



# CANADIAN WORKERS' COMPENSATION DIGEST

Volume 6 Issue 1





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# INTRODUCTION/ABOUT TEKS**MED**

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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.

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## ABOUT THE PUBLICATION

This is the twentieth 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



## Why safety noncompliance is moving from fines to felonies

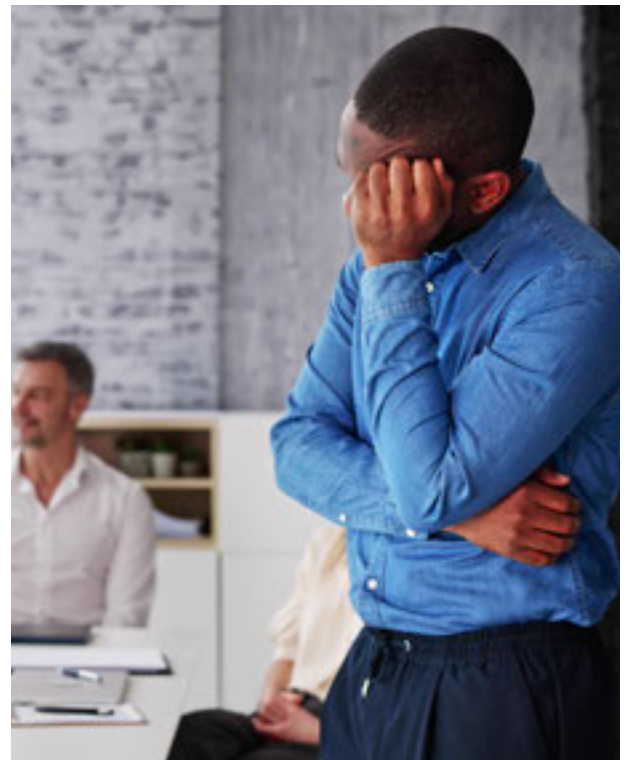
In Canada, workplace safety violations are increasingly being treated as criminal offenses rather than just administrative issues, especially when they cause serious harm or death. Legal expert Tony Paisana stresses the importance of companies maintaining thorough safety records and being cautious with internal communications, as these can impact legal outcomes. He also recommends seeking legal counsel during investigations to avoid self-incrimination and ensure proper handling of safety matters.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/ohs-law-and-legislation/why-safety-noncompliance-is-moving-from-fines-to-felonies/519048>

## Tightening workplace harassment laws

Recent changes in Canadian workplace harassment laws are requiring employers to update their policies and procedures to address psychological safety more thoroughly. Provinces like Quebec, Saskatchewan, Nova Scotia, and Ontario have implemented stricter measures, including the need for clear anti-harassment policies, risk assessments, and training for all employees. These updates now extend to virtual interactions, reflecting the realities of remote work. Employers must investigate harassment incidents, even without formal complaints, and ensure they comply with the evolving standards to create safer and more respectful work environments.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/psychological-safety/tightening-workplace-harassment-laws/517770>



# NATIONAL - CANADA

## CCOHS offers advice for working on ice

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) emphasizes the importance of rigorous safety practices when working on ice-covered waterways. They advise that ice thickness should be at least 15 centimeters for foot traffic, 20 centimeters for small groups, and 25 centimeters for snowmobiles. Regular testing with ice chisels, augers, or drills is essential to ensure stability. Workers should wear appropriate gear, including layered clothing, insulated boots, crampons for traction, and flotation devices. Survival suits or life jackets are recommended for those near open water. The CCOHS also stresses the importance of never working alone, maintaining clear communication, carrying emergency tools like throw bags and ice picks, and monitoring weather conditions to respond to sudden changes. Employers are encouraged to provide real-time weather updates and implement evacuation plans if conditions deteriorate. Training in ice rescue techniques and hazard assessment is crucial for all teams.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/safety-and-ppe/ccohs-offers-advice-for-working-on-ice/518161>



# BRITISH COLUMBIA

## BCRSP Chair Paul Belair calls for broader implementation of safety practices

Paul Belair, Chair of the Board of Canadian Registered Safety Professionals (BCRSP), advocates for a shift from reactive to proactive safety practices in Canadian workplaces. He emphasizes the importance of integrating safety across all business operations and formalizing safety as a regulated profession to enhance credibility and consistency. Belair also highlights the need for safety programs to adapt to emerging technologies and evolving workplace dynamics, ensuring that certified professionals are prepared for modern challenges.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/safety-and-ppe/bcrsp-chair-paul-belair-calls-for-broader-implementation-of-safety-practices/516150>

## WorkSafeBC's average base premium rate unchanged in 2025

WorkSafeBC has maintained the average base premium rate at 1.55% of assessable payroll for 2025, marking the eighth consecutive year without change. This stability is attributed to WorkSafeBC's strong financial position, which has allowed for improvements in the workers' compensation system while keeping rates stable for employers. In 2025, 59% of employers in B.C. will experience a decrease in their industry base rate, 33% will see an increase, and 8% will see no change. The average base premium rate of 1.55% for 2025 is less than the expected cost rate of 1.78%. Between 2019 and 2025, WorkSafeBC projects that \$2.5 billion of surplus funds will have been used to keep premium rates stable and below the expected cost to deliver services.

