

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Employer Injury and Illness Prevention Program, formerly the Target Employer Program, was introduced in 2002 to reduce workplace incidents and illnesses. The program name has been changed to better reflect the goal of reducing the number of work-related injuries and illnesses in Alberta. The program has been successful in improving legislative compliance and overall health and safety practices with these employers, providing a safer and healthier work environment for their employees.

On average employers involved in the program have reduced their disabling injury rate by approximately 10% per year and reduced their lost time claim rate by approximately 20% per year.

The program is designed to reduce the number of workplace incidents and illnesses, and to assist employers in improving their health and safety compliance. Alberta Employment and Immigration (AEI) targets employers with high injury rates to make them aware of their obligations to provide healthy and safe worksites.

Employers are selected based on a comparison of their injury statistics from the previous calendar year. Those employers who had 40 person years of employment or more, and who had a disabling injury rate in 2008 that was 2.5 times the 2008 provincial disabling injury rate average, are included in the Employer Injury and Illness Prevention Program.

2.0 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Employer Injury and Illness Prevention Program Plan for 2009/10 will involve inspections of over 500 selected employers with a disabling injury rate 2.5 times the provincial average or greater during the 2008 calendar year. The program encompasses both small and large employers. Under the program plan small employers are those that are between 40 and 59 person years in size. Large employers are 60 person years in size or greater.

Employers with the following WCB Industry Codes will not be part of this program. They will be included in the Health Care Initiative, a specifically designed program for the healthcare industry based on many of the same principles as the Employer Injury and Illness Prevention Program. Inspections completed within healthcare industry will follow the specific program protocol designed for healthcare employers. The following WCB Industry Codes are included in the Health Care Initiative:

82100 – Hospitals/Acute Care Centres;
82704 – Home Support Services;
82705 – Community Health Services;
82710 – Supply - Medical Personnel;
82806 – Rehabilitation Services for the Disabled;
82808 – Continuing Care Facilities;
82800 – Seniors Lodges/Homes; and
82500 – Medical Centre - Private.

3.0 HIGHLIGHTS OF PLANNED ACTIONS

Each employer selected into the Employer Injury and Illness Prevention Program will be contacted by an Occupational Health and Safety Officer to arrange an initial meeting with company executives. The Officer will:

- Outline the rationale and focus of the Employer Injury and Illness Prevention Program;
- Review with the employer their current health and safety practices and incident statistics;
- Conduct inspections and follow-up meetings throughout the year to determine compliance with the legislation. Inspections will be planned towards focusing on areas/worksites/processes of the employer's operation where incidents have occurred; and
- Continue to meet with and work towards helping the employer reduce incidents of disabling injuries for employees and improve health and safety practices.

Based on the results of these inspections, orders may be issued to the employer to rectify any observed unsafe and unhealthy worksite conditions.

Employers selected into the Employer Injury and Illness Prevention Program may also be contacted by representatives from Partnerships in Injury Reduction.

4.0 Number of Inspections to be completed

Small employers will receive a minimum of two visits during the business year.

Large employers will receive up to five visits during the business year.

2,000 cumulative inspections will be conducted with the employers selected into the program. Initial visits of employers should be completed as early in the fiscal year as possible.

5.0 Employer Injury and Illness Prevention Program Inspection Protocol

1. An assignment will be created in the Workplace Inspection Tracking System (WITS) for each employer, and will then be assigned to an Occupational Health and Safety Officer for the duration of the 2009-2010 fiscal year. The assignment will be created from the 2009-2010 Employer Injury and Illness Prevention Program Initiative within WITS. The regional location of the assignment will be based upon the location of the employer's head office.
2. Assignments such as complaints, incidents and presentation requests involving employers in the program will be forwarded to the Officer assigned to that employer for action, where practical. These assignments will be moved into the 2009-2010 Employer Injury and Illness Prevention Program Initiative within WITS (subject to matching WCB Acct Number and Industry Code).
3. Prior to contacting the employer the Officer will review the employer's incident data for the previous calendar year outlined in the Employer's Incident Profile Data Package (Disabling Injury Rate Data gathered from WCB). The Officer will also determine if there are any outstanding orders or previous orders written to the employer. The Officer should also review information on WITS from visits under the Employer Injury and Illness Prevention Program in previous years, particularly if the assignment has been transferred from another Officer.

4. The Officer will contact the employer by telephone to arrange an initial meeting to discuss with senior officials of the company the program focus, the benefits of the program and the employers' inclusion in the 2009-2010 Employer Injury and Illness Prevention Program. Ideally the President, CEO, or someone from the executive team would be involved in the first meeting, If meeting with senior executives cannot be arranged then the Officer will arrange to meet with the most senior person available (safety manager, plant manager). The purpose for the initial meeting with these employers is to help the employer gain an understanding of the specifics that have led to their high Disabling Injury Rate. The Officer upon first contact should verify the employer's WCB Account Number/Industry Code and contact/location information.

