

CANADIAN WORKERS' COMPENSATION DIGEST

Volume 2 Issue 4



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INTRODUCTION/ABOUT TEKSMED

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 THE PUBLICATION

This is the eighth 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.



NATIONAL - CANADA

CCOHS offers online course for COVID-19 risk assessments

A new, free online course, the COVID-19 Workplace Risk Assessment and Safety Plan, has been developed by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS).

The course is available in English and French and it outlines the steps organizations in Canada need to plan and conduct a COVID-19 workplace risk assessment, and to plan and evaluate a workplace safety plan.

<https://canada.constructconnect.com/dcn/news/ohs/2021/07/ccohs-offers-online-course-for-covid-19-risk-assessments>

Many Canadians working from home anxious about return to workplace: Report

Some people are not excited about the idea of going back to the office, judging from a recent report. Their main reason? COVID-19.

Nearly half (46 per cent) of Canadians working from home are anxious about the threat of the virus if and when they return to the office, according to a report from Canada Life.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/psychological-safety/many-canadians-working-from-home-anxious-about-return-to-workplace-report/259726>

Canadian government considers 'right to disconnect'

The government of Canada is currently considering a 'right to disconnect' for its employees.

The 'right to disconnect' gives workers a fundamental right to disengage from all work-related activities outside of mandated office hours. Since the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of remote work, employees are consistently working longer hours – negatively impacting mental health and work-life balance.

<https://www.hcamag.com/ca/specialization/benefits/canadian-government-considers-right-to-disconnect/254464>

BRITISH COLUMBIA

No change in WorkSafeBC's preliminary average premium base rate 2022

Even with more people expected to be back in the workplace next year, WorkSafeBC's preliminary average base rate will remain unchanged at 1.55 per cent of employers' assessable payroll, according to the organization.

This marks the fifth consecutive time the rate has stayed the same.



<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/leadership-and-culture/no-change-in-worksafebcs-preliminary-average-premium-base-rate-2022/276290>

Inspection reports now available online



WorkSafeBC inspections are an important part of ensuring health and safety in B.C. workplaces. During an inspection, a prevention officer will inspect your workplace and assess safe work practices in accordance with the Workers Compensation Act and the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Regulation.

To provide more convenient and easy access to this important information, WorkSafeBC has introduced a new online application that enables employers to access electronic copies of their past inspection reports.

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/announcements/2021/July/inspection-reports-now-available-online>

BRITISH COLUMBIA

WorkSafeBC to accept digital signatures from workers authorizing release of medical records

As of September 2021, WorkSafeBC will accept digital signatures from injured workers to authorize the release of relevant medical records from their treatment providers.

Workers will have the option of entering a digital signature on their Worker's Authorization for Release of Personal Information form (Form 69W1) and then uploading the form directly to their claim file.



<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/announcements/2021/August/worksafebc-accept-digital-signatures-from-workers-authorizing-release-medical-records>

WorkSafeBC issues guidance for employers on the transition to communicable disease prevention



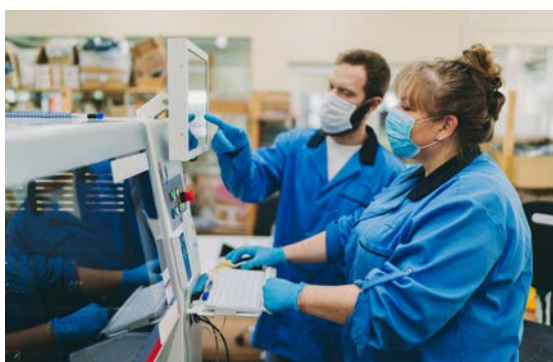
WorkSafeBC has released new information and guidance for employers on the transition from COVID-19 safety plans to communicable disease prevention. The transition began when the B.C. government moved the province to Step 3 of the BC Restart Plan.

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/news-releases/2021/June/worksafebc-issues-guidance-for-employers-on-the-transition-to-communicable-disease-prevention>



Thousands of Alberta workers have claimed compensation for COVID-19 infection: WCB

The Alberta Workers' Compensation Board has approved more than 8,000 claims related to workplace acquisition of COVID-19, with hundreds of Albertans missing weeks of work due to their illness, data show.



The WCB report shows through the end of April 2021, the board accepted 8,288 claims for workers with novel coronavirus illness arising in the course of their employment. About 11 per cent of those claims resulted in workers missing more than 21 days of work, and about two per cent were out of work for more than 60 days.

<https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/thousands-of-alberta-workers-have-claimed-workers-compensation-for-covid-19-infection-wcb>

Legislative changes

The Government of Alberta recently passed legislative changes for the workers' compensation system. Some of these changes came into effect January 1, 2021, while others are effective April 1, 2021. WCB Alberta is committed to keeping you informed and consulting with our stakeholders on areas that need further input.