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/news-releases/2025/January/worksafebc-average-base-premium-rate-unchanged-in-2025>



# BRITISH COLUMBIA

## New first aid regulations roll out across B.C.

WorkSafeBC has implemented significant changes to the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation concerning first aid requirements. These amendments align first aid certification levels and kit contents with Canadian Standards Association (CSA) standards, introduce mandatory written first aid assessments, and require annual drills. Employers must evaluate factors such as workforce size, workplace hazard rating, remoteness, and accessibility to determine appropriate first aid provisions. These updates aim to enhance workplace safety across the province.

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/campaigns/2025/January/new-first-aid-regulations-roll-out-across-bc?origin=s&returnurl=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.worksafebc.com%2Fen%2Fabout-us%2Fnews-events%2Fsearch%23sort%3DDate>



## B.C. safety violations show how gaps in protocol can lead to employee fatalities

A WorkSafeBC investigation revealed multiple safety violations at Cypress Mountain Resort following the death of a heavy equipment operator in October 2023. The investigation found that low- or mid-level managers were often unaware of regulatory requirements, leading to tasks being delegated without proper risk assessment. This highlights the critical need for comprehensive safety training and adherence to protocols to prevent such fatalities.

<https://www.hrreporter.com/focus-areas/diversity/bc-safety-violations-show-how-gaps-in-protocol-can-lead-to-employee-fatalities/390585>

# BRITISH COLUMBIA

## Ask an officer: What is claim suppression?

Claim suppression occurs when an employer discourages a worker from reporting an injury, filing or maintaining a compensation claim, or receiving compensation under the compensation provisions. This is addressed under the Act because workers have the right to file a claim should they be injured in the workplace. Before Bill 41, the Act already stipulated that an employer must not suppress injury reporting. Bill 41 made it a violation to include suppressing an application for a claim and maintaining a claim under the compensation provisions. WorkSafeBC receives tips through many avenues, from a worker reporting the suppression of a claim through the Prevention Information Line to internal reports from case managers, return-to-work staff, and prevention officers. Evidence supporting claim suppression can come in the form of documents, text messages, witnesses to conversations, recordings, and employers admitting their own errors. An employer will be cited for the violation under the Act. At that point, consideration will be given to enforcement in the form of an administrative warning letter or financial penalty. Penalties are based on the employer's payroll under OHS policy item P2-95-2. A basic penalty is calculated at 0.5 percent of an employer's payroll from the year leading up to the incident.

<https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/news-events/campaigns/2025/January/ask-an-officer-what-is-claim-suppression>





# ALBERTA



## Government of Alberta says workers' compensation system is working

The Government of Alberta reports that the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) has achieved significant improvements in supporting injured workers. Notably, 83% of injured workers received wage-loss benefits within 14 days of claim registration, and 85% returned to work within four months, surpassing provincial targets. Additionally, 86% of workers expressed satisfaction with the timeliness and transparency of the WCB during their recovery process.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/safety-and-ppe/government-of-alberta-says-workers-compensation-system-is-working/518724>

## Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) 2025

The Workers' Compensation Act allows for annual adjustments to long-term wage loss benefits through a cost of living adjustment (COLA) to account for inflation. COLA is calculated using the Alberta Consumer Price Index (ACPI) over the previous 12 months, minus 0.5%. This formula reflects the actual market changes, ensuring that benefits fairly match the current wage loss. The 0.5% deduction accounts for biases in the ACPI, such as commodity-substitution, outlet-substitution, new-goods, and quality-adjustment biases, ensuring a more accurate reflection of real price changes. The Board of Directors approves the annual COLA, which takes effect on January 1 each year.

[https://www.wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/employers/EFS\\_Cost\\_of\\_living\\_adjustment.pdf](https://www.wcb.ab.ca/assets/pdfs/employers/EFS_Cost_of_living_adjustment.pdf)



# SASKATCHEWAN

## **Saskatchewan firefighters receive enhanced cancer coverage**

The Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) has expanded its cancer coverage for firefighters, now covering 22 types of cancer, the most extensive in Canada. Effective October 1, 2024, this enhancement includes six additional cancers, ensuring greater support for firefighters diagnosed with conditions linked to their work. The move acknowledges the increased risks faced by firefighters and aligns with growing recognition of cancer as an occupational hazard. This expansion is part of WCB's efforts to better protect workers who face long-term health risks due to their roles in public safety.

