

SUBJECT: Workers' Compensation Board Rate Codes

SUBMITTED BY: Human Resources Committee

BACKGROUND

With a few notable exceptions, including farmers, teachers, federal employees, *The Workers' Compensation Act* covers all employers in Saskatchewan including provincial and municipal government employees, and Crown Corporation employees.

To allow the insurance premium charged to each employer to adequately reflect the operation, hazards and injury experience, Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) divides employers into broad industry classifications. Each industry class is then divided into sub-sections called rate codes. Each rate code has additional sub-codes to better enable the tracking of payroll, premiums, costs and the subsequent injury codes. Splitting the rate codes into sub-codes provides the ability to recognize the specific details of the employees within that sub-code and apply a surcharge or discount.

The provincial government rate code is a rate code category where the number of sub-codes is not adequate. The G51 rate code (provincial government and Ministries) is split between only 2 sub-codes, G51-01 (The Crown in Right of Saskatchewan) and G51-02 (Other Ministries and Agencies). As comparisons, rate code G22 (Health authority, hospitals, care homes) has 6 sub-codes, G11 (post-secondary education institutions) has 4 sub-codes and G31 (Cities, towns, villages, RMs) has 12 sub-codes. It is important to note the Crown Corporations are included in many different rate codes, often mixed with private entities.

For 2012, 3.13% of workers in the G51 classification were injured with a time-loss claim, and 8.27% were injured when medical claims only were included. The average duration of a claim in the G51 rate code classification was 50.91 days. Furthermore, of the 50 rate codes presented in the WCB 2012 annual report, G51 had the 18th highest “%of workers injured with loss time.” Clearly there is an opportunity to improve the Government of Saskatchewan's safety record.

ISSUE

Grouping of all employees of the provincial government and its various Ministries within a rate code that only contains 2 sub-codes makes it difficult for those interested in improving safety performance to determine where the issues lie. This structure also means that there is limited incentive for one Ministry to work harder to ensure greater workplace safety when its benefits will be limited as it is grouped together with other Ministries.

Without having sub-codes that better differentiate the Ministries based on their respective levels of risk (e.g. the risk presented to highways is much greater than the

risk present in the legislative library) leaders are not recognized for their efforts to improve workplace safety, or alternately, held accountable for their inaction.

The first step in solving any issue is awareness of the issue, so the Ministries need to be able to clearly see how well each of them is dealing with workplace safety and this cannot be done adequately with the existing 2 sub-codes.

RECOMMENDED

1) That the Workers' Compensation Board create additional sub-codes to recognize the varying levels of business risk within separate provincial government Ministries in order to provide improved accountability within those Ministries.