCB and the province's Workplace Safety and Health Division, the ad campaign focuses on the severe consequences that can occur when workplace safety is neglected.

The television commercial depicts an individual on a typical day at their jobsite. The individual starts to operate equipment but fails to follow the proper safety procedures and as a result, suffers a serious amputation. It's a situation that occurs far too often in Manitoba workplaces.

"Last year alone, about 35,000 injuries occurred in workplaces throughout Manitoba, 80 of which were amputations," says WCB President and CEO Doug Sexsmith. "The sad reality is, these injuries don't have to happen. Our goal is to raise awareness of the critical need for workplace safety through our SAFE Work ads, and ultimately change the way Manitobans think and feel about safety."

The commercial, which takes a graphic look at what can happen when workplace safety is overlooked, is designed to have a hard-hitting impact on viewers. In addition to raising awareness, its goal is to get people thinking about their own responsibilities when it comes to safety in the workplace.



SAFE Work's hard-hitting ad campaign drives home the message that injuries are preventable.

The idea that safe work is everyone's responsibility is one that relies on both workers and employers. Employers need to ensure high safety standards through training and education while workers have a responsibility to follow safety policies and procedures.

"The need for greater awareness and education definitely exists, among both workers and employers," says Doug Sexsmith. "Our goal is to shift people's way of thinking. The bottom line is that injuries are not an inevitable part of working life – they're preventable. It's that simple."

SAFE Work is a program of the WCB and the province's Workplace Safety and Health Division that draws attention to the need to prevent workplace injuries and deaths. WCB and WS&H work in collaboration to prevent workplace illnesses and injuries through promotion, protection and education.

For more information about training and injury prevention, visit [www.safework.com](http://www.safework.com).

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

Return undeliverable copies to:

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