



A Workplace Safety Strategy for Nova Scotians

2013–2017

Progress Update

WORK SAFE. FOR LIFE.
WORKERS' COMPENSATION BOARD OF NOVA SCOTIA


NOVA SCOTIA

The Strategy

Vision

Together, workers and employers will make Nova Scotia the safest place to work in Canada.

Principles

As the strategy is implemented, the following principles will guide decisions: transparency; accountability; collaboration and fairness.

Goals

1. Nova Scotia workplace safety performance will be among the best in Canada.
 - There will be measurable improvement in Nova Scotia's workplace safety performance relative to the rest of Canada.
 - Nova Scotian workplaces will be safe and Nova Scotians will expect them to be safe.
2. Leaders at all levels and across all sectors will demonstrate a commitment to and be accountable for safety in Nova Scotia workplaces.
3. The safety culture in Nova Scotia will continuously improve and evolve:
 - Nova Scotians will be aware of workplace safety performance and strategies through ongoing, proactive communications.
 - Nova Scotians will take responsibility for workplace safety and feel safe at work.
4. All workplaces will have access to and use the services and resources they need to assist them in achieving competency in workplace safety and improving their safety performance.

Together for a safer Nova Scotia

In the spring of 2013 Nova Scotians came together like never before to focus on workplace safety. The Workers' Compensation Board of Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education stood together with workers, employers, industry representatives, labour leaders and safety partners to officially introduce the Workplace Safety Strategy for Nova Scotians (2013-2017).

Developed by the WCB, the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education and based on extensive stakeholder consultation, the Workplace Safety Strategy is a five-year plan that establishes strong goals for health and safety and a long-term vision to make Nova Scotia the safest place to work in Canada.

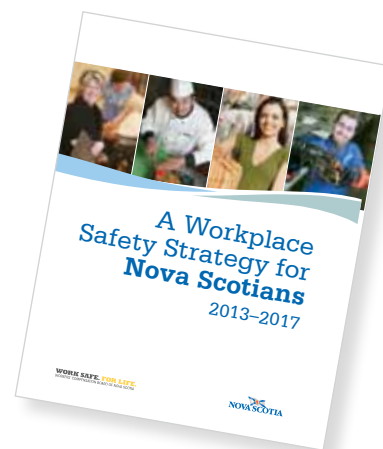
The Workplace Safety Strategy is not just a WCB strategy, or a government strategy. It's a strategy for all Nova Scotians, and it calls for real action from workers and employers in all workplaces.

Over the past year the WCB and the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education have been working together in new ways to advance the initiatives identified under each of the Strategy's six areas of focus:

- Leadership
- Safety Culture
- Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
- Education and Training
- Inspection and Enforcement
- Performance Management and Measurement

This update reflects the work of the WCB and the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education to fulfill their Workplace Safety Strategy commitments, but progress is happening in workplaces throughout Nova Scotia.

For more information about the Strategy and an opportunity to share what you or your organization is doing to make Nova Scotia a safer place to work, visit workplacesafetystrategy.ca.





Leadership

Leaders must emerge from all sectors and throughout organizations to champion and advocate safe workplaces.

Progress Highlights:

- The Leadership Matters conference brought together more than 175 safety leaders from across Nova Scotia to share best practice and develop collaborative relationships. The conference was opened by the Honourable Kelly Regan, Minister of Labour and Advanced Education, and featured presentations by educators and industry leaders from the retail, fishing and health care sectors.
- The Fall Federal Forum welcomed leaders from more than 20 federal government departments to talk about how injury management programs at organizations like Canada Post and the Department of National Defence are helping prevent injuries and promote safe and timely return to work.
- The WCB continued to support industry safety associations including partnering with the Nova Scotia Trucking Safety Association to produce a booklet illustrating safe behaviours in the trucking industry.
- WCB's Executive team visited employers demonstrating visible safety leadership, like CKF Inc. and Comeau's Sea Foods, to deliver letters of recognition for their commitment to workplace safety.

◀ *Janet Knox, CEO of Annapolis Valley Health, was one of several industry safety leaders who shared experiences and knowledge at the Leadership Matters conference in November.*

Safety Culture

Changing workplace safety culture requires time and concentrated efforts from a variety of influencers. Success will be achieved when safe practices are second nature – the only way to do business – and safety permeates every workplace in the province.

Progress Highlights:

- Awareness and behaviour-focused marketing continued in workplaces and in media across the province.
- Front-page media coverage and editorials supported a public dialogue on workplace safety, as well as significant online conversations in social media.
- A new social marketing campaign called *What Matters Most* began airing on television and radio. By showing Nova Scotians coming home to their families after work, the campaign is an emotional reminder that the most important reason for working safely isn't at work at all.
- Advertising during the summer encouraged Nova Scotians to report unsafe work practices by contacting the Department of Labour and Advanced Education.
- WCB introduced rebate programs that give employers an opportunity to have a portion of their surcharge refunded if they make qualifying investments in health and safety. WCB will issue its first rebate and surcharge cheques in the spring of 2014.
- The Practice Incentive Rebate Pilot program was introduced in the construction and trucking industries. Employers whose health and safety management systems successfully meet the requirements of a recognized accreditation (such as the WCB's Safety Certified Accreditation and the Construction Safety Association's Certificate of Recognition) will be eligible to receive a rebate in 2014.

