



## **Workers Compensation Act Committee of Review Submission**

The Workers Compensation Act is vitally important to the protection of our working people in Saskatchewan, however, over time the nature of work has changed, and the challenge facing workers has also changed. I appreciate the opportunity to outline some of the issues I've come across in my time representing workers.

The nature of a career has changed for people entering the workforce. Workers rarely start a job directly out of school and stay with the same employer their entire career. More workers are working temporary or contract jobs. Many workers are working numerous jobs. The "Gig" economy has impacted our workforce greatly. I urge WCB to take a more serious look at how better to represent workers who are injured while working these "Gig" jobs. Those working people generally have less protections and benefits and an injury is often catastrophic. The Workers Compensation Act must also work to find solutions to injured workers losing pay at multiple jobs but only being compensated for one lost wage.

Workplaces often delay wages for workers who are on a graduated return to work until they are paid by WCB or until payroll processes can be addressed. I would urge WCB to work with all employers to ensure that there is no disruption in pay. I also urge WCB to invest in staff to remove any disruption in pay while workers move through the approval process. For some workers, a missed pay or reduced pay, can be catastrophic and cause long lasting effects.

What we understand about mental health and addictions has also changed over the last number of years. The Workers Compensation Act must better take into account the impact work has on one's mental health. Many workers are reachable at all hours by their employer using modern technology, this creates not only an improper work/life balance, but a need to respond to issues immediately. WCB needs to be responsive to workers burning out as this is a real issue facing many workers. I also urge WCB to consider the isolation that comes with many workers working from home and away from colleagues, although I'm certain WCB is considering the challenges with at home work, the mental strain must also be considered. I urge WCB to also consider that with that strain often comes drug/alcohol abuse, addiction and relapse.

I think WCB has failed many workers who are on a long-term claim. The increases do not take into account potential career progression or added income that often comes with promotions, bargained increases and simply increased experience. Employers often talk about how experienced workers are an asset. This needs to be taken into account.

One comment I have often heard from WCB users is that the interaction with WCB is often more difficult than the injury itself. There is a feeling amongst WCB users that they are required to “jump through numerous hoops.” I understand and am empathetic to WCB employees, I understand they deal with people who are frustrated, however an easier, quicker more clearly outlined system would likely make it easier for both workers accessing WCB and WCB employees.

WCB plays an extremely important role in our workplaces, all workers who are hurt on the job need to be treated with dignity and cared for.

Thank you for reading my submission and taking the time to review how our workers are cared for.



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