



NSBA Letter Regarding Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation System

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Workers' Compensation Act Committee of Review
300 0 1820 Albert Street
Regina, SK S4P 4W1

Re: Workers' Compensation Act, Committee of Review

The NSBA is a member-driven and focused organization that serves, promotes and protects business throughout Saskatoon and beyond. As an organization representing a significant number of employers in the province, we appreciate the opportunity to provide feedback to the Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) Committee of Review. We believe steps could be taken to initiate reform and modernize the organization, which would resolve employers' concerns about the WCB's customer service and culture. In doing so, we are providing an amenable 'olive branch' to an important and necessary two-way relationship that is sometimes acrimonious and challenging.

The NSBA's Labour committee discussed opportunities where the WCB can make changes to serve business owners and employers better. As employers are collectively the sole funder for all WCB activity, the NSBA strongly believes that employers have a more vested interest in all activity of the WCB. Yet this interest is often impeded through interactions with various WCB employees. This appears to happen regularly, regardless of the case worker or file, so it seems evident that there is an inherent challenge within the organization's customer service. Employers are often given the impression they are 'the bad guy' or that they are guilty until proven innocent, which suggests there is also a challenge within its culture.

We would offer that many improvements could be made through the lens of transparency and accountability. We recommend the following:

- Development of new, or adherence to existing corporate policies, with well-defined fairness, transparency and accountability metrics;
- Greater level of transparency with employers than currently exists; i.e., Saskatchewan is the only province in Canada that doesn't share relevant information from an injured worker's file with the employer. This makes it extremely difficult to do case work for a potential appeal or an actual appeal;
- Management oversight on case managers to ensure policies are being followed;
- Management training and even employee repercussion if repeated offences are evident in certain employees;
- Adherence to cases and these policies in a timely way, with well-defined metrics and objectives, including timeliness, specifically to case managers regarding phone calls, correspondence, and decisions;
- Development of document retention policies to ensure all documents are on file and available;

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- Partial, yet significant, payment of cost relief to be exercised when appeal decisions are made, but final details are pending. i.e., If money is owing to the employer, get a reasonable amount returned asap.
- And finally, but perhaps most importantly, we believe an independent board or committee to provide oversight on WCB activity would be beneficial to ensure metrics are being measured and overall accountability is being adhered to. Within this framework, an Employers' Advocate role is suggested to ensure employers have more of a say in how their money is being spent, invested, and distributed.

We strongly believe that adopting these recommendations will create a stronger and more effective organization and foster and develop a stronger relationship amongst all parties involved. This focus on transparency and accountability will lead to a reduction in the number of appeals, which will have an inherent benefit and value to the organization and its stakeholders.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide this input. However, we do not request any speaking opportunities with the Committee of Review.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss further, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Keith Moen
Executive Director

