

# Health and Safety in Small Business

## The Costs of Injuries & Illness

Small-scale employers value their employees. The size of the workplace often means that owners work alongside workers. As a result, people in small businesses share a concern for one another's well-being.

Despite this, small businesses can be dangerous. While small businesses provide jobs for more than one-third of Manitoba workers about 28 per cent of Manitoba workplace injuries and illnesses occur in small businesses.

For a small business, workplace injuries are not only distressing, they can be costly. There can be increased costs in repair, losses in productivity, and increased workers compensation payments.

## The Challenges for Small Business

Most small business employers cannot afford the full-time services of the occupational health and safety specialists employed by some of the larger companies. Yet workplace hazards are just as common in small businesses as they are in large companies.

But many small business owners are not aware of workplace hazards and how to prevent them. They often mistakenly believe that their operations are safe because no government authority has told them differently.

## Health and Safety Responsibilities of Small Business Owners

All workplaces in Manitoba are covered by health and safety legislation. Most workplaces are covered by the Manitoba Workplace Safety and Health Act. The Act requires all employers to ensure the safety, health and welfare of their workers. Employer responsibilities include

- providing a safe and healthy workplace
- providing all workers with information and training about safety or health hazards in the workplace

- providing workers with any protective equipment needed to do their job and to make sure they know how to use it
- establishing and cooperating with workplace safety and health committees or worker health and safety representatives.

## Why have a Health & Safety Program?

Workplace injuries and illness can be prevented. The key to prevention is to develop a health and safety program. A health and safety program does not involve large costs. And in smaller businesses, it usually does not require additional employees. It can be integrated into your entire business operation and reflected in all of your work.

A health and safety program makes good business sense. With a good health and safety program in place, small business owners can focus their efforts on making their business grow.

### Who is Small Business in Manitoba?

In Manitoba there are more than 29,000 businesses with fewer than 20 employees.

Small businesses make up more than 87% of all Manitoba businesses.

Small businesses are an important part of our economy.

They are flexible and can quickly adapt to changing needs and situations.

Small businesses often provide jobs for people who would otherwise be unemployed.

They are the work force entry point for many young people.

## How to Start a Health & Safety Program in a Small Business

A health and safety program for small business includes the following ten steps:

1. Develop a company health and safety policy.
2. Establish a workplace health and safety committee if there are more than 20 employees. For between 10-19 employees, a worker health and safety representative is needed.
3. Make sure that workers receive health and safety training.
4. Identify workplace hazards and find ways to eliminate or control these hazards.
5. Inspect the workplace regularly.
6. Provide written safe work procedures for all hazardous tasks performed in the workplace.
7. Have emergency response plans in place.
8. Investigate all near misses and incidents leading to injury.
9. Keep records of all near misses and injuries on file.
10. Monitor and evaluate your health and safety program on an ongoing basis.

For more information on these steps, ask us for our Small Business Health and safety Guide, available free of charge to workers and employers.

### Need Help?

For help to start-up a workplace health and safety program or to deal with a health and safety issue, contact the services listed below. Some small businesses may be able to take advantage of the combined resources offered by the industry safety associations that are also listed below.

#### **MFL Occupational Health Centre**

(204) 949-0811

Toll Free: 1-888-843-1229 (Manitoba only)

Provides, free of charge, information and education on health and safety issues, physician services, a resource library, workplace health and safety assessments, and the Small Business Health and Safety Guide.

<http://www.mflohc.mb.ca>

#### **Workplace Safety & Health Division**

Hot Line (204) 945-6848 or

Toll-free 1-800-282-8069

Provides information on health and safety legislation, questions, and concerns. The Division also offers training courses and library services.

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/labour/safety>

#### **Workers Compensation Board**

(204) 954-4321 or

Toll free 1-800-263-8466

Provides information on registration, assessments, claims and compensation in addition to a number of other services and health and safety materials.

<http://www.wcb.mb.ca>

#### **Manitoba Building Contractors Safety Program**

(204) 775-3171 - Winnipeg

(204) 728-3456 - Brandon

<http://www.wpgca.com>

#### **Manitoba Heavy Construction Safety Program**

(204) 947-1379

<http://www.mhca.mb.ca>

#### **Manitoba Restaurant Safety Program**

(204) 783-9955

<http://www.dinemanitoba.com>

#### **Prairie Implement Manufacturers Association**

(204) 987-7462

<http://pima.ca>

If you need more information contact the

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Winnipeg, Manitoba, R3C 4M6

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Toll Free: 1-888-843-1229 (Manitoba only)

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