

Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission Safety Outreach Representatives

Mr. Speaker, the Workers' Safety and Compensation Commission is always looking for new ways to support employers and create safer workplaces in the Northwest Territories.

Through ongoing communication and engagement with employers, the WSCC identified an opportunity to improve their services and provide additional supports for employers facing occupational health and safety challenges that is separate from their role as enforcer of the *Safety Act* through penalties and fines.

The WSCC is proud to introduce the new positions of Safety Outreach Representatives. These new positions will provide employers with technical expertise, analysis, consultation, and collaborative services to improve workplace occupational health and safety programs, meet Occupation Health and Safety, or OHS, regulatory requirements, and ultimately improve workplace safety outcomes.

The WSCC's mandate is to promote and improve health and safety in the workplace. These new positions will help to achieve this by supporting employers in their understanding of occupational health and safety roles and responsibilities. Safety Outreach Representatives will accomplish this through collaboration with employers, and by providing resources and guidance to create or improve safety programs.

These Safety Outreach Representatives can directly help employers by helping them develop an OHS program; providing them with technical expertise to identify best practices to reduce workplace incidents; and sharing educational resources to improve OHS outcomes in the workplace.

The WSCC wants to assure employers that Safety Outreach Representatives are not Safety Officers. They do not have the mandate to enforce regulations and laws, and are not going to provide Safety Officers with information that could lead to an inspection or penalty. This is a proactive, supportive step that does not penalize employers for requiring guidance to improve occupational health and safety outcomes at their workplace.

Although Safety Outreach Representatives will reach out to employers, and the WSCC hopes employers will take advantage of this new, no-penalty support in making their workplaces even safer.

It is also important to note that this improved service is provided by reallocating existing resources within the WSCC. Employers will not incur any additional costs, and their rates will not increase as a result of this new resource.

Mr. Speaker, the three Safety Outreach Representatives at the WSCC are hired and in place. Two are located at the WSCC office in Yellowknife, and are ready to support employers in the Northwest Territories. The third is in the WSCC's Iqaluit office, providing support to Nunavut employers.

The WSCC aims to reduce workplace incidents and injuries, and these Safety Outreach Representatives are a great resource to help employers within their own workplaces. Together, we can achieve our vision of eliminating workplace diseases and injuries.

Any employer who is looking to improve health and safety in the workplace can contact the WSCC and request support from one of their Safety Outreach Representatives today.

Mahsi, Mr. Speaker.