<https://www.wcbask.com/news/saskatchewan-firefighters-receive-enhanced-cancer-coverage-0>

## **WCB approves 2025 premium rates**

The Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) approved the 2025 premium rates, keeping the average rate steady at \$1.28 per \$100 of assessable payroll. This decision benefits the majority of employers, with 76% seeing either a decrease or no change in their industry premium rates, while 24% will face increases. The WCB's funding policy ensures financial stability, aiming for a funding level between 100% and 140%. Additionally, the WCB continues to prioritize long-term sustainability, factoring in claims costs, investment performance, and workplace safety improvements when setting premium rates.

<https://www.wcbask.com/news/wcb-approves-2025-premium-rates>

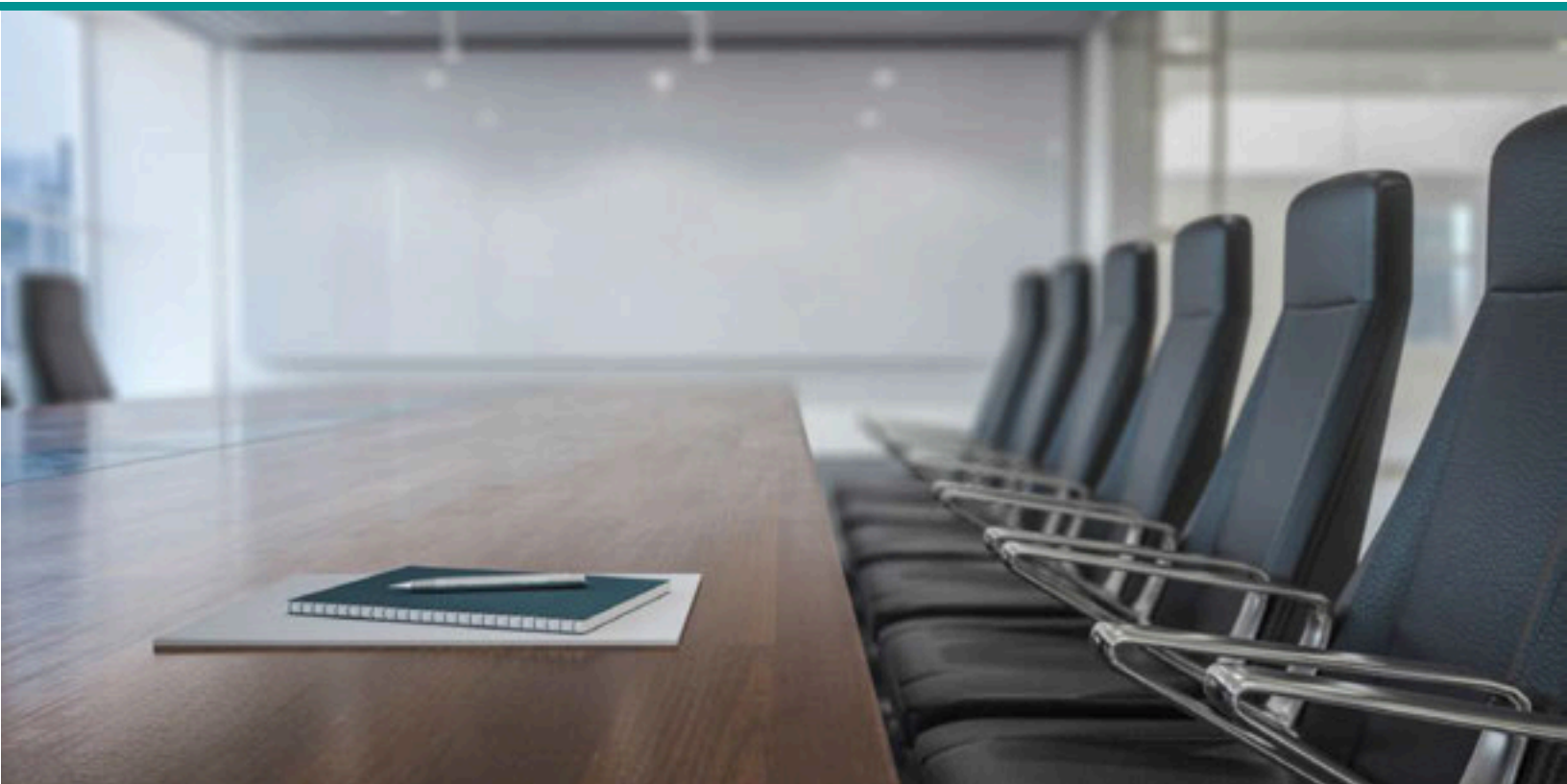


# MANITOBA

## WCB Announces New President and CEO

Catherine Skinner has been appointed as the new President and CEO of the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) of Manitoba. She had been serving as Acting President and CEO since March, providing leadership during the transition. With over 20 years of legal experience, including 10 years at the WCB, Skinner has held senior roles, most recently as Vice President of Legal, Compliance, and Corporate Services. She is committed to advancing WCB's mission to promote workplace safety and support a culture of safety across Manitoba.

<https://www.wcb.mb.ca/wcb-announces-new-president-and-ceo>



# ONTARIO



## Ontario's \$500,000 safety fine will reduce workplace injuries and fatalities, says expert

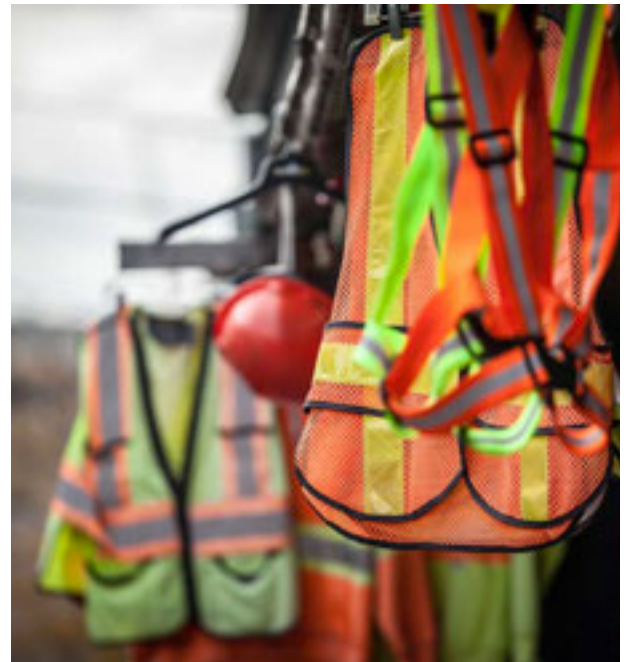
Ontario's introduction of a mandatory minimum fine of \$500,000 for employers found responsible for more than one serious workplace injury or death within a two-year period aims to deter workplace injuries and fatalities. Dr. Emile Tompa, a senior scientist at the Institute for Work and Health, supports this measure, citing research indicating that penalties, especially those resulting from inspections, effectively reduce workplace