

CANADIAN WORKERS' COMPENSATION DIGEST

Volume 2 Issue 1



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INTRODUCTION/ABOUT

TeksMed Services Inc. is the leader in Canadian disability management backed by over 25 years of success. We proactively manage occupational and non-occupational injuries and illnesses with personalized recover-at-work solutions helping hundreds of employers with thousands of employees.

Inspired by a never-ending quest to be the best, TeksMed continues to set the standard and raise the bar for integrity, innovation and exceptional service.

TeksMed seeing the ability in disability.

Thousands of businesses across Canada trust us with their disability management. Call us and start saving money. Our program literally pays for itself! For more information on our services and contact information see the final section of this magazine.

ABOUT THIS MAGAZINE

This is the fifth issue of our Canadian Workers' Compensation Digest. This magazine highlights prominent Canadian Workers' Compensation updates nationally and within each province/territory.

All content within this digest is sourced from third-party websites which can be accessed by following the provided links.



Steps On Making The Return To Work Safe

As summer ends and fall approaches, our thoughts are turning to familiar routines. Shorter and cooler days are here, and kids are going back to school.

Still — this fall is different. COVID-19 has upended all of our lives, and what once was familiar, now feels somewhat strange and uncertain.

So, what are the reasonable precautions that businesses should be taking, and how can they identify the particular steps that they need to take?

<https://www.ohscanada.com/opinions/steps-making-return-work-safe/>

Employers Prioritizing Support For Working Parents But Current Policies Not Effective

Images of parents trying to shush their kids during work Zoom meetings are now as commonplace as, well, Zoom meetings. With many people six months into working from home due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic, employers can often literally see employees with kids trying to juggle it all.

<https://www.benefitscanada.com/human-resources/other/employers-prioritizing-support-for-working-parents-but-current-policies-not-effective-survey-150218>

Pandemic Blurring Work-Life Lines A Recipe For Employee Burnout

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, technology was blurring the lines between work and home life.

An unhealthy attachment to our mobile phones made it easy to get lured back into our work worlds when we were supposed to be on vacation, socializing with family and friends or just enjoying some downtime.

<https://www.benefitscanada.com/benefits/health-benefits/pandemic-blurring-work-life-lines-a-recipe-for-employee-burnout-149600>

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Proposed Changes To Labour Laws Would Increase Workers' Compensation Limits, Make COVID-19 Claims Easier

The B.C. government is proposing changes to provincial labour law that it says will increase WorkSafeBC's powers and the amount of compensation workers can receive.

If approved, the amendments to the Workers Compensation Act tabled Tuesday would raise the maximum salary on which workers compensation benefits are based to \$100,000 from \$87,000.



<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/proposed-changes-to-labour-laws-would-increase-workers-compensation-limits-make-covid-19-claims-easier-1.5649632>

WorkSafeBC Announces Preliminary Average Premium Rates For 2021

The Workers Compensation Act requires WorkSafeBC to set premium rates annually for employers in order to pay for the workers' compensation system.

Annual base premium rates are driven by injury rates, return-to-work performance and the resulting cost of claims, as well as investment performance relative to required rates of return.

Each year, the costs in some rate groups go up, some go down and others stay the same. In 2021, 46 percent of employers in B.C. are projected to experience a decrease in their industry base rate, 43 percent will see their industry base rate increase and 11 percent will see no change.

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/news-releases/2020/September/worksafebc-announces-preliminary-average-premium-rates-2021>



ALBERTA

Alberta Bill Proposes Major Changes To Union Strike Rules And Funding

The Alberta government is proposing major changes to rules governing unions, including limits on where and how workers can picket during strikes or lockouts.

Under a bill, pickets would not be allowed to interfere with anyone coming or going across a picket line, and secondary pickets at locations other than at the direct employer involved would need the OK from Alberta's Labour Relations Board.

<https://www.ohscanada.com/alberta-bill-proposes-major-changes-union-strike-rules-funding/>

Federal Top-Up Pay For Alberta Essential Workers Remains In Limbo

Nearly four months after the federal government pledged billions of extra dollars for low-paid essential workers, Alberta employees have yet to see a cent of it.

While most other provinces have launched programs to reward workers on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic with bonus payments, the Alberta and federal governments can't agree on how the money should be spent in the province.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/federal-top-up-pay-for-alberta-essential-workers-remains-in-limbo-1.5708499>



SASKATCHEWAN

Staying Safe At Work

Appropriate preventative measures should be in place for workers who continue to work during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) outbreak. Below are some workplace protections to consider.

