

NEWS RELEASE

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WCB Approves 2016 Employer Premium Rates *Improved safety records in 45 out of 50 industry codes result in the lowest average premium rates in three decades.*

REGINA, SK – The Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) approved the 2016 average employer premium rate for 47,783 employers covered by workers' compensation and for the ninth consecutive year, rates have dropped. In 2016, the average employer premium decreased from the 2015 level of \$1.46 to \$1.34, which is an 8.2 percent decrease.

WCB Chairperson Gord Dobrowolsky said he is pleased to see this drop in premium rates for the ninth consecutive year, the lowest since 1986.

"Better safety records in 45 industry rate codes have resulted in lower 2016 premium rates for 45,683 employers," Dobrowolsky said. "This is all a testament to the commitment of Saskatchewan employers and workers to keep their workplaces safe."

By lowering the 2016 average premium from 2015 level (\$1.46), the WCB is recognizing the continued increase in reported payrolls and the improved safety performance in the province.

As part of the rate setting process, each year, the WCB seeks customer feedback through its annual public rate setting information sessions. For the second year, the WCB offered live web-streaming for those across the province unable to attend in person giving customers in rural areas an opportunity to ask questions of WCB remotely.

WCB CEO Peter Federko said the WCB continues to see an increase in reported payroll. "For almost a decade, we've seen premium rates decline and the biggest impact on rates is the decrease in the workplace injuries. This combined with the growth in reported payroll translates into a lower premium rate. Today, we have more workers on the job and fewer injuries reported. This is great progress."

But Federko said, we can't lose sight of the Mission:Zero goal – Zero Injuries, Zero Suffering, Zero Fatalities. "We must not become complacent because even one injury is one too many."

For employers who implement successful safety programs and who maintain injury-free work places, there is a financial gain. Under the WCB's Experience Rating program, employers with above-par safety records earn premium discounts while employers with poor safety records pay a surcharge.

Last year, 87 percent of employers achieved Mission:Zero – Zero workplace injuries.

All Saskatchewan employers will receive letters this week with the specifics of their 2016 premium rate.

About WCB:

The Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board is a provincial statutory agency governed by a Board of Directors and is funded by employers. Saskatchewan's workers' compensation system was adopted in 1930. At that time, the Workmen's Compensation Act made into law what is known as the historic compromise: employers became collectively liable for workers' compensation costs and, in return, workers' waived their right to sue for work injury. Visit www.wcbask.com for more detail on rate setting and other WCB initiatives.

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Mission: Zero is an initiative to eliminate workplace injuries in Saskatchewan. Launched at the WCB's 2008 Annual General Meeting, the Mission: Zero campaign and programs drive home the impact of work injuries and the importance of workplace safety and injury prevention. The intent behind Mission: Zero is to bring about faster and deeper reductions to the provincial workplace injury rate.