

# CANADIAN WORKERS' COMPENSATION DIGEST

Volume 3 Issue 2



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# INTRODUCTION/ABOUT TEKSMED

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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.

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## ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

This is the tenth 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.

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# NATIONAL- CANADA

## **'Far from perfect': Report reveals latest on work fatalities, injuries**

More than 900 workers in Canada died due to work-related causes in 2019, according to the most recent national report on workplace fatalities and injuries.

The 2021 Report on Workplace Fatalities and Injuries was released in October from the University of Regina. It states that 590 workers in Canada died as a result of occupation-related diseases in 2019, while 335 also died that year as a result of workplace injuries, for a total of 925.

Workers' compensation boards also accepted a total of 271,806 claims of lost time due to injury in 2019.

<https://www.ohscanada.com/features/far-from-perfect-report-reveals-latest-on-work-fatalities-injuries/>





# NATIONAL - CANADA

## **More workers consider mental illness a disability**

More Canadians are recognizing mental illnesses as actual disabilities, finds a recent report.

Specifically, roughly half think that depression (54 per cent) and anxiety (44 per cent) are disabilities, the highest figures since 2019, according to RBC Insurance.

"Over the years, we have seen more and more Canadians recognizing that disabilities can be mental, and not just physical in nature," says Maria Winslow, senior director for life and health at RBC Insurance. "This is an important shift, particularly as people continue to deal with the ongoing stresses of the pandemic and they continue to report a decline in their mental health."

<https://www.hrreporter.com/focus-areas/compensation-and-benefits/more-workers-consider-mental-illness-a-disability/363657>

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## **Bell Let's Talk Day: Employers supporting staff amid pandemic stresses**

This year, Canadian employers marked Bell Canada's Let's Talk Day by addressing the ongoing coronavirus pandemic's impact on the mental health of employees.

The annual event, which began in 2010 to encourage discussions about mental health, is built on four pillars: mental-health research, workplace leadership, ending stigmas around mental health and advocating for mental-health care and access, says Monika Mielnik, director of diversity, equity and inclusion and mental health at Bell.

<https://www.benefitscanada.com/benefits/health-wellness/bell-lets-talk-day-employers-supporting-staff-amid-pandemic-era-stresses/>

# BRITISH COLUMBIA

## WorkSafeBC reminding employers and workers to take precautions when working in cold weather

With cold temperatures and winter conditions continuing to be in the forecast for most of B.C., WorkSafeBC is reminding employers and workers to take precautions and stay safe when working outdoors.

A number of industries and occupations can involve substantial outdoor cold-weather exposure, including construction workers, utility and maintenance workers, transport truck drivers, recreational instructors, operators and attendants.

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/news-releases/2021/December/worksafebc-reminding-employers-employers-workers-to-take-precautions-when-working-in-cold-weather>

## B.C. provides more services for construction workers

British Columbia is investing \$1 million to provide more drug-poisoning prevention services for construction workers in the province.

The funding was delivered to the Vancouver Island Construction Association (VICA), and will help expand its Tailgate Toolkit project. The project which will reduce the stigma associated with substance use, and raise awareness of pain management, pathways to treatment and other information about mental health and substance use.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/occupational-hygiene/bc-provides-more-services-for-construction-workers/322112>





# BRITISH COLUMBIA



## Proposed policy amendments regarding permanent psychological disability benefits

Where an injury, mental disorder, or occupational disease results in a permanent psychological impairment, WorkSafeBC may provide a worker with permanent disability benefits. Their policy provides guidance on the procedures to determine a worker's permanent psychological disability benefits.

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/law-policy/public-hearings-consultations/current-public-hearings-and-consultations/proposed-policy-amendments-regarding-permanent-psychological-disability-benefits>

## High Risk Strategies and Industry Initiatives updated for 2022

WorkSafeBC's High Risk Strategies and Industry Initiatives identify and target industries and employers with a high risk of serious workplace injury and a significant contribution to the serious injury rate.

