



Acoustical Association Ontario

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Provincial in scope ...

Provincial in outlook

WSIB Premiums To Be Maintained at 2013 Rates in 2014



The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) recently announced that premium rates will be maintained at current levels for all employers in 2014. Elizabeth Witmer, the current Chair of the WSIB, stated that “continuing improvements in recovery and return to work outcomes for Ontario’s injured workers - along with the WSIB’s improved financial picture - mean we are well-positioned to offer stability for employers. Results for the first quarter of 2013 show the system is progressing well towards its financial targets, including meeting funding requirements set under government regulation last year.” Following the release of the Arthurs review last year, the government issued requirements that the board be 60 per cent funded by 2017, 80 per cent funded in 2022 and a full 100 per cent funded by 2027.

WSIB statistics are showing that ninety-two per cent (92%) of all injured workers with lost time injuries were back to work, with no wage losses, within 12 months of their injury and that there has been a significant drop in both the length of time workers were on claim and the number of workers requiring 100 per cent wage loss support.

The Board has reduced annual benefit costs paid out to injured workers from \$3.2 billion in 2009 to \$2.7 billion by the end of 2012, which has resulted in a cost saving of more than \$500 million a year. On the revenue side, employer premiums had fully covered the WSIB’s operating costs in 2012, which allowed the WSIB to apply approximately \$1.3 billion of investment earnings to the unfunded liability.

The Board, in its report to stakeholders, noted that administration and operations have met with improved efficiency and modernization noting that “expenses continue to be tightly controlled and faster decision making, resulted in 92% of eligibility decisions now being made within two weeks of the claim being received and more than half of these are made within 24 hours.” In addition, the report further noted, that the use of the Board’s eService has skyrocketed noting that 94% clearance certificates were issued online in 2012. Further, the use of the WSIB ePremiums and eRegistration systems increased to 47% and 66% respectively.

The recently released 2013 first quarter report, commented that the WSIB experienced continued operational and financial improvements, which are helping it to reduce its unfunded liability. “We know we can meet the challenges ahead as we continue to introduce enhanced programs and new technology to deliver even better value and service to workers and employers” concludes Witmer in the report. “Although we have more work ahead of us, we are on-track to creating a modern, sustainable system that supports economic growth and productivity and provides a financially stable system for future generations.”

The Mathews Dinsdale Minute



In October of 2012, we wrote a little bit about the College of Trades and the anticipated role it will play as the Ontario government revamps our skilled trades. We talked of the debate and questions arising from the new approach to the skilled trades and concerns about how it will represent all stake holders.

While the issue of how the College of Trades will be structured and will operate has been debated, one part of the review of the structure of organized trades in Ontario started quite a while ago. That was the process for reviewing journeymen to apprentice ratios. According to the reports publicized on the College of Trades website, to date review reports have issued for 20 different trades, including Floor Covering Installer; Roofer; Construction Boilermaker; Hoisting Engineer; Plumber & Steamfitter and Drywall, Acoustic and Lathing Applicator/Drywall Finisher and Plasterer.

Of the 20 trade reviews that have taken place, following a process of stakeholder written and oral submissions, 11 have recommended that journeyman to apprentice ratios remain unchanged. Of the remaining 9, the majority have recommended reducing the ratios to allow for more apprentices.

It is extremely hard to determine what this really means in the context of what must presumably be an extensive cost both financially and in the individual time of all involved. Is this a process of tweaking creating only minor differences? Are we opening up our trades to reinvigorate the persons working in them by facilitating the entry of younger workers? Are we seeing an illustration that the old ratios simply worked and this wasn't as necessary as some thought?

An interesting point in all of this is that the approach of the decisions is that unless there is evidence that ratios need to be changed, the status quo will prevail. In other words, unless there is clear evidence of a need for a change, the panels are presuming that the existing ones are correct. Given the amount of resources and effort being poured into these reviews one is left to wonder whether or not an entirely fresh look at the ratio for each trade (were that possible) might not have been a better framework for the review process. Unfortunately, this is not in the cards.

And for your information, the Drywall, acoustic and lathing applicator and Drywall finisher and plasterer ratios remain status quo.

 mathews
dinsdale *Workplace Law Spoken Here*



32 Vancho Crescent
Etobicoke, Ontario
M9A 4Z2

Phone: 416-605-6417
Fax: 416-240-0592
E-mail: aao@bellnet.ca

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