

Occupational Health and Safety Regulations - Update

As you are aware, a number of the occupational health and safety regulations have been under review for a few years now. The review of some of the regulations, such as Noise and Chemical Hazards, is complete, but the General Safety Regulation is still outstanding. Once the GSR review is complete, all the regulations will be combined into one document and implemented at the same time. The government is now offering fall 2002 as the effective date of implementation.

Once the regulations are finalized, we will:

- Let you know it's happened
- Provide you a summary of the changes
- Review all our courses to ensure they reflect the new legal requirements
- Offer a course on the regulations (new and existing requirements)

To give you a taste of the expected changes:

General Safety Regulation

- Some changes to the requirements for confined space entry and trenching
- Enhanced/clarified requirements for competency of workers performing potentially hazardous work
- New requirements for performing hazard assessments
- New requirements for lifting and carrying loads
- New requirements regarding exposure to blood and body fluids
- New requirements addressing violence in the workplace

Chemical Hazards Regulation will have new exposure limits for some chemicals.

Noise Regulation will have new exposure limits as well as requirements for new construction and equipment.

Changes have also been made to the **Mining, Explosives and Ventilation** regulations.

To get a copy of any of the draft regulations (pdf format), go to the government website www.whs.gov.ab.ca click on "regulations and legislation", then "occupational health and safety". Scroll down to **Public Consultation** then click on the appropriate regulation. If you have any problems, give us a call.

Workers' Compensation Act -- amendments

Bill 26, the *Workers' Compensation Amendment Act, 2002* has been tabled in the Legislature. The Bill, if passed will:

- Improve accountability of the Board, and the appeals commission
- Increase the openness of these two bodies
- Ensure the independence of the commission from the Board
- Tighten up time limits on appeals decisions
- Streamline some of the Board decision making systems
- Create a medical review panel to address conflicts in medical opinions

Copies of Bill 26 are available at www.assembly.ab.ca or by calling (780) 427-5585.

For more information contact the WCB Project Office at (780) 415-9995.

Workplace Safety 2.0 Forum

AMHSA participated in this forum, which was organized by Clint Dunford, the Minister of Alberta Human Resources and Employment. Participants included private industry, safety associations, organized labour, industry associations and government. The goal of the forum was to develop a strategy to reduce the lost time injury rate by 40% by 2004. This would be a drop from the current lost time claim rate of 3.4 injuries per 100 person years to 2.0 injuries. A 40% reduction would result in 15,000 fewer injuries to Alberta workers. Note that a lost time claim rate of 2.0 still reflects too many injuries, but it is a marker on the road to zero.

It was recognized by all the participants that the government cannot legislate or enforce its way to injury-free workplaces. This can only happen through a combined effort of government, associations such as AMHSA and employers.

We feel that municipalities, as leaders in their communities can lead the way towards 2.0 and beyond. For more information, go to the government website www.whs.gov.ab.ca and check out the "what's new at WHS" column on the right side of the page.

Head's Up! Annual Survey Coming Soon

Watch your mail box for the annual survey. It will be mailed out to all municipal managers by June 15th. We ask that you take a few minutes to think about what you'd like to see us doing and provide us that feedback. If we don't know what you want/need from us, we'll just do our own thing! It would be much better if we could actually provide the resources and services that you want. We like all surveys returned by August 15th to allow us to use your feedback in planning for 2003.

Regional Mini Conferences

We got a tremendous response for the regional mini conferences to be held in June and July. Final agendas will be mailed out in the next week or so, to everyone who registered, but we've received a few calls about locations. So here's the scoop:

All meetings will start at 9:00, and wrap up sometime in the late afternoon.

Grande Prairie, June 20

Old Timer's Cabin, Evergreen Park, Grande Prairie

Venue, coffee and lunch sponsored by County of Grande Prairie

Nisku, June 26

Executive Royal Inn, Nisku

☹ *No sponsors yet; feel free to call us about this!*

Turner Valley, July 9

Flare'n Derrick Community Hall, Main Street, Turner Valley

Venue sponsored by Town of Turner Valley; coffee and lunch sponsored by Utilicorp

Thanks to all of our sponsors! We'll send out some kind of summary to everyone after the meetings are wrapped up. And if participants felt it was worthwhile, we will try to make this an annual event.