injuries, illnesses, and fatalities. In contrast, inspections without penalties have a less pronounced effect. The Ontario Ministry of Labour reported 2,918 critical workplace injuries and 47 fatalities, with injuries increasing by 43.8% since 2020. The proposed fine would be the highest minimum penalty for workplace safety violations in Canada.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/news/general/ontarios-500000-safety-fine-will-reduce-workplace-injuries-and-fatalities-says-expert/518743>

## Ontario's push for properly fitting PPE for all

Ontario is enhancing workplace safety and inclusivity by expanding the requirement for properly fitting personal protective equipment (PPE) for women beyond the construction sector to all industries. This initiative aims to reduce safety hazards and promote gender equality. Natasha Ferguson, founder of the nonprofit Women's Work, commends the province's efforts, emphasizing that ill-fitting PPE is a safety hazard and that providing equipment tailored to women's needs benefits both workers and the industry. The legislation also mandates cleaner workplace washrooms for all workers, addressing a critical aspect of workplace inclusivity.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/safety-and-ppe/ontarios-push-for-properly-fitting-ppe-for-all/516165>





# ONTARIO

## **WSIB pumps over \$2 billion back into the economy in 2025 with average premium rate reduction and surplus rebates for safe businesses**

The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) has announced that Ontario businesses will receive over \$2 billion in 2025 through a combination of a reduced average premium rate and surplus rebates for safe businesses. The average premium rate is set to decrease to \$1.25 per \$100 of insurable earnings, marking the lowest rate in more than 50 years. This reduction is designed to ease the financial burden on businesses while simultaneously promoting workplace safety. The surplus rebates will be distributed to businesses with strong safety records, rewarding their efforts in maintaining safe environments.