<https://www.wcb.ab.ca/about-wcb/whats-new/legislative-changes.html>

SASKATCHEWAN

New Construction Codes Act Coming to Saskatchewan

The Government of Saskatchewan recently passed The Construction Codes Act (Bill 4) in the Legislative Assembly. The new Act will allow better alignment between construction codes and accessibility standards, including how they are applied to buildings, ensuring people with disabilities can better access and use buildings in Saskatchewan.



<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/government/news-and-media/2021/may/11/new-construction-codes-act-coming-to-saskatchewan>

Asbestos exposure leading cause of workplace deaths at 30%: WorkSafe Saskatchewan



New data from WorkSafe Saskatchewan shows asbestos exposure was the leading cause of workplace deaths in the province in 2020 at 30 per cent of all work-related fatalities.

WorkSafe is a partnership between the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) and the ministry of labour relations and workplace safety.

“Unfortunately, asbestos exposure continues to claim lives, but it is preventable,” said Annette Goski, WCB director of prevention.

<https://globalnews.ca/news/7974253/asbestos-saskatchewan-workplace-deaths-2020/>

SASKATCHEWAN

Workers' Compensation Board in Saskatchewan releases 2020 operational results

The Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) remained fully funded in 2020, with the ability to cover the future costs of all claims in the system. The WCB's 2020 annual report was tabled in the provincial legislature Friday.

"Having a solid funding position is important to ensure continued benefits and programs to help workers who are injured at work," said WCB chairperson Gord Dobrowolsky. "As well, employers can be sure they are protected from lawsuits and that they will continue to have an effective, efficient compensation system."



<https://www.sasktoday.ca/south/local-news/workers-compensation-board-in-saskatchewan-releases-2020-operational-results-4170315>

WCB launches Business Transformation Program to better serve employers and injured workers



The WCB officially launched its Business Transformation Program to transform how the WCB serves its customers. Work on this program started in 2020 and the program officially launched in the first quarter of 2021.

The WCB's Business Transformation Program is the start of a transformation that will change how the WCB serves its customers. Over the next five to seven years, the organization will invest in processes, structures and technologies that will enable the WCB to transfer how its customers are served.

<https://www.wcbask.com/news/wcb-launches-business-transformation-program-better-serve-employers-and-injured-workers>

MANITOBA

2020 Annual Report Highlights Impact of COVID-19 and Funds Returned to Employers



The WCB's 2020 Annual Report and Five Year Plan was tabled in the Manitoba Legislature on May 10. The report highlights the impact the COVID-19 pandemic had on the organization, initiatives implemented to maintain customer service levels for employers and injured workers and financial relief efforts for employers.

<https://www.wcb.mb.ca/2020-annual-report-highlights-impact-of-covid19-and-funds-returned-to-employers-0>

WCB Distributes \$71 Million in Surplus Funds to Manitoba Employers

For the third year in a row, the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB) is distributing surplus funds to employers, whose premiums fund the workers compensation system. By continuing to invest in injury prevention and return to work programs, the WCB is pleased to once again provide financial relief to employers after a challenging year for all Manitobans.

"COVID-19 has had a significant impact on businesses across the province and we want to do our part to provide some measure of relief to employers," said Richard Deacon, President and CEO of WCB.

"Following our mandate to serve Manitobans, we are pleased to once again give money back to employers and help support their recovery efforts after what has been a very difficult year."



<https://www.wcb.mb.ca/WCB-distributes-surplus-funds-to-employers>

New regulation streamlines reporting requirements for critical injury

A new regulation under the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA) will come into effect on July 1, 2021: Ontario Regulation 420 / 21 – Notices and Reports under Sections 51 to 53.1 of the Act – Fatalities, Critical Injuries, Occupational Illnesses and Other Incidents.

The new regulation incorporates the critical injury definition and streamlines reporting requirements into a single regulation that applies to all workplaces covered under the OHSA.

<https://www.workplacesafetynorth.ca/news/news-post/new-regulation-streamlines-reporting-requirements-critical-injury>

Creating “a safer province” with WSIB’s Health & Safety Excellence program

Ontario’s Workplace Safety & Insurance Board released the largest quarterly rebate payout to businesses—to the tune of some \$6.2 million—since launching its Health & Safety Excellence program.

<https://www.ebmag.com/creating-a-safer-province-with-wsibs-health-safety-excellence-program/>

Free Health and Safety Training for Small Businesses

The Ontario government is investing \$10.5 million to prevent workplace illnesses and injuries by improving health and safety awareness and practices at up to 60,000 small businesses across the province over the next three years.

