

Insight

July 2017



Experience Rating (ER) calculation

WorkSafeBC's Board of Directors approves consultation on the proposed amendment to the ER calculation policy.



Occupational Exposure Limits (OELs) and OEL review period

WorkSafeBC's Board of Directors approves consultation on OELs and OEL review period.



Partners Program (COR) update

The COR consultation is extended until August 1, 2017.



Research Training Awards

Learn about the 2017 Research Training Award recipients.

Did you know?

There are new resources for joint health and safety committees and worker health and safety representatives. Learn more at worksafebc.com.

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Proposed policy amendment to remove the capitalized values of permanent disability awards from the experience rating calculation

About experience rating (ER)

WorkSafeBC's ER Plan was introduced in 2000. Under the ER Plan, employers whose claim costs are lower than their peers' receive a discount on their premiums, and employers whose claim costs are higher pay a surcharge. The goal of the ER Plan is to encourage employers with high injury costs to reduce them, and to encourage employers with low injury costs to keep them low.

Policy development

At their meeting on May 25, 2017, WorkSafeBC's Board of Directors approved the release of a discussion paper with options and draft policies to stakeholders for comment.

At issue is whether to stop using the projected total cost of permanent disability awards when calculating an employer's ER. Instead, WorkSafeBC would include the amounts of these awards as they are paid out to workers over time.

The consultation period for this item will end **Friday, September 15, 2017**. The discussion paper, draft policies, and information on how to provide feedback are available on worksafebc.com.

[Review or comment on the proposed amendment to the ER calculation policy.](#)

The Board of Directors will consider stakeholder feedback before making a decision on the proposed policy.

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WorkSafeBC's Board of Directors approves consultation on Occupational Exposure Limits (OELs) and OEL review period

The Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR) prescribes OELs for workers' exposure to hazardous chemical substances. Generally, these OELs are consistent with the Threshold Limit Values recommended by the [American Conference of Governmental Industrial Hygienists \(ACGIH\)](#).

About Threshold Limit Values (TLVs)

A TLV is an airborne concentration of a chemical substance from which nearly all workers are believed to experience no adverse health effects over a working lifetime. TLVs may be expressed as an 8-hour time-weighted average, a short-term exposure limit, or a ceiling limit.

Each year, the ACGIH publishes a list of substances for which they have set new or revised TLVs, retained TLVs, or withdrawn TLVs.

Before adopting new or revised TLVs, WorkSafeBC reviews and consults with stakeholders on potential implementation issues. The existing B.C. OELs continue to be in effect until the Board of Directors makes a decision on which new or revised TLVs to adopt. For more information, please see the [OEL review process](#).

Policy development: Proposed amendments to OELs

At their May 25, 2017 meeting, WorkSafeBC's Board of Directors approved the release for consultation of proposed OEL changes based on the 2013, 2014, and 2015 new or revised ACGIH TLVs. WorkSafeBC also proposes a withdrawal of the OEL for Ethylidene norbornene.

We are inviting stakeholder feedback on the following items:

- Proposed new or revised OELs
- Proposed retention of OELs
- Proposed withdrawal of the Ethylidene norbornene OEL

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The consultation period will be open until **Friday, September 1, 2017**.

[Review or comment on the proposed amendments to OELs.](#)

Policy development: Review period for OELs for chemical substances

The Board of Directors also approved the release for consultation of a proposed increase to the review period for ACGIH TLVs from one year to three years. A three-year review period provides additional time to:

- Develop and review methods to assess worker exposure to new or revised ACGIH TLVs.
- Allow industries to prepare and adapt to upcoming OEL changes.
- Request and obtain research related to OELs.

WorkSafeBC's Policy, Regulation and Research Division is committed to proactively bringing critical OEL issues to the Board of Directors when warranted, prior to the scheduled ACGIH TLV review period. To ensure the ongoing review of new or emerging chemical substance exposure risks, our Risk Analysis Unit also has the mandate to provide ongoing review of potential exposure risks.