<https://www.wsib.ca/en/news-release/wsib-pumps-over-2-billion-back-economy-2025-average-premium-rate-reduction-and-surplus>





## **Working in the cold: prevention to better protect**

The Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) emphasizes the importance of preventing cold-related risks for workers during the winter season. Workers exposed to cold, wind, rain, and snow are at risk of conditions such as frostbite, hypothermia, and carbon monoxide poisoning, a colorless and odorless gas produced by internal combustion engines. To reduce these risks, CNESST recommends heating workstations, providing heated shelters, covering metal handles with thermal insulation, wearing layered, appropriate clothing, and allowing regular breaks to warm up.

<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/fr/salle-presse/communiqués/travail-au-froid-prevenir-pour-mieux-protéger>



## **At work, psychological health should never hang by a thread**

The Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) highlights the importance of safeguarding psychological health in the workplace and emphasizes that mental well-being should never be overlooked or placed in jeopardy. Employers, employees, and other stakeholders are urged to take proactive steps to address and eliminate psychosocial risks in the workplace. These risks, such as workplace harassment, excessive workload, and lack of support, can significantly impact employees' mental health. To help organizations foster healthier work environments, the CNESST provides valuable resources, advice, and tools designed to assist in creating a culture that prioritizes both physical and psychological well-being. This initiative is part of a broader effort to enhance overall workplace health and safety standards across Quebec.

<https://www.cnesst.gouv.qc.ca/fr/salle-presse/communiqués/santé-psychologique-jamais-tenir-fil>