The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) website gives the following information on wearing masks. This recommendation is also followed by the Government of Saskatchewan.

Wearing a non-medical mask or face covering while out in public is recommended for periods of time when it's not possible to consistently maintain a two-metre physical distance from others, particularly in crowded public settings.

<http://www.worksafesask.ca/covid-19/staying-safe-at-work/>



Asbestos Exposure Is The Leading Cause Of Work-Related Deaths In Saskatchewan

Many Saskatchewanians are staying close to home these days, which means construction projects, renovations and repairs are likely in full swing.

WorkSafe Saskatchewan, the partnership between the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board and the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety, is urging contractors and homeowners to take the proper steps to protect themselves and others against the risks of asbestos exposure.

<http://www.worksafesask.ca/asbestos-exposure-is-the-leading-cause-of-work-related-deaths-in-saskatchewan/>



MANITOBA

Manitoba's Minimum Wage Rises To \$11.90 An Hour

Minimum wage will be going up in Manitoba.

The province said, the minimum wage will increase by 25 cents, going to \$11.90 an hour from \$11.65.

A similar increase, up 30 cents to \$11.65 from \$11.35, took place on Oct. 1, 2019.

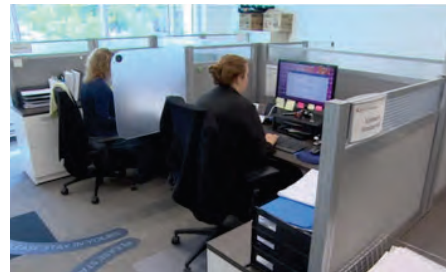
<https://globalnews.ca/news/7343726/manitoba-minimum-wage/>

Back In The Office: How Some Employers Are Preparing For Return Of Workers

Some companies continue to have employees do their jobs from home as the pandemic persists, but others are edging closer to fully bringing their workers back to the office.

For commercial realtor Cushman and Wakefield/Stevenson in Winnipeg began phasing in employees in May, starting with 20 employees, said firm president Aaron DeGroot.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/winnipeg-workers-back-in-office-covid19-1.5718396>



New App: DRIVR-X at Work

Distracted driving and speeding can be fatal. DRIVR-X at Work, Safe Work Manitoba's new app created in partnership with Manitoba Public Insurance, helps drivers understand how their choices have consequences when they drive for work.

https://www.safemanitoba.com/News/Pages/News_DRIVRXAtWorkMobile_20SWMB.aspx



Pre-Entry COVID-19 Screening Now Mandatory For Ontario Workplaces

Ontario continues to see increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases in what may be a second wave of the virus.

As a result, pre-entry COVID screening of all workers and “essential visitors” became mandatory for all businesses in Ontario — effective immediately — regardless of sector.



<https://www.ohscanada.com/features/pre-entry-covid-19-screening-now-mandatory-ontario-workplaces/>

Preparing For A Workplace Inspection During COVID-19

Protect against COVID-19



Clean regularly touched items

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, inspections by provincial inspectors have increased in Ontario.

Anne Duffy, director of the occupational health and safety branch at the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development sheds some light on how the provincial government is working to ensure compliance through the pandemic.

<https://www.ohscanada.com/features/qa-preparing-for-workplace-inspection-covid-19/>

ONTARIO

Ontario Launches Free Online Training Promoting Safe Workplaces

Ontario provincial government has announced a \$3-million investment in online health and safety training.

The government is hopeful the virtual courses will make it easier for jobseekers and workers to get essential qualifications, while practising physical distancing and preventing the spread of COVID-19.



<https://www.ohscanada.com/ontario-launches-free-online-training-promoting-safe-workplaces/>

Ontario Extends Support for Employers and Employees Impacted by COVID-19

The Ontario government is helping protect jobs and businesses by extending protection to prevent temporary layoffs from automatically becoming permanent job losses. Although Ontario is now in Phase 3 of reopening, this extension will give businesses more time to reopen and return to full operations. This extension will last until January 2, 2021.

Under Ontario labour laws, termination of an employee after 13 weeks of being temporarily laid off triggers costly payouts which, for many businesses, could be the difference between survival and closure. This regulatory amendment delays these terminations and severance liabilities.