All small businesses with 6 to 19 employees are required to have a health and safety representative and can apply for this training. The Small Business Health and Safety Training Program will provide free online training to Health and Safety Representatives to keep workers safe in the retail, construction, health care, accommodation and food services, and other sectors.



<https://www.wsps.ca/important-updates/free-health-and-safety-training-for-small-businesses>



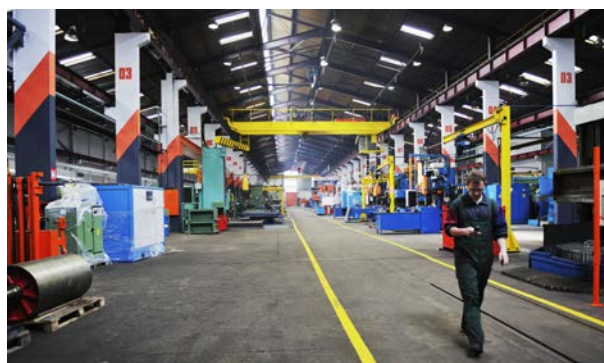
The government calls for employees' gradual return to the workplace as of September

While working from home is no longer mandatory, but recommended in our current pandemic environment, the government is calling for a gradual return to both public and private work places, with respect to health measures. This was one of the messages conveyed today in a press conference by the Minister of Government Administration and President of the Treasury Board, Sonia LeBel, and the Minister of Labor, Employment and Social Solidarity in the Mauricie region, Jean Boulet.

<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/fr/salle-presse/communiqués/retour-graduel-milieux-travail-septembre>

The CNESST launches an information campaign on the dangers associated with road construction sites

The Committee on Standards, Equity, Health and Safety at Work (CNESST) is launching a new information campaign on road worksites and the dangers specific to this sector of activity.



<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/fr/salle-presse/communiqués/cnesst-lance-une-campagne-dinformation-sur-dangers>



The CNESST sets the average contribution rate for 2022 for the Occupational Health and Safety Fund

The board of directors of the Commission for Standards, Equity, Health and Safety at Work (CNESST) today approved the average contribution rate for the Fund for Occupational Health and Safety (FSST) for the year 2022.

<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/fr/salle-presse/communiqués/taux-moyen-cotisation-2022>

Return of the CNESST's prevention squad among temporary foreign workers in agricultural businesses

This year, from May 17 to August 26, 2021, the prevention squad focused its efforts on temporary foreign workers (TFWs) with respect to health measures. The objective was to inform and educate employers and TFWs, notably on their main rights and obligations when it comes to work, in addition to the efforts already implemented by the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) to make workplaces aware of the health measures to be implemented in relation to COVID-19.



<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/fr/salle-presse/communiqués/retour-lescouade-prevention-cnesst-aupres>

NEW BRUNSWICK

WorkSafeNB launches fall protection blitz

WorkSafeNB knows that falls continue to be a leading cause of serious workplace injuries in New Brunswick and that employers care about their employees' well-being.

To help keep workers safe, and to continue driving a safety-first culture in New Brunswick's roofing industry, WorkSafeNB's health and safety officers will be visiting worksites this summer to ensure compliance with safety regulations.



<https://www.worksafenb.ca/about-us/news-and-events/news/2021/worksafenb-launches-fall-protection-blitz/>

Unpaid waiting period eliminated

WCB New Brunswick is pleased to announce the removal of the three-day unpaid waiting period for injured and ill workers of New Brunswick.



Over 25 years ago, an unpaid waiting period was introduced whereby an employee who experienced a work-related injury or illness was not eligible for compensation for the first three days of the claim. Legislation repealed that provision in stages, with the initial elimination of one unpaid day effective July 1, 2019 and the complete elimination of the unpaid waiting period for workers experiencing a workplace injury beginning Thursday, July 1, 2021.

<https://www.worksafenb.ca/about-us/news-and-events/news/2021/unpaid-waiting-period-eliminated/>

NOVA SCOTIA

Pandemic good and bad news for N.S. Workers' Compensation Board

The first year of Nova Scotia's pandemic has delivered good and bad news when it comes to workers injured on the job in 2020.

According to statistics released Wednesday by the Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia, there were 666 fewer claims filed for time lost on the job in 2020 than there were in 2019.



<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/workers-compensation-board-injury-injured-workers-pandemic-covid-19-1.6015311>

Injury costing Nova Scotians and their workplaces too much time from work (May 5/21)

In 2020, people injured on the job in Nova Scotia were off work for a total of 3,131 person-years – a staggering statistic that has very real human and economic impact, WCB Nova Scotia reported today in the organization's annual statistical summary.