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/announcements/2022/January/high-risk-strategies-and-industry-initiatives-updated-for-2022>





## **COVID-19 one of the biggest causes of workplace illness and death in Alberta: WCB**

The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) has accepted 12,588 claims for workers who caught COVID-19 on the job in Alberta, including 7,788 claims in 2021.

There have also been 33 death claims connected to COVID-19 exposure in the workplace. WCB said fewer than five of those death claims were filed in 2020. The most recent WCB data on workplace deaths shows that in 2018, 58 deaths were linked to occupational disease, 23 were accidents and 19 deaths came from motor vehicle accidents on the job.

<https://edmontonjournal.com/news/local-news/covid-19-one-of-the-biggest-causes-of-workplace-illness-and-death-in-alberta-wcb>

## **WCB says it will accept physician diagnosis in lieu of test result for COVID proof**

Amid limited access to PCR testing for COVID-19 and shortages of free rapid test kits, the Alberta Workers' Compensation Board says it will accept a physician diagnosis in lieu of test results for workers who contract the virus on the job.

<https://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/wcb-says-it-will-accept-physician-diagnosis-in-lieu-of-test-result-for-covid-proof>

## **How claims affect your premiums**

Adjustments to your premiums are based on your claims experience to provide you with incentives to reduce your costs. For small business employers, adjustments are based on your total number of claims. For large business employers, adjustments are based on the cost of your claims.

[https://www.wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/employers/EFS\\_How\\_claims\\_affect\\_your\\_premiums.pdf](https://www.wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/employers/EFS_How_claims_affect_your_premiums.pdf)



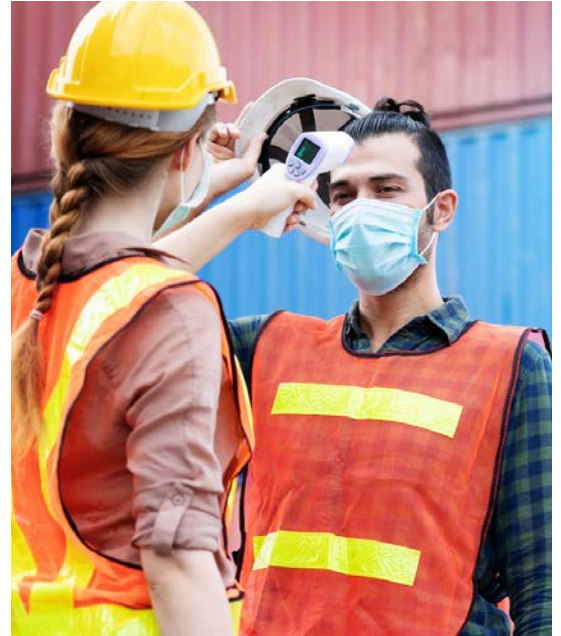
# SASKATCHEWAN

## Sask. WCB stands firm on requiring COVID-19 PCR test, but will treat applications on case-by-case basis

The Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board is standing firm on its requirement for a PCR test in order to process COVID-19-related claims.

At a provincial COVID-19 update on Jan. 13, 2022, Jennifer Norleen-Beitel, the vice president of operations with the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB), said the organization will look for a PCR test but will consider other information. .

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/sask-wcb-testing-pcr-requirement-1.6313954>



## WCB employer premium rates to increase for first time in 18 years



The Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) plans to increase its employer premium rate in 2022, the first increase for this rate in 18 years.

The premium rate was \$1.17 per hundred dollars of payroll in 2021, while that rate will increase to \$1.23 next year, the first increase since 2004. Despite this increase, the WCB pointed out that Saskatchewan's premium rates remain among the lowest in Canada.

<https://www.moosejawtoday.com/local-news/wcb-employer-premium-rates-to-increase-for-first-time-in-18-years-4883591>



# SASKATCHEWAN

## Saskatchewan WCB extends cost relief for employers

Amid the surge of the omicron variant, Saskatchewan employers will have a better capacity to cover costs for accepted work-related COVID-19 claims.

