

CANADIAN WORKERS' COMPENSATION DIGEST

Volume 5 Issue 3



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INTRODUCTION/ABOUT TEKS**MED**

Teks**Med** Services Inc. is the leader in Canadian disability management, backed by over 30 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.

Teks**Med** sees the ability in disability.

Thousands of businesses across Canada trust us with their disability management. For more information on our services and contact information see the final section of this magazine.

ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

This is the nineteenth 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



Connections between DEI and MSDs

The National Safety Council (NSC) recently released a comprehensive report titled "The Intersection of DEI and MSDs: Ensuring Equitable Outcomes." This report explores how diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) intersect with musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs), the most common workplace injury in North America.

The report, published through the MSD Solutions Lab—an NSC initiative funded by Amazon—analyzes workplace factors that lead to inequitable MSD outcomes and offers solutions for mitigation. It references over 100 academic publications and sources, examining work organization, workplace and equipment design, safety culture, psychological safety, and psychosocial risk factors.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/safety-and-ppe/connections-between-dei-and-msds/494353>

Canadian dairy farmers urged to consider goggles, gloves and other bird flu protections

As the U.S. identified a second human case of bird flu linked to dairy cows this week, some Canadian dairy farmers and veterinarians are on guard, taking measures like stocking up on personal protective equipment.

The H5N1 virus that's at the centre of the current outbreak is deadly to birds; in cows, it's resulted in decreased milk production, loss of appetite and fever.

Earlier this month, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommended that jurisdictions make PPE available to dairy and poultry farms with infected animals to avert infections, and affected states began offering supplies.

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/health/ppe-dairy-farms-bird-flu-1.7212704>



BRITISH COLUMBIA

WorkSafeBC advises employers to plan ahead to protect workers from extreme heat and wildfire smoke

With summer approaching, WorkSafeBC is urging employers to plan for the health and safety risks that come with extreme heat and exposure to wildfire smoke. These conditions can lead to significant health issues for workers, such as heat exhaustion, heatstroke, and respiratory problems.

To effectively manage the risks of wildfire smoke and heat stress, employers should conduct risk assessments tailored to their specific worksites and workforce before extreme weather conditions arise. This involves identifying potential hazards, evaluating the severity of risks, and implementing appropriate control measures.

<https://awcbc.org/en/worksafebc-advises-employers-to-plan-ahead-to-protect-workers-from-extreme-heat-and-wildfire-smoke/>

Enhancing crane safety in British Columbia

In a significant move to enhance safety in the crane industry, WorkSafeBC has announced a comprehensive risk-reduction strategy aimed at improving crane safety across British Columbia. This initiative comes in response to the increasing number of cranes operating on complex, multi-employer worksites and a slew of recent incidents.

The urgency of this strategy was amplified by four incidents earlier this year, including one fatal, and are also highlighted by the 2021 tower crane collapse in Kelowna, which claimed the lives of five workers. These events have spurred WorkSafeBC to undertake a thorough review of crane safety, informed by input from over 130 crane-sector stakeholders.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/safety-and-ppe/enhancing-crane-safety-in-british-columbia/493984>



BRITISH COLUMBIA

WorkSafeBC's inspectional approach for construction in 2024 aims to reduce serious injuries and fatalities

Statistics from WorkSafeBC show that the construction sector in B.C. had a time-loss claims rate that was 24 percent higher than the provincial average for all sectors. Across B.C., the time-loss claims rate was 2.40 per 100 workers in 2022, while in construction it was 2.98.

“Our 2024 inspectional initiatives focus on the sectors that have the highest risk of serious injury, and that includes construction,” says Suzana Prpic, Senior Manager, Prevention Field Services at WorkSafeBC. “The goal of our inspectional approach for construction is to work with stakeholders to reduce the risk of injury to workers in the industry.”

