

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WCB approves 2020 premium rates

The 2020 rate marks the first time in 12 years the average premium rate has not dropped

Regina, Sask., Dec. 4, 2019 – The Saskatchewan Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) has approved the 2020 average employer premium rate of \$1.17 per hundred dollars of payroll. This is the same rate as 2019, marking the first time in 12 years the average premium rate has not dropped.

"While our average premium rate hasn't changed from last year's rate, average premium rates will go up for some industries and down for others," said the WCB's CEO Phil Germain. "We are seeing a number of factors that are causing some industry rate codes' average premium rate to increase: consistently high numbers of serious injuries and fatalities, claims costs increasing and decreases in industry payrolls."

Claims that are more serious in nature need additional longer-term treatments, which affect claims costs. Claims costs increased 7.62 per cent from 2017 to 2018. Overall mental health claims costs increased by 59 per cent in 2018 compared with 2017. In 2018, there were 48 work-related deaths compared with 27 in 2017, an increase of 78 per cent.

The 2020 average premium rate is 43 per cent below the 17-year high of \$2.05 in 2004. Preventing work-related injuries influences premium rates.

"Over the last decade, thanks to the efforts of workers, employers, safety associations and other leaders, injuries on the job have declined overall. The workplace total injury rate in our province has dropped by almost 50 per cent since 2008. Over the last three years, 88 per cent of Saskatchewan employers have achieved zero injuries," said Germain. "However, now that our average premium rate has levelled off, this signifies we all have more work to do. If claims costs continue to increase at a faster rate than payroll, it is likely that the 2021 average premium rate may increase."

While the total number of injuries including time loss injuries have dramatically declined, the more serious injuries have not decreased. From 2010 to 2018, we have seen roughly the same number of serious injuries per year at approximately 2,400. During the same period, serious injuries have represented nine per cent of all claims, 86 per cent of compensation days and 81 per cent of costs.

"This tells us that the number of serious injuries and more costly injuries are not dropping as fast as all other injury types," said Germain. "In order to start seeing premium rates go down again, we need to focus on eliminating serious injuries and fatalities."

In 2020, 33 per cent of Saskatchewan employers covered by the WCB will see a decrease or no change to their industry premium rate, with the decreases ranging from 0.7 per cent to 12.0 per cent. The premium rates for 67 per cent of employers will increase in 2020, with the increases ranging from 0.8 per cent to 11.1 per cent.

"For more than a decade, many workers and employers have worked together to prevent work-related injuries in this province," said WCB Chairperson Gord Dobrowsky. "We cannot thank you enough for preventing injuries and saving lives. Yet we must not become complacent. We all need to work together toward our goal of zero injuries in 100 per cent of Saskatchewan's workplaces."

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