That's because the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) has announced it is further extending cost relief to June 30, 2022.

"We're accepting eligible workplace COVID-19 claims and given the recent Omicron surge, the WCB is also extending temporary financial support for employers to cover COVID-19 claim costs," says Phillip Germain, CEO of Saskatchewan WCB. "By taking a proactive response to the higher transmissibility of the omicron variant, we believe this decision will help assist workers and employers affected by COVID-19 injury claims."

<https://www.hrreporter.com/focus-areas/compensation-and-benefits/saskatchewan-wcb-extends-cost-relief-for-employers/363579>





# MANITOBA

## 'Our commitment is to strengthen the culture of safety across Manitoba'

As an organization primed to promote health and safety in the province, Jamie Hall, COO, SAFE Work Manitoba says:

“Our focus really is on building programs and enabling the community of safety and health providers in the province to succeed.”

SAFE Work Manitoba is a division of the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) of Manitoba that is dedicated to preventing workplace injury and illness.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/leadership-and-culture/our-commitment-is-to-strengthen-the-culture-of-safety-across-manitoba/321897>



## Manitoba government amends workers compensation act to enhance support and benefits for firefighters



The Manitoba government is amending the Workers Compensation Act (WCA) to include coverage for five additional cancers to the list of presumptive cancers, pertaining to firefighters and at-risk personnel in the Manitoba Fire Commissioners Office, becoming a national leader in taking this step to protect Manitobans on the front lines, Premier Heather Stefanson announced.

<https://news.gov.mb.ca/news/index.html?item=52777>





## Rapid test or medical note OK for COVID workplace claims in Ontario during Omicron: WSIB

Ontarians who suspect they caught COVID-19 at work can make claims with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board even without a positive result from a PCR test now that the gold-standard assessment tool is no longer available to most residents.

A top executive with the board says, however, that individuals should still try to get a medical opinion or rapid test to confirm their infection.

“Our approach hasn’t changed too dramatically,” said Scott Bujeya, chief operations officer with the board, which supports those injured at work. “The information gathering that we’re doing is very similar to what we would have been doing pre-Omicron.”

<https://globalnews.ca/news/8576300/rapid-test-medical-note-covid-wsib-claims-ontario/>



# ONTARIO

## Ontario extends paid sick days program

Ontario is extending its Worker Income Protection Benefit program, which provides paid sick days, until July 31, 2022.

The government says it wants to continue keeping workers safe and ensure they do not lose pay if they need to miss work for reasons related to COVID-19.



<https://www.hrreporter.com/focus-areas/compensation-and-benefits/ontario-extends-paid-sick-days-program/362456>

## Ontario looks at creating 'portable' benefits program



The Ontario government is looking for advice on designing a plan that provides workers with benefits such as health, dental and vision care, even if they change jobs.

This could be especially beneficial for digital platform and gig workers, and others in the service industry, who switch jobs more frequently.

To that end, the government is creating an advisory panel to help with the process, saying Ontario will become the first province in Canada to pursue such a comprehensive benefits program.

<https://www.hrreporter.com/focus-areas/compensation-and-benefits/ontario-looks-at-creating-portable-benefits-program/363701>



## **The CNESST calls on workplaces to strengthen health measures**

Faced with the resurgence of COVID-19 cases, particularly the arrival of the Omicron variant which appears to be more transmissible, and following government announcements, health measures must be reinforced for all work environments.

<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/fr/salle-presse/communiqués/cnesst-appelle-milieus-travail-renforcer-mesures>

## **The CNESST supports workplaces in preparing prevention and participation mechanisms**

Following the modernization of the occupational health and safety system, adopted by the National Assembly in the fall of 2021, an interim system for the establishment of prevention and participation mechanisms in the workplace is planned for April 6, 2022.

Already, two months before the measures come into force, the Commission for Standards, Equity, Health and Safety at Work (CNESST) has designed user-friendly and interactive information tools to help workplaces in the implementation of the prevention and participation mechanisms provided for in the interim regime.