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/news-releases/2024/April/worksafebc-inspectional-approach-construction-2024-aims-reduce-serious-injuries-fatalities>



BC sets minimum wage and other protections for app-based workers

British Columbia has introduced new regulations to establish a minimum wage and basic protections for app-based ride-hailing and delivery workers like Uber, DoorDash, and SkipTheDishes.

These rules, which will come into effect on September 3, marking a first in Canada, aim to address common concerns among app-based workers, including low and unpredictable pay, protection of tips, and lack of workers' compensation.

Under the new regulations, the minimum wage for engaged time—when a worker is actively on a job—will be set at \$20.88 per hour. This rate is 20% higher than BC's general minimum wage to account for the fact that the minimum wage does not cover waiting time between assignments.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/news/general/bc-sets-minimum-wage-and-other-protections-for-app-based-workers/493392>



ALBERTA



Alberta nurses advocate for equal worker's compensation coverage

In a continued effort to address disparities in workplace health and safety coverage, Alberta nurses are urging the provincial government to include them in the presumptive coverage for psychological injuries, a benefit currently extended to other first responders. This coverage allows for easier access to Workers' Compensation benefits for psychological trauma experienced on the job, without the need to prove a direct causal link between their employment and their psychological injuries.

"Through the nature of their work, nurses are routinely exposed to traumatic events in the workplace," stated Heather Smith, president of the United Nurses of Alberta (UNA), last year. She emphasized that it is unjust for nurses to "be forced to wait for – or be denied – access to Workers' Compensation benefits after experiencing traumatic events while on the job."

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/psychological-safety/alberta-nurses-advocate-for-equal-workers-compensation-coverage/489578>

Alberta Workers' Compensation Board 2024 Annual General Meeting

At the 2024 Annual General Meeting held on June 6th, various pertinent questions were addressed regarding the company's operations and future strategies. Key discussions revolved around the sustainability of premium rate subsidies for employers in 2025, dependent on economic conditions and Alberta's economic recovery. Further insights were shared about the significant rise in economic loss awards in 2023, primarily attributed to pandemic after-effects and challenges in the labour market. The meeting also covered strategies to address increasing claims costs and the importance of preventive measures and effective disability management in reducing these costs.

https://www.wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/public/2024_AGM_Q&A_summary.pdf



SASKATCHEWAN

Saskatchewan WCB seeking customer feedback

“In the months of June and July, the Saskatchewan Workers’ Compensation Board (WCB) will be reaching out to customers across the province to gather feedback to help improve WCB services.

The information provided by customers will be vital in improving the WCB’s services over the short- and long-term. As customers experience these services from a different perspective, we will be seeking input from workers and employers at all touchpoints of their experience with us.

This information will be used in the development of a customer feedback system that will help us in the future to gather feedback at the most critical points of the customer journey. We will be asking customers about their preferred feedback methods. This information will be used to inform changes to how the WCB gathers feedback from our customers. Customer feedback is essential in our ability to be able to improve our services for our customers.”

<https://www.wcbsask.com/news/saskatchewan-wcb-seeking-customer-feedback-4>

WCB shares 2023 results at annual general meeting

The Saskatchewan Workers’ Compensation Board (WCB) shared its 2023 results at its annual general meeting today, held virtually. WCB CEO Phillip Germain and members of the board and executive team provided an overview of the organization’s financial, strategic and operating highlights, including 2023 workplace injury and fatality statistics.

“We are committed to maintaining a strong and stable funding position,” says Germain. “By doing so, we let workers and employers know their needs will be met, while also ensuring stable funding for programs and services that help us meet our vision of eliminating injuries and restoring abilities. That way, workers and employers know the WCB will be there for them when they need us.”

The WCB remained in a fully funded position in 2023, with a sufficiency ratio of 135.7 per cent. This ratio ensures the organization has the ability to cover the future costs of all claims in the system. The sufficiency policy sets a target range for the sufficiency ratio of between 100 and 140 per cent.