Special PIR Update

The following report is additional information for those of you who participate in the Partners in Injury Reduction Program. If you don't participate currently, but would like more information, give Jim or Rose Ann a call.

2001 Results

WCB has announced the refunds for employers who met the PIR program requirements (including having an effective health and safety program in place). Seventy one municipalities met the requirements and received refunds ranging from 5% to 20% of their WCB industry premiums. The total dollar amount to municipalities for 2001 was \$932,176. Congratulations to all participating municipalities for their dedication to health and safety.

External Audits:

There are approximately 120 municipalities participating in the PIR program in 2002, including 10 new municipalities. One of the requirements of participating in the program is to have an audit done of your health and safety program.

An external audit is required to achieve a Certificate of Recognition, and is then required every three years. Internal audits are required in the years in between. There are 56 municipalities that require an external audit this year in order to achieve or renew their COR. External Audits are arranged by contacting Jim or Rose Ann. The municipalities requiring an external audit are listed below.

Municipalities Requiring an External Audit in 2002:

Birch Hills County	MD Foothills (<i>in works</i>)	Town of Hinton
City of Airdrie	MD MacKenzie	Town of Lacombe
City of Cold Lake (<i>arranged</i>)	MD Pincher Creek	Town of Morinville
City of Fort Saskatchewan	MD Taber	Town of Olds
City of Leduc	Red Deer County	Town of Pincher Creek
City of Lloydminster	Saddle Hills County (<i>in works</i>)	Town of Ponoka
City of Medicine Hat	Starland County	Town of Redcliff
City of Red Deer	Sturgeon County	Town of Rocky Mountain House
City of St. Albert	Town of Banff	Town of St. Paul
Clearwater County	Town of Bonnyville	Town of Swan Hills
County of Beaver	Town of Brooks	Town of Sylvan Lake
County of Camrose	Town of Calmar	Town of Taber
County of Lamont	Town of Cardston	Town of Turner Valley (<i>arranged</i>)
County of Newell	Town of Coaldale	Town of Valleyview (<i>in works</i>)
County of Stettler	Town of Coronation	Town of Westlock
Lacombe County	Town of Didsbury	Yellowhead County
Leduc County (<i>in works</i>)	Town of Drumheller	
MD Brazeau	Town of Fort McLeod	
MD East Peace	Town of Fox Creek	
MD Fairview	Town of Gibbons	

Some municipalities have contacted us already, as can be seen on the list. What we ask is this:

- If your name is on the list,
- and if no arrangements have yet been made,
- and if you would like an external audit,

please contact us before the end of June. Let us know when you want your audit done and how many permanent employees you have. (We need to know the number of employees in order to decide how many auditors will be required to perform your audit.)

All audits (external and internal) must be completed, submitted to AMHSA, reviewed by us and approved before year end. The earlier we get the audits, the sooner we can perform the quality

assessment and either approve them or identify problems. If we do find any problems, they can be corrected before year end, if there is time.

Auditor Certification/Recertification

Several people have expressed interest in taking Health and Safety Program Development and/or Health and Safety Program Audit. So we are offering another class in the County of Lacombe. The dates are as follows:

- 🕒 **Health and Safety Program Development: July 16 & 17**
- 🕒 **Health and Safety Program Audit: July 18 & 19**

Each course is \$60. Note that successful completion of Program Development is a prerequisite for Program Audit.

Program Development teaches participants about the 8 elements of a health and safety program, including the purpose of the element, how to implement it, and how to decide if everything is in place.

Program Audit teaches participants about the audit process, and then allows them to work with the audit tool by performing a practice audit in the classroom. After completion of the course, participants perform an audit in their own municipality to achieve their certification as a peer auditor.

Auditors are required to recertify once every 3 years, so we always offer free recertification courses every spring around the province. However this year the response was very low – most auditors have been recertified recently as a result of the changes to the audit tool. Those who were interested in the recertification have been invited to participate in the audit course instead. They can take just the theory, or also participate in the practice audit. If any other auditors require recertification or would like to brush up on their auditor skills, give us a call. If there is room in the class, you are welcome.

If you have any questions about any of this information please call or e-mail:

- Edmonton area: 955-3701
- Alberta wide: 1-800-267-9764
- e-mail: safety@amhsa.net