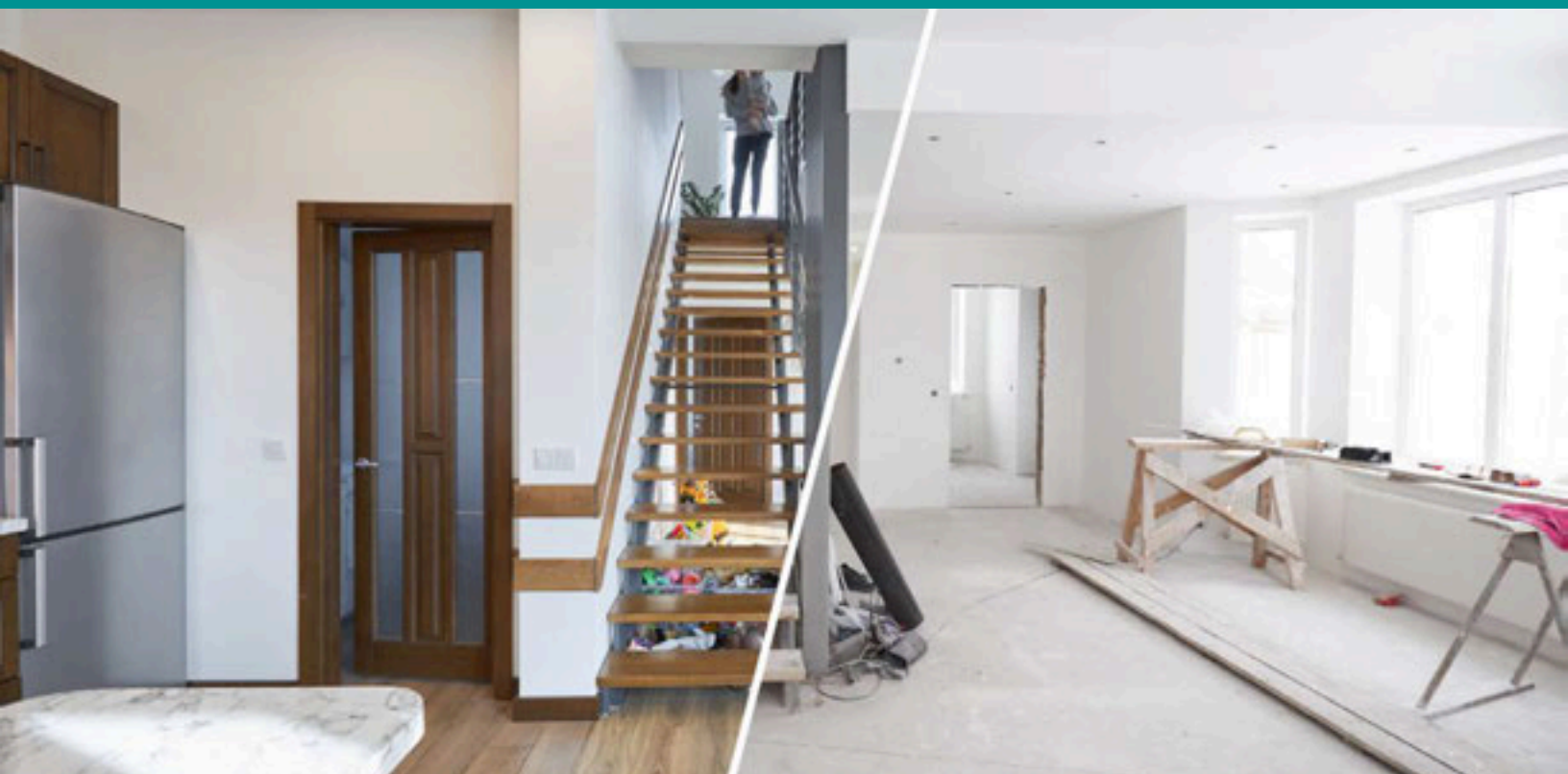


# NEW BRUNSWICK

## WorkSafeNB launches review of Home Modifications Policy

WorkSafeNB is reviewing its Home Modifications Policy to assist injured workers with significant long-term functional impairments in accessing or improving mobility within their homes. The policy, grounded in the Workers' Compensation Act, supports injured workers requiring modifications to their homes to accommodate mobility needs resulting from workplace injuries. Examples include installing grab bars, widening doorways and hallways, and adding stair or porch lifts, ramps, and railings. The review aims to improve clarity, streamline processes, and better align with modern practices. Key changes include expanded guidance on eligible modifications and their scope, ensuring transparency for workers and their families, and clarified processes for budget assessments, ensuring renovations are necessary and cost-effective.

<https://www.worksafenb.ca/about-us/news-and-events/news/2024/worksafenb-launches-review-of-home-modifications-policy/>



# NOVA SCOTIA



## WCB reminds captains, crews to prioritize safety in the lead up to lobster fishing season

The Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) of Nova Scotia emphasizes the importance of safety as the lobster fishing season approaches. Captains and crews are urged to prioritize safety by monitoring weather conditions, assessing their vessels, inspecting safety equipment, and ensuring all crew members are prepared for emergencies. Wearing personal flotation devices is mandatory, and staying vigilant for potential hazards is crucial. The WCB collaborates with partners to provide resources and training, aiming to reduce risks and promote a safe fishing season.

<https://www.wcb.ns.ca/About-Us/News-Room/News/WCB-reminds-captains-crews-to-prioritize-safety-in-the-lead-up-to-lobster-fishing-season-Nov-21-24>

## New service for a new type of workplace injury

A new service has been introduced by the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) of Nova Scotia to help workers and employers manage gradual onset psychological injuries, often resulting from workplace bullying or harassment. This initiative is part of the WCB's ongoing efforts to provide better support and services to workers, ensuring quicker communication and decision-making. It aligns with the Protect More Strategic Plan, which focuses on enhancing workplace safety by addressing both physical and psychological injuries in a timely and effective manner.

<https://www.wcb.ns.ca/About-Us/News-Room/News/New-service-for-a-new-type-of-workplace-injury-Nov-8-24>

# PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND



## WCB PEI implements updated First Aid regulations

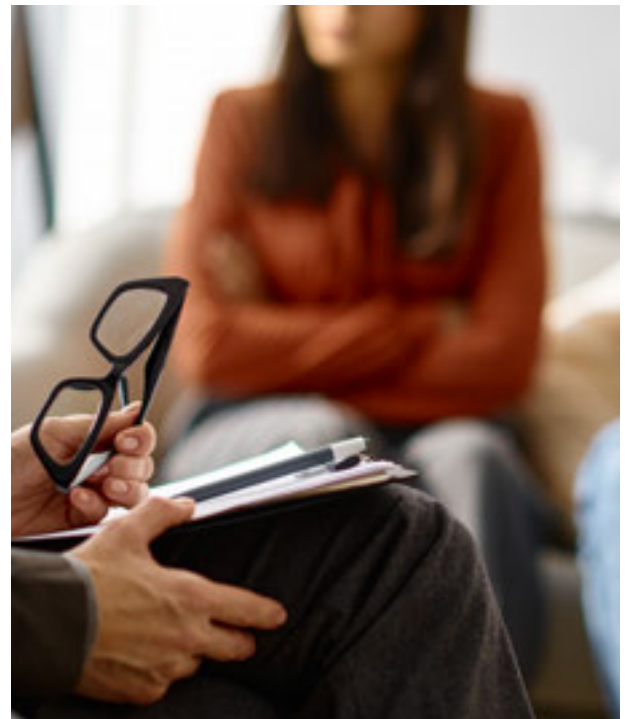
Starting January 1, 2025, the Workers Compensation Board (WCB) of Prince Edward Island will enforce updated first aid regulations aligned with Canadian Standards Association (CSA) guidelines. These changes shift the focus from simply the number of employees to the workplace's specific risk assessment, ensuring first aid training and supplies are tailored to the actual hazards present. Employers can access a Workplace First Aid Regulations Guide, which includes resources like a risk assessment template and a summary of the changes to help meet the new requirements.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/safety-and-ppe/wcb-pe-implements-updated-first-aid-regulations/517121>