<https://news.ontario.ca/en/release/58240/ontario-extends-support-for-employers-and-employees-impacted-by-covid-19>



Reinforcement of CNESST actions across Quebec: Unite to fight the pandemic

The Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité de travail (CNESST) will increase its actions in the field as of today and will carry out intensive interventions across the province to fight against the spread of COVID-19. In addition, considering the particular situation in the Capitale Nationale and Chaudière-Appalaches regions, the CNESST will carry out immediate intervention blitzes there in collaboration with Public Health.

The current situation calls for rapid and effective action to limit outbreaks, which are on the rise in several cities and regions of Quebec.

Deployed in the field, the CNESST inspectors check whether the workplaces have put in place and apply the preventive measures required to protect the health and safety of everyone.

<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/salle-de-presse/communiqués/Pages/22-octobre-2020-quebec.aspx>

The CNESST partners with the Bureau de normalization du Québec to develop a certification program for non-medical masks in the workplace

After consulting with its partners, the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité de travail (CNESST) is joining forces with the Bureau de normalization du Québec (BNQ) to develop a mask certification document for non-medical masks used in the workplace.

To protect the health and ensure the safety of workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, in accordance with public health directives, the wearing of procedural (medical) masks in the workplace was made mandatory, in particular when physical distancing measures or the installation of a physical barrier could not be observed.

<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/salle-de-presse/communiqués/Pages/3-novembre-2020-quebec.aspx>

NEW BRUNSWICK

Relief Coming To Employers After Stretch Of Higher WorkSafeNB Premiums

After three consecutive years of increasing workers compensation premiums, employers in New Brunswick are about to get a reprieve.

Rates are projected to fall by about 25 cents per \$100 in payroll, reducing the average assessment from \$2.65, which ties Nova Scotia for the highest in the country, to about \$2.40 or possibly less.



<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/discount-coming-workers-compensation-rate-1.5281360>

Working Safely From Home



As workplaces try to prevent the spread of COVID-19, employees may find themselves unconventionally working from home. While working from home has clear advantages, it's important to remember that new work spaces can pose concerns. Where you work and how you work is important to your health and safety.

<https://www.worksafenb.ca/safety-topics/covid-19/working-safely-from-home/>

NOVA SCOTIA

Workplace Injuries In Nova Scotia Continue Long-Term Downward Trend

Workplace injuries in Nova Scotia continued a long-term downward trend in both overall total time-loss injury volume and the per capita rate of injury, according to the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) of Nova Scotia's 2019 Annual Report.

<https://www.ohscanada.com/workplace-injuries-nova-scotia-continue-long-term-downward-trend/>



WCB Nova Scotia Releases 2021 Employer Assessment Rates

Years of education and training in fishing are making a dangerous industry safer, while also making it more affordable for Nova Scotia captains to provide the protection of workers' compensation coverage to their crews, according to WCB Nova Scotia.

In announcing 2021 employer assessment rates Sept. 1, the organization pointed out the long-term progress in fishing, which is seeing its rate decline a further six per cent to \$4.03 per \$100 of assessable payroll. That's a 50 per cent reduction since 2015, when the rate had reached an all-time high.

<https://www.ohscanada.com/wcb-nova-scotia-releases-2021-employer-assessment-rates/>

NOVA SCOTIA

Nova Scotia's Worker Compensation Board exploring continued work-from-home strategy

An arms-length government agency is taking a chance and exploring what it may need to do to get its staff of approximately 400 employees working from home — permanently.

The Worker's Compensation Board (WCB) issued a Request For Proposals (RFP) on the province's tender website earlier this month.



It asks for proponents to help the WCB build and plan a long-term remote workplace strategy.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/7209040/nova-scotia-wcb-wfh-strategy/>

Nova Scotia Continues To Be A Safer Place To Work, But It's Taking Longer To Achieve Return To Work

Workplace injuries in Nova Scotia continued a long-term downward trend in both overall total time-loss injury volume and the per capita rate of injury, reports WCB Nova Scotia in its 2019 Annual Report.

There were 5,663 time-loss injuries for 2019, a slight decline from 5,819 in 2018. Measured as a rate per capita, there were 1.67 time-loss injuries per 100 covered employees. These are the lowest numbers on record since they have been measured this way.