<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/fr/salle-presse/communiqués/mécanismes-prevention-participation>

## **Hybrid work arrangement is key for successful return to the office: CNESST**

Businesses need to adapt to a hybrid work arrangement to ensure a successful transition back to the office, according to the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST).

"The working world has changed a lot because of the COVID-19 pandemic," noted Manuelle Oudar, president, CEO and chair of the CNESST board of directors.

<https://montreal.ctvnews.ca/hybrid-work-arrangement-is-key-for-successful-return-to-the-office-cnesst-1.5658127>



# NEW BRUNSWICK

## What to do if your employee tests positive for COVID-19

As an employer, you have an important role to play in preventing the spread of COVID-19 and must take every reasonable precaution to keep your workplace healthy and safe.

Due to the increase in COVID-19 cases, it is no longer feasible for Public Health to continue contact tracing among the general public. Individuals who test positive are asked to notify their close contacts and their household members. The same applies to workplaces.



<https://www.worksafenb.ca/about-us/news-and-events/news/2022/what-to-do-if-your-employee-tests-positive-for-covid-19/>

## New guidelines to help New Brunswick psychologists

Providing timely support to workers requires a thorough review of evidence to determine if an injury or illness is compensable under the Workers' Compensation (WC) Act.

A new document, Is mental stress a compensable injury? What constitutes a traumatic event?, will help New Brunswick psychologists understand how the Act is applied to injuries or illnesses related to mental stress and traumatic events.

<https://www.worksafenb.ca/about-us/news-and-events/news/2021/new-guidelines-to-help-new-brunswick-psychologists/>

## Advisory: Working in extreme cold

WorkSafeNB is reminding employers and workers to take extra care when working outdoors. Working in extreme temperatures can pose significant risks. Ideally they want to minimize those risks. If you're able, try changing your schedule to perform indoor tasks, rather than outdoor jobs.

<https://www.worksafenb.ca/about-us/news-and-events/news/2022/advisory-working-in-extreme-cold/>

# NOVA SCOTIA

## Workplace injury's impact reduced in Q2 as Nova Scotians returned to work sooner

As outlined in their latest Report to the Community, WCB Nova Scotia continued to support workers and employers through the second quarter of 2021, beginning to deliver on new Strategic Priorities, with a significant focus on return to work, and better safety outcomes in long-term care and home care.

<https://www.wcb.ns.ca/About-Us/News-Room/News/Workplace-injury-impact-reduced-in-Q2-as-Nova-Scotians-returned-to-work-sooner-Nov-26-21.aspx>



## Safety Top of Mind as Lobster Season Starts in Southwestern Nova Scotia



Lobster fishing crews in southwestern Nova Scotia are reminded to make safety a priority and follow rules and guidelines as they begin their fishing season.

Dumping Day, traditionally the last Monday in November, marks the official start of the fishing season in lobster fishing areas 33 and 34 along the southern and western shores of the province.

<https://www.wcb.ns.ca/About-Us/News-Room/News/Safety-Top-of-Mind-as-Lobster-Season-Starts-in-Southwestern-Nova-Scotia-Nov-26-21.aspx>

# PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

## Recent Amendments to Workers Compensation Act

New amendments to the Workers Compensation Act were recently approved in the fall 2021 sitting of the Legislative Assembly that help clarify and modernize the current legislation.

Among the recent amendments to the Workers Compensation Act and regulation were changes to the indexation of compensation benefits, which would increase the amount of benefits paid to workers on long term benefits and survivors of fatally injured workers.

<http://www.wcb.pe.ca/Information/NewsItem/545>



## Workers Compensation Board of PEI announces 2022 Rates and Surplus Distribution to Employers

The Workers Compensation Board of Prince Edward Island has announced a reduction in the estimated average assessment rate for Island employers.

The estimated average assessment rate for 2022 will be \$1.43 per \$100 of payroll, which is a 9% or 14 cent decrease from 2021 rates.

