

## TOO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE DIE IN BC WORKPLACES SAYS WCB

**May 11, 2004, Richmond, B.C.** – Nine young BC workers died on the job last year according to statistics released by the Workers' Compensation Board. Six were male, three female.

“The loss of these nine young workers with the resulting human and financial costs to their families, their employers and their co-workers did not have to happen,” said Roberta Ellis, WCB Vice-President of Investigations and Review. “All of us – parents, employers, workers and the community at large – need to make sure that when we send our young men and women out to work they and us fully understand our rights and responsibilities.”

Of the nearly 9,000 injuries experienced by young workers aged 15-24, 612 of those were for serious injuries involving amputations (275), major fractures (251) and 3<sup>rd</sup> degree burns (31). Every 40 minutes of every working day, one young worker in BC is injured.

Encouragingly, the injury rate\* for young workers has dropped from 5.9 in 1994 to 3.4 in 2003 -- a decline of 42 percent; however, the rate still remains higher than the overall provincial rate of 3.0.

To promote safer, healthier workplaces for our most vulnerable workers as the summer-job season approaches, Shaw TV and the WCB will air a 90-minute program on May 13<sup>th</sup> at 8 p.m. focusing on four young workers who experienced serious injuries when they were teenagers.

*\*The injury rate refers to the number of claims per 100 person years of work. All 2003 injury rates are preliminary and subject to future revision.*

Participating in the television program was, “A way for Shaw to help address the key community issue of workplace safety for our young people” said Shaw TV Program Manager Carmen Salerno.

Shaw TV is available throughout the Lower Mainland on Cable 4. Check your local listings for your cable channel elsewhere in the province.

Youthink, a local newspaper written by teens and read by nearly 70,000 lower mainland students, will include an eight-page supplement advising young workers about their rights and responsibilities and what resources are available to them with its May 10 edition.

The WCB website – [www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com) – has a host of resources for young workers, employers, parents, educators and other interested parties to keep young people from getting hurt.

Serving nearly two million workers and about 173,000 employers, the Workers' Compensation Board of BC is a provincial statutory agency governed by a Board of Directors. The WCB is committed to a safe and healthy workplace, to providing return-to-work rehabilitation and legislated compensation benefits to workers injured as a result of their employment, and to being responsible, accountable and financially sustainable.

-30-

For more information contact:

Gladys Johnsen  
Public Affairs Manager  
Prevention Division, WCB  
(604) 214-5441 or toll-free in B.C.  
at 1 888 621-7233, local 5441

A direct link to full program information, alternate broadcast times and background material is available at [www.worksafebc.com](http://www.worksafebc.com). A fax copy is available by calling Sharleen Gairdner at (604) 232-5823 in the lower mainland or toll-free in BC at 1 888 621-7233