<https://www.wcb.ns.ca/About-Us/News-Room/News/Nova-Scotia-continues-to-be-a-safer-place-to-work-but-its-taking-longer-to-achieve-return-to-work-July-30-20.aspx>

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Prevention Update: Fit for Duty

An individual is fit for duty if they are in a physical, mental, and emotional state that allows them to perform essential work tasks safely.

Employers and supervisors must make every effort to ensure their workers are fit for duty, and promptly address any unsafe situations that may arise when a worker is impaired.

http://www.wcb.pe.ca/DocumentManagement/Document/pub_fitfordutyupdate.pdf

Retail Operations Guidelines

This guideline applies to all retail businesses, including but not limited to clothing retailers, big-box retailers, food, alcohol, and cannabis retailers, shopping malls, book stores, convenience stores, bargain retailers, and electronics retailers.

<https://www.princeedwardisland.ca/en/information/health-and-wellness/retail-operations-guidelines>



NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Early and Safe Return to Work

The early and safe return to work (ESRTW) process helps workers continue working after an injury or to return to work in a safe and timely manner after taking time off.

During this time, every effort should be made to help them recover at work while undergoing medical treatment for their work-related injury. Going back to work after an injury sometimes involves making changes duties or hours of work. The worker may also need equipment or devices to help with their return to work.

<https://workplacenl.ca/employers/early-and-safe-return-to-work/>



Working Safely at Home

In an effort to try to prevent the spread of COVID-19, workplaces are asking their employees to work from home. Here WorkplaceNL provides some things to keep in mind when setting up and working in your new home workspace.

https://workplacenl.ca/site/uploads/2020/03/working-safely_infographic.pdf



NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

N.W.T. and Nunavut Workers' Compensation Commission Proposing New Pension System

The way benefits are calculated in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut for people who are permanently injured on the job may be changing.

The Northwest Territories and Nunavut Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) is calling for public input into a proposal to do away with lifetime pensions and replace them with a lump sum payment plus a pension to age 65 for lost earnings.



<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/nwt-nunavut-workers-compensation-commission-proposing-new-pension-system-1.5725580>

WSCC Guidance For Northern Workplaces To Reopen Safely During COVID-19

The Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission (WSCC) today released additional materials to assist employers in reducing the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in their workplaces.

All employers should prepare a COVID-19 Exposure Control Plan to identify what safety measures and procedures need to be in place to reopen safely.

<https://www.wsc.nt.ca/news/media-release-wsc-guidance-northern-workplaces-reopen-safely-during-covid-19>



Public Feedback Released On Changes To Yukon Workplace Safety, Workers' Compensation Acts

The Yukon government has released the results of public consultation around modernizing the Workers' Compensation Act and the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

Participants were asked to weigh in on existing gaps and proposed changes to the legislation, including the expansion of mental stress injuries and which workers are presumed most at risk for cancers and post-traumatic stress disorder.



<https://www.yukon-news.com/news/public-feedback-released-on-changes-to-yukon-workplace-safety-workers-compensation-acts/>

Support For A Positive Culture In Yukon workplaces

The Government of Yukon has approved a new regulation aimed at preventing violence and harassment, two serious workplace hazards. The regulation will help to foster a positive culture in the workplace as well as physical and psychological safety for Yukon workers.

<https://yukon.ca/en/news/support-positive-culture-yukon-workplaces>

MORE ABOUT TEKS**MED**

Thousands of businesses across Canada trust us with their disability management. Call us and start saving money. Our program literally pays for itself! For more information on our services, contact us today:

TeksMed.com

T: 1-844-835-7253 (TEKSALE)

E: info@teksmed.com

WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY ABOUT US:

“We've successfully reduced our WorkSafeBC costs by 18.25% from last year! This represents approximately \$100,000 in direct savings for the province of BC. A big thank you to the TeksMed team for their efforts and the day-to-day guidance that has helped On Side achieve such great strides.”

- On Side Restoration | Director of Human Resources

“With guidance from Teksmed on managing our claims, we were able to develop a comprehensive modified duty program that allowed our workers to remain at work doing light duty while they healed. Our company went from 26 lost time accidents in a year to zero. Thank Teksmed, for your help and support.”

- Van Kam Freightways Ltd. | Health & Safety Officer

“In less than two years, TeksMed has reduced our claim costs by 67.5%. TeksMed's team of professionals has achieved its objective of reducing our claim costs and our administration. I would highly recommend TeksMed to anyone considering professional claims management services.”

- Wendy's | Safety & Security Manager

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