In 2020, Nova Scotia reached a new low in the number of time-loss claims, at 4,997. Most of these injuries continue to be sprains and strains, mostly to the back. At the same time, workers and employers experienced a new high in lost time from the job due to injury, totaling over 1.1 million days, with an average of 178 lost days per claim.

<https://www.wcb.ns.ca/About-Us/News-Room/News/Injury-costing-Nova-Scotians-and-their-workplaces-too-much-time-from-work-May-5-21.aspx>

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

Working at Heights Campaign Underway

Beginning June 28, WCB launched a widespread education and enforcement campaign surrounding working from heights, which includes a package of new safety resources, posters, media and mini training videos to assist employers and workers in understanding their legal obligations.

The goal of the initiative is to protect workers by ensuring compliance with the OHS Act and Regulations and raising awareness of the importance of workplace safety.

In 2019, on a Prince Edward Island worksite, a worker suffered life altering injuries as a result of falling approximately 5.5 meters (18 feet) from unguarded scaffolding to the concrete surface below.

<http://www.wcb.pe.ca/Information/NewsItem/529>

WCB reports 2020 highlights at Annual Public Meeting

The Workers Compensation Board (WCB) released its 2020 Annual Report and presented this year's highlights at their virtual Annual Public meeting this week.

"We are pleased to report on the highlights from the past year," said WCB Board Chair Jim MacPhee. "It goes without saying 2020 was not a typical year. The COVID-19 pandemic was a true test of the strength of our system, our funding and rate setting policies which are meant to safeguard against extreme fluctuations from market volatility. While there were fluctuations in the investment portfolio over the year, we are confident the funding status and investment strategies are doing what they are designed to do during rate stabilization periods and will help us weather the storm."



<http://www.wcb.pe.ca/Information/NewsItem/528>

NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

New app helps workplaces better understand OHS Legislation

A new mobile app was launched today to help promote safer workplaces. NL OHS, a Guide to Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Legislation, is a joint initiative of WorkplaceNL and the Department of Digital Government and Service NL. By using clear language and easy-to-find topics, the app helps make the Newfoundland and Labrador Occupational Health and Safety Act and Regulations easier to understand.

The app is available for free through the Apple and Android app store or can be viewed in a web browser (see Related Links below). When downloaded, you can access it without using WIFI or data – ideal for remote worksites.

OHS topics now available include: confined space entry, ladders, noise, ventilation, working at height, working alone and psychological health and safety. More topics will be released later this year.

The Guide to OHS Legislation app was developed in partnership with the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety.



<https://workplacenl.ca/article/new-app-helps-workplaces-better-understand-ohs-legislation/>

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Back Injury

Last year back injuries made up nearly 1 in 10 workplace injuries in the NWT and Nunavut. Whether mild back pain or a more debilitating injury, back problems can have permanent impacts on someone's working life, personal life, mood, and overall quality of life.

Some jobs come with a higher risk of back injury due to the type of day-to-day tasks and activities. Airport cargo handlers, mine labourers, and healthcare providers are some examples of high risk jobs. However, it is important to remember that back injuries are a risk to all workers. Do you ever have to lift things? Sit at a desk? Stand for long periods of time? Work with tools or machinery that vibrate? These tasks all have a risk of back injury, and it is important for everyone to understand how to prevent them.

https://www.wscn.nt.ca/BackInjury_

WSCC gets new governance council chair

The Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission of the NWT and Nunavut has named Jenni Bruce as the new chair of its governance council.

The seven-person council oversees how WSCC is run and safeguards the workers' protection fund used to pay benefits and provide services to injured workers.

<https://cabinradio.ca/59276/news/wscn-gets-new-governance-council-chair/>





Yukon workers now have access to domestic, sexualized violence leave

Yukon workers who have been victims of domestic and sexualized violence now have access to paid and unpaid leave under the Employment Standards Act.



The government has passed Bill 10, which first received assent in November 2019. Rates of domestic violence in the Yukon are three times the national average. Also, the rates of sexualized violence in the province are higher than the national average.

<https://www.hrreporter.com/focus-areas/payroll/yukon-workers-now-have-access-to-domestic-sexualized-violence-leave/358004>

Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board maintains strong foundation and funded position despite a challenging year

The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board's (YWCHSB) 2020 annual report was tabled in the Yukon Legislative Assembly today and is now available to the public.

The report highlights the actions the organization took to weather the 2020 global pandemic while supporting our stakeholders through the challenging year.



<https://www.wcb.yk.ca/web-0074/web-0077/ywchsb-maintains-strong-foundation>

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

A FEW WORDS FROM OUR HAPPY CLIENTS:

“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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