<https://www.wcbsask.com/news/wcb-shares-2023-results-annual-general-meeting>



MANITOBA

Psychological claims to WCB rise in 2023, city report finds

The latest annual report on workplace safety among Winnipeg city employees has revealed a notable uptick in psychological claims filed with the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) in 2023. This report also provides insights into lost time injury (LTI) rates and other crucial safety metrics.

According to the report, there were 182 psychological claims submitted to WCB in 2023, marking a 31% increase from the 139 claims filed in 2022. Factors contributing to these claims include workplace violence, mental stress, burnout, and other critical incidents.

Despite the rise in psychological claims, they maintained a consistent share of all lost-time WCB claims, accounting for 34% in both 2022 and 2023. In contrast, physical injury claims slightly decreased to 1,246 cases in 2023 from 1,254 the previous year. However, the frequency of LTIs per 100 workers increased to 11 in 2023, up from 10.2 in 2022.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/news/general/psychological-claims-to-wcb-rise-in-2023-city-report-finds/493275>



ONTARIO



WSIB review leads to change in how injured foreign agricultural workers are treated

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) announced today the completion of its foreign agricultural worker review, launched in September 2023. The review has resulted in new measures to help foreign agricultural workers recover from an injury or illness in Ontario, and to treat them fairly when they return to their home country.

<https://www.wsib.ca/en/news-release/wsib-review-leads-change-how-injured-foreign-agricultural-workers-are-treated>

Test your heat stress knowledge and help create tool

"Our whole focus is studying and understanding the human response to extreme heat," says Emily Tetzlaff, a PhD candidate at the University of Ottawa. Tetzlaff is part of the Human and Environmental Physiology Research Unit (HEPRU) and is currently spearheading a project that could significantly impact workplace safety in Ontario. The project, the HEPRU Occupational Heat Stress Knowledge Assessment Tool (HEPRU-OHSKAT), aims to evaluate and enhance the protection against heat stress among workers in the province.

Heat stress is a growing concern, especially in the face of climate change and increasing global temperatures. For many workers, particularly those in industries such as construction, agriculture, and manufacturing, heat stress can pose serious health risks. These risks include heat exhaustion, heat stroke, and other heat-related illnesses, which can be fatal if not managed properly.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/safety-and-ppe/test-your-heat-stress-knowledge-and-help-create-tool/494604>





ONTARIO

Prioritizing occupational safety through an understanding of WSIB

Understanding the role and importance of the Workplace Safety Insurance Board (WSIB) in Ontario is crucial for both employers and employees. Its primary mission is to assist workers in their recovery and return to work following a workplace injury or illness. This includes not only medical and wage replacement support but also aid for surviving family members in re-entering the workforce or pursuing education.

With the significant economic and personal costs associated with workplace injuries, WSIB, alongside the Occupational Health and Safety Act (OHSA), plays a vital role in reducing these incidents through regulations, training, and partnerships with various organizations. It's crucial to understand the weaving role WSIB plays in promoting workplace safety, acting as a resource for both employers and employees, whom the organization seeks to benefit most.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/safety-and-ppe/prioritizing-occupational-safety-through-an-understanding-of-wsib/492640>





Wildfires and smoke plumes: Act before air quality deteriorates

Since forest fires can pose a health and safety risk, particularly due to the smoke released, the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) would like to inform workers and employers of the preventive measures to implement in an environment where air quality is deteriorating.

Fire smoke may contain certain irritant substances including fine particulate matter that can cause or aggravate certain symptoms, particularly in people with illnesses (e.g. asthma), making them vulnerable. The CNESST would like to remind employers of the importance of limiting workers' exposure to this smoke.

<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/fr/salle-presse/communiqués/feux-forest-panaches-fumee-agissez-avant-que>



Increase in fatal accidents: CNESST calls for vigilance

In recent weeks, several fatal accidents have occurred in workplaces in Quebec. In fact, since the end of April, more than ten fatal accidents have occurred, which represents, on average, two deaths per week. No workplace is completely safe from such tragedies. That is why it is important to act.

In this context, the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) is calling for vigilance and would like to remind employers and workers of the importance of taking all possible measures to prevent workplace accidents. Prevention is everyone's business. Let's be vigilant!