5. The initial meeting with the employer will involve discussion of the following:
 - An explanation of the Employer Injury and Illness Prevention Program (including an explanation of the program name change) its objectives and its benefits;
 - Discussion of the letter sent from the AEI Minister's Office to each employer selected into the program;
 - The role of Alberta Occupational Health & Safety, and resources available to help the employer reduce injuries, illnesses and Disabling Injury Rate;
 - The availability of resources from the Workers' Compensation Board and Partnerships in Injury Reduction to assist the employer;
 - An overview of the *Occupational Health & Safety Act, Regulation and Code* including obligations and responsibilities of the employer and of the employer's workers;
 - Due diligence in meeting minimum health and safety requirements;
 - The employer's Disabling Injury Rate information (Employer's Incident Profile Data Package, additional current injury data, available or provided by WCB, that may indicate trends and offer insights for next action steps);
 - The employer's health and safety system and challenges that the employer may be experiencing in developing and/or implementing their program;
 - A review of the Employer's Incident Investigation Reports for incidents in the previous calendar and current year, their comparison with the Employer's Incident Profile Data, and discussion around opportunities for hazard control and prevention of injuries and illness;
 - A discussion of specific actions that the employer intends to take throughout the coming year to address their elevated Disabling Injury Rate (recommended agreed upon written action plan). The discussion would include the actions that both Alberta Occupational Health & Safety and the employer may take to improve health and safety and reduce incidents of injury (further meetings, inspections, near miss record review, worker training /orientation, supervision

practices, and actions that may favorably impact incident trends that become evident upon review of data and discussion);

- Provision and discussion of the General Information Kit;
 - The employer will be informed that an Officer has been assigned to their company to work with the employer throughout the fiscal year to help them identify opportunities to eliminate hazards, control hazards and reduce the incidence of injury and illness. This will include the provision of health and safety related information and site inspections. The Officer will also review the implementation and/or development of the Health & Safety program and will offer advice and consultation when necessary.
6. After the initial meeting the Officer will conduct site inspections of the employer's worksite(s). The Officer will exercise discretion as to which employers may receive more inspections or visits than others. The Officer will conduct site inspections in accordance with OHS Compliance Policy. The inspections will be unannounced and conducted at worksites that the Employer Injury and Illness Prevention Program employees are engaged in work at. The inspection will be limited to their workers and the work that they are doing.
 7. For small employers (between 40 and 59 person years) a minimum of two visits will be required. The first visit will consist of an initial inspection and a discussion with the employer of why they are included in the Employer Injury and Illness Prevention Program and incidence of injury and illness. The second and any subsequent visits will ensure that the employer is complying with any written orders or instructions, and to follow-up with the employer on their progress on reducing incidents and improving health and safety performance.
 8. For small employers (between 40 and 59 person years) a minimum of two visits will be required. The first visit will consist of an initial inspection and a discussion with the employer of why they are included in the Employer Injury and Illness Prevention Program and incidence of injury and illness. The second and any subsequent visits will ensure that the employer is complying with any written orders or instructions and to follow-up with the employer on their progress on reducing incidents and improving health and safety performance.
 9. For large employers (60 person years or greater) up to five visits will be required. The first visit will consist of a pre-arranged meeting with the company's management and health and safety personnel to discuss their inclusion in the Employer Injury and Illness Prevention Program, and incidence of injury and illness. Subsequent visits to conduct inspections, re-inspections, presentations, and any follow-up meetings with the employer to discuss their progress on reducing incidents and improving health and safety performance. Visits should be completed throughout the entire fiscal year.

10. Further suggested visits with employers in the program would include:

- Attendance at one or more of the employer's health and safety committee meetings/tool-box talks/employer event, if applicable;
- Presentations to the employer/employees on the Employer Injury Reduction Program and the requirements under the OHS Act, Regulation and Code;
- Follow-up meetings with the employer on their planned progress towards injury reduction and improvements in their health and safety program/compliance; and
- Follow-up meeting in the last quarter of the fiscal year to review progress made over the past fiscal year with their inclusion in the program.

6.0 LEGISLATION

Officers will be applying the:

- Occupational Health and Safety Act Chapter 0-2,
- Occupational Health and Safety Regulation 62/2003, and
- Occupational Health and Safety Code (2006).

Note: Officers will apply the 2009 Occupational Health and Safety Code when it is enacted. It will replace the 2006 Occupational Health and Safety Code on July 1, 2009.

Dan Clarke
Executive Director
Occupational Health and Safety Compliance

Date