<http://www.wcb.pe.ca/Information/NewsItem/544>



# NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

## **Update on the statutory review of the Newfoundland and Labrador's workers compensation system**

The Honourable Bernard Davis, Minister of Environment and Climate Change and Minister Responsible for WorkplaceNL, provided an update on the status of the 2019 Statutory Review of the Workers' Compensation System.

The final report for the 2019 Statutory Review entitled 'Striving for Balance and Compromise', was submitted to the Provincial Government on June 10, 2021. The report including subsections contained a total of 48 recommendations. The report was released on June 18, 2021, fulfilling a recommendation to do so within 14 days of receipt.

<https://workplacenl.ca/article/update-on-the-statutory-review-of-the-newfoundland-and-labradors-workers-compensation-system/>

## **WorkplaceNL holds discounted average assessment rate at \$1.69 for fourth consecutive year**

Effective January 1, 2022, WorkplaceNL will hold the average assessment rate paid by employers at \$1.69 per \$100 of payroll, including a temporary \$0.21 average discount.

Seventy-three percent of employers will have no change or a lower annual assessment rate and 27 per cent of employers will have a higher rate in 2022. This compares to 43 per cent having no change or a lower rate and 57 per cent having a higher rate in 2021.

<https://workplacenl.ca/article/workplacenl-holds-discounted-average-assessment-rate-at-1-69-for-fourth-consecutive-year/>

## **MyWorkplaceNL online service available for injured workers**

WorkplaceNL has added new services for injured workers to its suite of online tools. MyWorkplaceNL is a secure, convenient online service where injured workers can submit a report of a workplace injury, view claim and payment data, live chat with a representative, view and print select information, order hearing aid batteries, submit expenses and send in other claim-related documents.

<https://workplacenl.ca/article/myworkplacenl-online-service-available-for-injured-workers/>

# NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

## HAND-ling injury Prevention

In 2021, 19.2 % of accepted claims were related to hand injuries. Our hands are critical to the functioning of our daily work and lives and, as a result, are often the first part of our bodies exposed to hazardous conditions such as extreme cold or heat, sharp edges, pinch points, electricity, chemicals etc. Even a small cut can end up being more than an inconvenience and cause serious issues. Hand injuries can have a temporary or sometimes permanent impact on our lives unless we take daily care to protect our hands, fingers, and wrists to prevent injuries from happening.

<https://www.wscc.nt.ca/HandInjury>



## Northwest Territories announces new requirements for travelling workers



Northwest Territories has announced a new COVID-19 safety protocol for travelling workers.

Employees returning from travel outside the Northwest Territories will now be required to work from home for the first three days after arrival.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/safety-and-ppe/northwest-territories-announces-new-requirements-for-travelling-workers/320662>



# YUKON

## **Yukoners may be eligible for PCR testing if they contracted COVID-19 at work: WCB**

The Yukon Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board is encouraging Yukoners who believe they have contracted COVID-19 at work to gather evidence and make a claim, regardless of whether they qualify for a PCR test or not.

"From our perspective, we've been working with [the Department of Health and Social] to find a solution on this issue, because we know this issue. So what we are saying is that if you suspect your contracted COVID-19, in the workplace, you are to acquire rapid antigen tests," said WCB spokesperson James Price.

<https://www.yukon-news.com/news/yukoners-may-be-eligible-for-pcr-testing-if-they-contracted-covid-19-at-work-wcb/>

## **Yukon modernizes the Safety and Compensation Act**



Changes to the Workers Safety and Compensation Act, passed in the legislature on Dec. 2, will change the way workers receive compensation and improve coverage for firefighters in the territory.

The minister responsible for the Workers' Compensation Health and Safety Board, Richard Mostyn, said the new legislation "brings Yukon in line with other Canadian jurisdictions" and is now "clear, simple and accessible."

<https://www.yukon-news.com/news/yukon-modernizes-the-safety-and-compensation-act/>



# 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](mailto: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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