<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/fr/salle-presse/communiqués/recrudescence-accidents-mortels-appel-vigilance>



Workshop on labour standards, pay equity and occupational health and safety

Workers are particularly numerous in starting a new job during the summer period. This is why the New Workers Prevention Squad of the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) is back in service for a third year.

<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/fr/salle-presse/communiqués/travailleuses-travailleurs-nouvellement-embauches>

Financing of the Quebec occupational health and safety regime for 2025

The board of directors of the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) today approved maintaining the average contribution rate for the Fonds de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (FSST) at \$1.48 per \$100 of payroll for the year 2025. This rate remains the lowest since the introduction of the Act respecting industrial accidents and occupational diseases in 1985.

<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/fr/salle-presse/communiqués/taux-moyen-cotisation-2025>

Union calls for changes to protect road signallers

In Quebec, the road signage industry is under scrutiny as the United Steelworkers (USW) calls for significant safety reforms. With a concerning rise in accidents and fatalities among road signallers, the union says urgent action is needed to prevent further tragedies on construction sites across the province.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/news/general/union-calls-for-changes-to-protect-road-signallers/483749>



NEW BRUNSWICK

WorkSafeNB announces significant benefit enhancements for New Brunswick workers as Bill 45 becomes law

WorkSafeNB is pleased to announce that the Government of New Brunswick's Bill 45, An Act Respecting the Firefighters' Compensation Act and the Workers' Compensation Act, has received Royal Assent, making it law. These historic benefit improvements, which include an increase in loss of earnings benefits and adjustments to maximum annual earnings, mark a significant milestone in our ongoing commitment to the well-being of our province's workforce.

Once passed, starting July 1, 2024, wage loss benefits for all injured workers will increase from 85% to 90% of net earnings, providing increased financial security as they recover from a workplace injury or illness.

In addition, amendments have been introduced to refine how we calculate Maximum Annual Earnings (MAE). The MAE represents the highest amount of earnings per worker that an employer would pay premiums on and serves as the upper limit for calculating workers' compensation benefits. The updated multiplier, from 1.5 to 1.6, used in the formula will result in more of our clients having their full wages covered, with the MAE set to increase from \$76,900 to \$82,100.

<https://www.worksafenb.ca/about-us/news-and-events/news/2024/worksafenb-announces-significant-benefit-enhancements-for-new-brunswick-workers-1/>



NOVA SCOTIA



Continuing Education Courses: Working together for psychologically healthy workplaces

WCB Nova Scotia is proud to announce new partnerships with two of Atlantic Canada's leading providers in Psychological Health and Safety training – the University of Fredericton and the University of New Brunswick.

Under our contract with these providers, employers and workers across Nova Scotia can access these self-serve courses at deep tuition discounts.

<https://www.wcb.ns.ca/About-Us/News-Room/News/Continuing-Education-Courses-Working-together-for-psychologically-healthy-workplaces-May-30-24>

Website Launch: New resources available for psychological health and safety

WCB Nova Scotia is proud to introduce a suite of resources for Nova Scotians found in this newly launched Psychological Health and Safety Resource Centre.

The suite of resources, adapted from our colleagues at WorkSafe Saskatchewan, will help Nova Scotians as we work to prevent and manage gradual onset psychological injury. The material contained in the website is considered at the leading edge of psychological injury prevention in Canada.

<https://www.wcb.ns.ca/About-Us/News-Room/News/Website-Launch-New-resources-available-for-psychological-health-and-safety-Jun-6-24>

Nova Scotia's workplace injury rate improved last year

Released during national Safety and Health Week, WCB Nova Scotia's Impact of Workplace Injury Report for 2023 shows continued improvement in the long-term trend of workplace injury's impact.

The province's time-loss injury rate improved to 1.40 injuries per 100 covered workers in 2023, down from 1.54 the previous year. This number has been steadily declining for decades, and is half what it was in 2003.