We are inviting feedback from stakeholders until **Friday, September 1, 2017**.

[Review or comment on the proposed increase to the OEL review period.](#)

All stakeholder feedback received will be carefully reviewed, analyzed, and provided to the Board of Directors to consider as part of their decision-making process.

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Partners Program (COR) consultation update

The Partners Program is a voluntary certification program designed to encourage employers in B.C. to take a proactive role in occupational health and safety. Employers registered in the Partners Program who meet program requirements achieve a [Certificate of Recognition \(COR\)](#) and become eligible to receive a financial incentive.

The Policy, Regulation and Research Division began consultation on the draft policies and discussion paper in February 2017. At the request of stakeholders, the consultation will be extended until **Tuesday, August 1, 2017**.

[Submit feedback on proposed amendments for the Partners Program.](#)

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Introducing the 2017 Research Training Awards recipients

Research Services is pleased to announce the four recipients of our [2017 Research Training Awards](#) competition. These scholars come from a variety of fields and represent the next generation of innovators in occupational health and safety and workers' compensation research in B.C.

The recipients and their studies are described briefly below. Keep an eye on future editions of *Insight* for more about these projects as they develop.

"Can Achilles tendon issue dysfunction be directly assessed during routine clinical examination? Clinical validation of a new method to quantify tendon health."

Evan Finnamore is a Master's student at the University of British Columbia (UBC) and a trainee with the [Centre for Hip Health and Mobility](#). Evan's project is aimed at validating a newly developed technique for measuring tendon stiffness in patients recovering from an Achilles tendon injury. Using a new technology for palpating tissues called the [MyotonPRO](#), Evan will compare injured tendons with healthy ones to assess stiffness. The goal is to evaluate whether this new technique is effective. The project could also lead to new guidelines to help health care providers determine when it's safe for a patient to do weight-bearing activities in a rehab context, with the intent of returning to typical activities as quickly as possible.

"Examining regional variation in health care services in the five Canadian workers' compensation systems and its relationship to return to work."

Kimberly Sharpe is a PhD candidate with UBC's School of Population and Public Health, working with the [Partnership for Work, Health and Safety](#). Her project takes a comparative look at regional variation in hospital admissions, surgeries, physician visits, and diagnostic tests. Her research will lead to a better understanding of the differences in access to health care in various regions, and the impact these differences have on disability duration and return-to-work outcomes in workers' compensation systems in B.C., Alberta, Manitoba, Ontario, and New Brunswick.

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"Effects of occupational diesel exhaust exposure on lung inflammation: The role of neutrophils."

Denise Wooding is a Master's student in Experimental Medicine at UBC, working with the [Pollution Lab](#). Almost 900,000 Canadians regularly breathe in exhaust from diesel engines in the course of their work. This includes truck drivers, heavy equipment operators, heavy-duty mechanics, and bus drivers. Denise's project aims to understand the effects of occupational diesel exhaust exposure in both healthy and at-risk groups (e.g., former smokers). Her research will lead to a better understanding of who is most at risk from diesel exhaust exposure. It may also provide evidence for future efforts to develop therapies and drugs to treat occupational lung disease.

"Improvement of self-management skills among people with spinal cord injury."

Gurkaran Singh is a Master's student at UBC, working with [ICORD](#). In Canada, more than 1,500 spinal cord injuries are reported each year. Approximately eight percent of these injuries happen to people between the ages of 15 and 34 years of age. The purpose of Gurkaran's study is to evaluate the effectiveness of a new self-management mobile app designed to provide support for individuals with spinal cord injuries. Self-management tools help people to take control of their daily care by increasing independence, quality of life and motivation, and ultimately, their ability to return to work. By supporting self-management skills, this new app could reduce secondary complications that arise from spinal cord injuries, such as pressure ulcers, kidney failure, and mental health impacts.