## WCB of PEI launches Psychological Injuries Team

The Workers Compensation Board (WCB) of Prince Edward Island has created a dedicated Psychological Injuries Team to support workers affected by psychological injuries, such as those caused by workplace harassment. The team, consisting of entitlement officers and case coordinators, aims to streamline the claims process and provide tailored support. The WCB has also introduced FAQ publications for workers and employers, as well as a return-to-work toolkit and mental health support guide to aid recovery and reintegration into the workplace.

<https://www.thesafetymag.com/ca/topics/safety-and-ppe/wcb-of-pe-launches-psychological-injuries-team/516164>



# NEWFOUNDLAND & LABRADOR

## Safety Leadership Award Winner Feature: Q&A with RothLochston Constructors Inc.

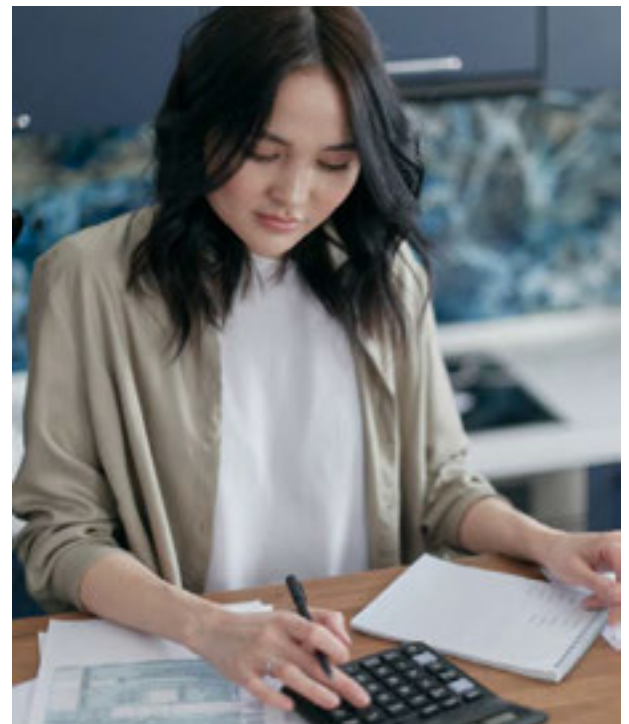
RothLochston Constructors Inc. received the 2024 WorkplaceNL Safety Leadership Award for Employers, recognizing their strong commitment to workplace safety. The company emphasizes a safe environment for all employees, vendors, and subcontractors, ensuring everyone returns home safely each day. Their safety programs include leadership commitment, resource allocation, regular safety monitoring, adherence to international standards like ISO 45001, and the use of targeted safety campaigns. Additionally, they leverage safety software to improve processes and encourage employee involvement in safety initiatives. Through these efforts, RothLochston fosters a culture of care, integrity, and accountability in their operations.

<https://workplacenl.ca/article/safety-leadership-award-winner-feature-qa-with-rothlochston-constructors-inc/>

## It's time to file your 2024 Annual Employer Statements

Employers are reminded that the 2024 Annual Employer Statements are due by February 28, 2025. These statements include the Employer Payroll Statement, Occupational Health and Safety Statement, and Employer Contractor Statement. To submit, log into WorkplaceNL's online portal, MyWorkplaceNL, and select "Annual Employer Statements" from the menu. If you haven't registered yet, visit the homepage and click "Register for online services." For assistance, contact WorkplaceNL at 709.778.1000 or toll-free at 1.800.563.9000.

<https://workplacenl.ca/article/its-time-to-file-your-2024-annual-employer-statements/>



