

# City of Red Deer: Champions of Safety!

The following article was provided to us by the Alberta Workers' Compensation Board.

## They are champions ... of safety

When the City of Red Deer's safety officer retired 12 years ago his position wasn't filled for 10 years. Why?

"Because we wanted champions for safety right from the top of the organization down to frontline employees," says Grant Howell, personnel manager for the City of Red Deer. "To do that we had to shift the responsibility from just one safety officer onto everyone's shoulders."

Leading the way for safety initiatives is the 'Super Safe Operating Committee' consisting of 15 superintendents from various departments who set the city's safety direction. Fourteen separate safety committees, each responsible for making safety a priority in their department, then implement that direction. "We know its working because our departmental safety orientations and training get better each year. We can go out into the field and see our people working safer, with more knowledge of safety equipment and safety practices," says Howell.

After obtaining a Certificate of Recognition (COR) in 1993 and their Partners in Injury Reduction (PIR) involvement, the city really wanted to move its safety programs to the next level. The auditor program helped them achieve that. "I credit the safety auditor program for moving the city to the next level. We have the best auditors in the province and that pays off internally," says Howell. "Our parks maintenance department has gone 10 years without a lost-time claim. And our garage recently celebrated 1,000 days without a lost-time claim," says Howell.

The city willingly shares its experiences with other municipalities interested in adopting some of the safe work practices. The city's certifying partner, the Alberta Municipal Health and Safety Association (AMHSA), holds conferences with its municipal members and has asked the City of Red Deer to make presentations on its safety program.

"They have the ability to effectively demonstrate leadership. We use them as a flagship for other municipalities who want to improve their safety records," says Jim Moroney, executive director of the AMHSA. "They've been able to make the entire organization responsible for the success or the failure of their safety program, and it has been a success," says Moroney.

## Occupational Health and Safety Act/Regulation/Code Update

As you are probably aware, the occupational health and safety legislation has undergone a major review over the past few years. Below are some highlights.

## **Amended Occupational Health and Safety Act**

- enacted December 2002
- maximum fines increased from \$150,000 to \$500,000 for a first offence; from \$300,000 to \$1,000,000 for second and subsequent offences (jail terms were not changed)
- option for the courts to issue alternative penalties to fines and jail terms
- authority for officers to issue administrative fines
- publishing of best/worst health and safety performers
- prosecution period increased from 1 year to 2 years
- allowance for the creation of an OHS Code

## **New Occupational Health and Safety Regulation**

- passed March 2003
- contains most of the administrative details
- required reports, plans and procedures must be in writing and available to workers
- more detailed training requirements for operating/using some equipment
- workers to notify their employer of unsafe equipment
- where the regulation requires a worker to do something, the employer is required to ensure that it is done

## **New Occupational Health and Safety Code**

- to be passed October 2003
- this code will be an amalgamation of the 11 existing regulations
- requirement for hazard assessments, and elimination or control of identified hazards
- lifting and carrying of loads must now be addressed, as well as other ergonomic hazards
- procedures must be developed to manage the risk of violence (from both outside and inside the organization)
- a number of the existing provisions have been reviewed and amended

We are still awaiting the release of the code, and it's getting closer. The draft was sent to the OHS council and approved, and is expected to be released by Oct 16/03. AMHSA is currently working on a course to bring everyone up to speed on the new requirements.

## **Audit Season**

You might be getting tired of reading about this, especially if your municipality does not participate in the Partnerships Program, but the audit deadline is looming. The Partnerships Program operates on a calendar year cycle; all audits need to be in to our office by November 30. That is less than 2 months away. If audits do not get in to our office in time, we can't review them and get the required information to AHRE and WCB on time, and so the audits won't count for this year.

If you require an internal audit, there is still a fair amount of time to get it done. But if you require an external audit, and have not yet contacted us, the time frame is starting to get pretty tight. We need to contact auditors and hope they are able to take time away from their own organization to audit your program. We have heard from approximately 2/3 of those municipalities requiring an external audit. If

you require an external audit, and want one (or if you're not sure of your status) give us a call today!

## Health and Safety Conferences

There are two excellent health and safety conferences coming up in the next few months:

### **Alberta Health and Safety Conference: November 24 - 26 in Calgary**

This is the second year for this multi-partner, multi-industry conference. It will be held at the Telus Convention Centre in Calgary. Professional Development courses will be held before and after the actual conference. Conference topics include: risk assessments, fall protection standards, cognitive demands and health and safety, stress leave, mold, risk communication, and much more. There is also a trade show, with over 60 displayers (including AMHSA). We are expecting to receive conference brochures shortly, so call us if you'd like one. Or you can go to the conference website: [www.hsconference.com](http://www.hsconference.com).

### **RUSA/ACSC/AMHSA Conference: December 1 - 4 in Red Deer**

This is the 30th year for this popular utility/health & safety conference. While the previously mentioned conference is a multi-industry conference, this one is focused on the issues within the municipal sector. Topics this year include: ergonomics, personal protective equipment, water quality testing standards, MISSION POSSIBLE, new worker training & orientation, GIS/GPS uses, etc. As always there will be a tradeshow running in conjunction with the conference and AMHSA will be at this one as well. We sent out the registration packages last week; if you didn't receive one, contact Lorraine in our office.

Both of these conferences give delegates an opportunity to learn more about the issues of concern to them and their municipality through the work shop sessions, as well as make contacts and learn from other delegates. If your organization does not participate in either of these conferences, consider checking out one (or both!) this fall.

## Comings and Goings

Many of you will have got to meet our northern area Trainer, Mark Wesley over the last several months. He has been training for us as a consultant for a few years, and came on board as one of our staff last November. Unfortunately for us, Mark has decided to pursue other options and is no longer able to work with us. We wish him all the best in his future endeavors. Until we are able to find a new Trainer for this area, we will use consultants to ensure we can provide for your training needs.

## Money, Money, Money

It's sad but true - prices continue to go up.

One of the publications we make available to you has gone up in price. The **WHMIS Core Materials**

**Manual**, published by the Workers' Compensation Board of BC, has increased from \$50 to \$75.

The cost of some of our courses will also go up. We gave some advance warning in August, and want to remind you of the price increases again. These increases will come into effect in January 2004.

Course	current rate (municipal)	new rate (municipal)	current rate (associate)	new rate (associate)
<b>Defensive Driving</b>	\$40.00	\$50.00	\$60.00	\$75.00
<b>Operator Courses</b>	\$120.00	\$150.00	\$160.00	\$200.00
<b>Other 1 day courses (other than defensive driving and operator)</b>	\$40.00	no change	\$60.00	no change
<b>2 day courses</b>	\$60.00	\$75.00	\$120.00	\$150.00
<b>1/2 day courses</b>	\$30.00	no change	\$40.00	no change

## Survey Results

Thanks to all 116 of you who responded to our survey this past summer. We reviewed all the responses that came in, and used your information when we met with our Board of Directors for our planning meeting in September. With the results of our planning meeting we now create our 2004 Business Plan and submit it to the Workers' Compensation Board for approval. We want to contact some of you to follow up on your survey comments.

We promised there would be prizes - 7 names were drawn from the 116 responders and the winners are:

- Town of Rainbow Lake AMHSA course registration
- Town of Two Hills AMHSA training video
- MD of Clear Hills AMHSA calculator
- Town of Peace River set of AMHSA mugs
- City of Airdrie AMHSA travel mug
- Village of Delburne AMHSA travel mug
- Town of Black Diamond AMHSA fleece vest

Congratulations to the draw winners!