*The **What Matters Most** social marketing campaign depicts Nova Scotians coming home to their families and loved ones. The campaign reminds Nova Scotians that the most important reason to make their workplace safe is not at work at all.* ►





Small and Medium-sized Enterprises

Providing smaller businesses with access to tools that will help them enhance safety in their workplaces is a priority.

Progress Highlights:

- Small and medium business representatives from about 50 organizations came together in November to discuss their specific needs and challenges when it comes to occupational health and safety. This forum was hosted by the WCB and the Department of Labour and Advanced Education.
- WCB now has a Workplace Consultant dedicated to supporting the injury prevention and return-to-work programs of small and medium businesses.
- Working in partnership with industry safety associations, a workplace safety toolkit is being developed to specifically address the unique needs of small and medium businesses.
- All new businesses will soon be receiving occupational health and safety information when they register through Service Nova Scotia.
- The Department of Labour and Advanced Education and WCB are making website changes to better address the needs of small and medium businesses.

◀ *Many Nova Scotia workplaces, including those in the automotive industry, will benefit from the Workplace Safety Strategy's focus on small and medium businesses.*

Education and Training

Deeper and broader understanding, whether it comes through formal education or quality workplace training, is vital in changing a culture where workplace injury has been accepted as part of the job. In the new safety culture, injuries are preventable and unacceptable.

Progress Highlights:

- Safe@MyJob, a new workplace safety quiz and certificate available to all Grade 10-12 students, is up and running on the Nova Scotia Virtual School.
- More than 25 workshops were hosted throughout the province on new workplace health and safety regulations, *Occupational Health and Safety Act* roles and responsibilities and eye injury prevention.
- Nova Scotia workers completed 3,400 online safety courses offered through the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety and funded by the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education.
- The WCB embarked on a pilot project with a local school board to adapt health and safety resources for students with special needs who are going on short-term work placements.

Tracey Leary, WCB's Education Consultant, and grade 10 students at Halifax West High School discuss the benefits of wearing personal protective equipment on the job. ▶





Inspection and Enforcement

Workplace inspection and enforcement of safety laws and regulations are valuable opportunities to promote better safety practices.

Progress Highlights:

- The Public Prosecution Service is in the process of recruiting an additional prosecutor who will be dedicated to occupational health and safety.
- The Occupational Health and Safety Division of the Department of Labour and Advanced Education completed a reorganization based on a comprehensive review process. The new structure will build capacity, increase accountability and enhance service delivery. The addition of 17 positions will balance strategic and regulatory focus and create a new business unit focused on Education and Outreach.
- The Occupational Health and Safety Division is working with industry groups such as the Nova Scotia Construction Safety Association to identify and target high-risk companies with poor safety records and government is working with police to share information on safety training and inspections.
- Phase I of the Workplace Health and Safety Regulations came into effect making it easier for employers, workers and safety partners to find information and rules related to fall protection, scaffolding, work on highways and occupational health. Phase II is currently underway and will propose mandatory training for Joint Health and Safety Committees and Safety Representatives.
- Hundreds of Nova Scotians provided input as part of consultation to review the Administrative Penalty system. Proposed changes include a clear fine schedule, streamlined appeal process and graduated penalty system. Other benefits to workplaces will include:
 - Increased focus on educating and enforcing the law through compliance orders
 - The penalty revenue will fund workplace safety education initiatives

◀ *The Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education is hiring more inspectors to focus on education and compliance, as well as working with industry to identify and target high-risk companies with poor safety records.*

Performance Management and Measurement

Workplace safety is now measured almost exclusively by failure – injuries and lives lost on the job; time lost to work-related injury. Those lagging indicators are important and will continue to be measured. New tools are needed, however, to help Nova Scotian workers and employers determine if they are doing the right things to keep workers safe.

Progress Highlights:

- Dr. Kevin Kelloway at the CN Centre for Occupational Health and Safety at Saint Mary's University will lead research exploring the possibility of developing a provincial safety climate index as a potential leading indicator that will encourage safety performance improvement.
- A Workplace Fatality Expert Working Group, led by Dr. Mark Fleming at the CN Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, will explore the causes of workplace fatalities and determine if specific prevention strategies can be developed to reduce, and ultimately eliminate, workplace tragedies.
- New data shows that fishermen are 46 times more likely to suffer an acute fatality than in any other industry. In 2013, the WCB and the Department of Labour and Advanced Education laid the groundwork for the development of an industry-led, long-term Fishing Safety Action Plan. Through the Safe at Sea Alliance, fishermen, their families and communities will come together to discuss safety issues and develop a plan to improve the overall safety culture of fishing in Nova Scotia.
- The WCB and the Department of Labour and Advanced Education are working with partners to develop a performance measurement framework to track progress and outcomes over the term of the Workplace Safety Strategy implementation.

On Pinkney's Point Wharf in Yarmouth County, WCB Workplace Consultant Tommy Harper (R) discusses fishing safety with Paul Sampson (L), Occupational Health and Safety Officer with the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education. This was one of many wharf visits conducted to promote the use of personal floatation devices (PFDs) among fishermen including nine man overboard drills.