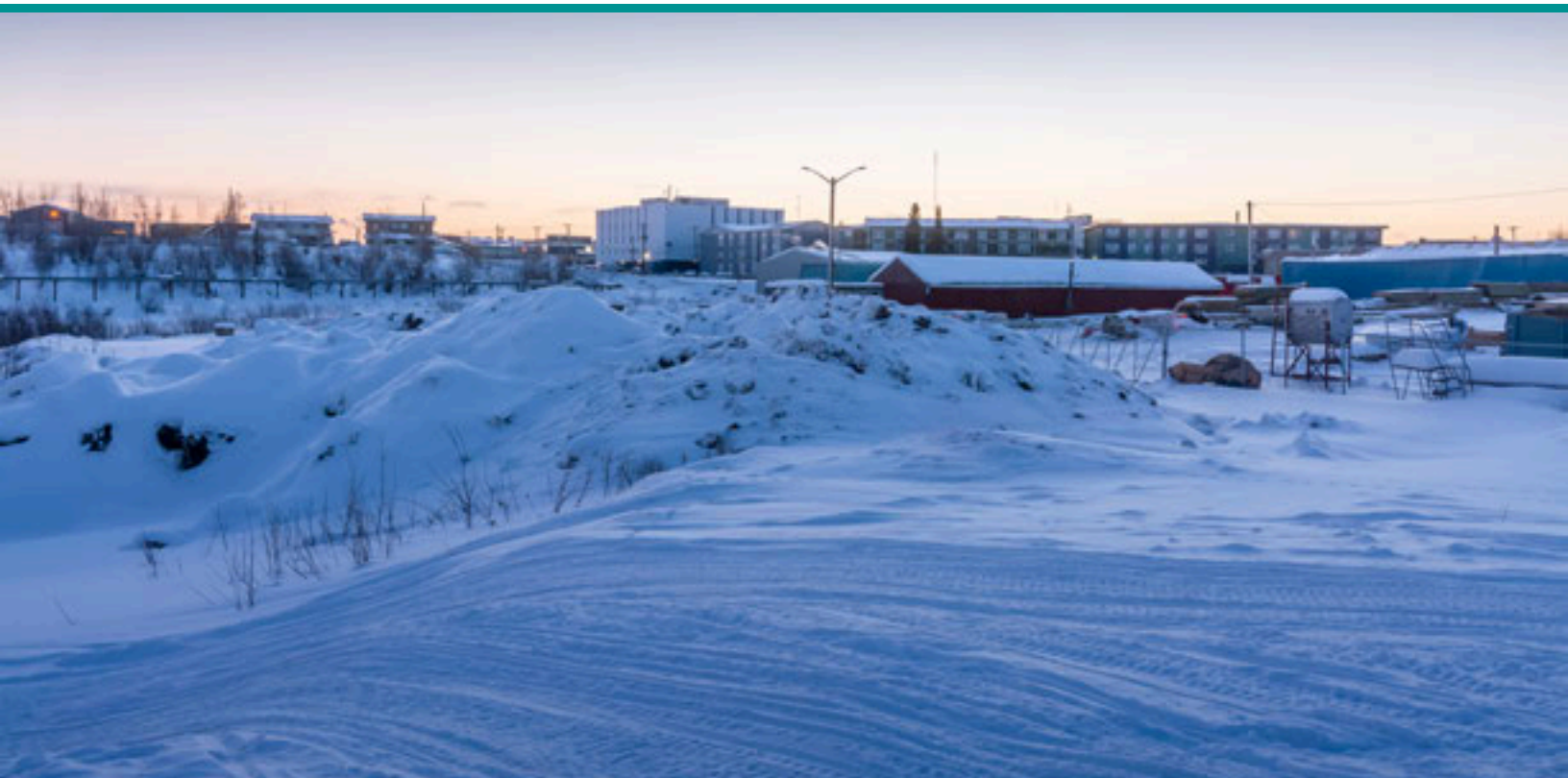


# TERRITORIES

## Senior leadership appointment at the Yukon Workers' Safety and Compensation Board

Premier Ranj Pillai has appointed Catherine Jones as the Acting President and Chief Executive Officer of the Yukon Workers' Safety and Compensation Board, effective December 2, 2024. Ms. Jones succeeds Kurt Dieckmann, who retired after serving in the role. With a PhD from the University of Toronto, she brings extensive experience in policy development, legislative reform, and organizational leadership. Premier Pillai expressed confidence in Ms. Jones's ability to lead, highlighting her deep understanding of the territory's workplace health and safety system. He also acknowledged Mr. Dieckmann's contributions to fostering a safer and healthier work environment for all Yukoners.

<https://yukon.ca/en/news/senior-leadership-appointment-yukon-workers-safety-and-compensation-board-0>



# MORE ABOUT TEKSMED

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](https://www.teksmed.com)

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

E: [info@teksmed.com](mailto: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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### **EAST OFFICE**

**4711 Yonge Street, 10th Floor  
Toronto ON, M2N 6K8**

**Toll Free: 1-844-835-7253**

**Toll Free Fax: 1-877-504-1777**

**Email: [info@teksmed.com](mailto:info@teksmed.com)**

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### **WEST OFFICE**

**44600 Skylark Road  
Chilliwack BC, V2R 6H5**

**Toll Free: 1-844-835-7253**

**Toll Free Fax: 1-877-504-1777**

**Email: [info@teksmed.com](mailto:info@teksmed.com)**

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