<https://www.wcb.ns.ca/About-Us/News-Room/News/Nova-Scotias-workplace-injury-rate-improved-last-year-May-10-24>

PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND



The WCB shares 2023 highlights and new initiatives at its annual general meeting

In 2023, the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) wrapped up its 2019-2023 Strategic Plan on a high note, by continuing the implementation of initiatives that tangibly support injured workers all the while balancing the needs of Island employers.

“Our 2019-2023 Strategic Plan was an ambitious one that ushered a new era of innovation and commitment to workplace safety and compensation,” said Jim MacPhee, Chair of the WCB. “It became the steppingstone for what lies ahead. Reflecting on our journey since 2019, it’s clear that our collective dedication has positively impacted the lives of workers and employers across Prince Edward Island.”

<https://www.wcb.pe.ca/Information/NewsItem/1005>

Online certificate courses and resources in multiple languages now available

The Workers Compensation Board (WCB) is pleased to announce it is offering free online certificate courses that cover a variety of compensation and occupational health and safety topics. Courses are available now, to anyone, at the click of a button on the WCB website.

“As part of our 2024-2026 strategic plan, we have identified the need to adapt our outreach and communications to the growing diversity in our workforce,” said Dan Campbell, CEO of the WCB. “By providing these courses free of charge to Island workers and employers, our goal is to empower each and every one of them with knowledge and understanding of topics that affect them in the workplace, both individually and collectively.”

<https://www.wcb.pe.ca/Information/NewsItem/982>



NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

Save the Date: 2024 Health and Safety Learning Symposium

Mark your calendar on October 9, 2024, for WorkplaceNL's Health and Safety Learning Symposium in St. John's. Join us for networking opportunities and multiple presentations on a variety of topics to increase your health and safety knowledge.

St. John's Convention Centre, 50 New Gower Street, St. John's
Wednesday, October 9, 2024 , 9:00 A.M.– 4:00 P.M.
Registration opens in August 2024!

<https://workplacenl.ca/article/save-the-date-2023-health-and-safety-learning-symposium/>

'Immediate and decisive action' needed to solve issues raised in workplace investigations audit

Labour leaders and opposition parties are calling on the Newfoundland and Labrador government to take necessary actions to address the issues raised in an audit of the province's response to serious workplace accidents.

The findings of the audit are "severely damning," said Pleaman Forsey, Exploits MHA and the Progressive Conservative critic responsible for Workplace N.L., according to a CBC report, and he wants the provincial government to take "immediate and decisive action" in response to the audit.

Newfoundland and Labrador's Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) department is failing to even complete its investigations on a lot of serious workplace accidents in the province, according to the 2022 audit. It found that at least one-quarter of investigations surveyed by the audit weren't finished before that two-year deadline elapsed, "thereby precluding the option for prosecution," reported CBC, citing the audit that looked into cases filed over a nearly four-year period ending in 2020.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/safety-and-ppe/immediate-and-decisive-action-needed-to-solve-issues-raised-in-workplace-investigations-audit/492496>



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:

“Over the course of our working relationship, Fitzpatrick Electrical Contractor has found TeksMed’s disability management to be exceptional. Their knowledge of return-to-work best practices, WSIB law and policy, and overall commitment to customer service is impressive and extremely helpful to us, especially in this industry.”

- Fitzpatrick Electrical Contractor Inc. | Health & Safety Manager

“TeksMed has been helping our employees return back to work when they are fully recovered and ready to work while reducing the time away from their workplace and lost wages. This has led to a substantial amount of savings for Denny’s Canada.”

- Denny’s Canada | Human Resources Coordinator

“TeksMed has been working with us for the last 3 years and has been providing excellent workplace injury claim management services. We have reduced our WCB costs by 12% each year and have successfully brought our injured workers back to work sooner and safer. Their professionals have made me worry-free on the WCB claims, so I can work on other things of my duties. Their team has really helped our company throughout the years.”

- Van-Whole Produce | HR Generalist

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