

## **The 2009 Construction High Risk Strategy Objectives**

The Construction High Risk Strategy is a multi-year program intended to reduce the sector injury rate, duration, potential fatalities and serious injuries while increasing return to work. Components of the plan also need to address the issues associated with young workers, occupational disease and societal attitudes towards health and safety. For 2009, these overall objectives continue, but with an increased emphasis on fatalities, serious injuries, and the composite injury rate. As a result, some additional classification units (CUs) are being added to our Strategy and our key mechanisms of injury are being further refined to provide better clarity and focus.

Lessons learned through our efforts from 2006 to 2008 will be incorporated into our action planning for 2009.

- Focus efforts on 21 out of 67 CUs (emphasis on residential wood frame)
- Follow up to Measure Up campaign
- Primary target emphasis on
  - Falls from elevation (from ladders, from roof, from scaffold)
  - MSI (Overexertion involving building materials)
  - Struck by (building materials)

To achieve the goal of serious injury reduction and safer worksites, WorkSafeBC will continue to implement this plan using four key resources: Communication, Consultation, Education, and Compliance. Through each of these resources, a series of plans and programs will be carried out within the sector to create a culture where employers and workers view health and safety both as a shared and individual responsibility and as an over-riding business priority.

## **Construction Sector Performance Highlights**

Construction continues to play a key role in British Columbia's economy. This sector represents approximately 39,000 employers, 180,000 workers, and about 9% of the provincial workforce. Since 2006, British Columbia has experienced an unprecedented level of construction activity, and approximately \$110 billion in construction activity is planned between 2007 and 2014.

Construction activity continued to rise during 2008 with employment growth increasing 11% and a significant flow of young workers entering the industry. There were almost 26,000 young workers employed in construction in 2007 which accounts for 16% of the industry's workforce.

Employment in the construction industry is forecasted to decrease in 2009 due to the economic slowdown in the world economies. The focus of the high risk strategy will not be affected by this decrease as *falls from elevation*, *MSIs*, and *struck by* incidents remain the leading accident types.

The Construction Team has been very focused on specific high risk CUs and the key mechanisms of injury that have large concentrations of serious injuries by developing the tools and initiatives necessary to improve performance where it is needed most. Significant progress in health and safety performance has once again been achieved through the combined efforts of industry, their associations and WorkSafeBC.

One area that lacked objective performance measurement was the performance of prime contractors on multi-employer worksites. WorkSafeBC does not collect statistics by project. The "Prime Contractors: How Do You Measure Up?" campaign conducted in the fall of 2007 provided us with important quantitative data for 7 key areas of responsibility. Overall the findings were quite positive with 183 prime contractors out of 253 determined to be in general compliance with Section 118 of the Workers Compensation Act. The campaign results were discussed with key industry stakeholders to review what was learned and where we can take action to improve future results.

### 2008 Performance at a Glance

	Construction Sector	All BC
Employment Growth	+ 11%	+ 2.2%
Non-HCO Claim Growth	+ 4.7%	- 1.0%
Overall Injury Rate	- 5.6%	- 3.3%
Serious Injury Rate <sub>1</sub>	- 0.4%	-0.3%
Accepted Fatalities	+13.3%	=15.1%
STD Duration	+4.0%	+ 4.1%

The financial impacts continue to pay dividends with large reductions in assessment rates and rate group surpluses, as compared to the large unfunded liabilities a few years ago. A number of Construction rate groups have seen their rates drop 20%, the maximum allowed in one year. Overall, the sector's rates have dropped 8.3% versus no change for BC's industries overall.

None of us should lose sight; however, that construction remains as one of the top high risk industries in BC in terms of injury rate, fatalities, serious injury rates and benefit cost rates. We have made good progress over the past 3 or 4 years that the Construction Team has been in place but we have a long way to go yet to achieve our potential.